2014-2015 Graduate Council
Meeting Agenda: March 18, 2015 | 3:30 p.m.–5:00 p.m. | 102 Kern Graduate Building
Coffee available: 3:10 p.m.

1. Minutes of the February 18, 2015 Meeting
2. Communications to Graduate Council
3. Announcements/Remarks by the Chair - Regina Vasilatos-Younken, Interim Dean of the Graduate School, Chair of Graduate Council
4. Reports of Standing Committees of Graduate Council
   a) Committee on Committees and Procedures – David Spencer, Chair
   b) Committee on Programs and Courses – Joan Redwing, Chair
      Informational item (Appendix A):
      1) Graduate Council Curriculum Report, 3/11/2015
   c) Committee on Academic Standards – James Kasting, Chair
   d) Committee on Fellowships and Awards – Krista Wilkinson, Chair
   e) Committee on Graduate Research – David Spencer, Chair
   f) Committee on Graduate Student and Faculty Issues – Roger Finke, Chair
5. Reports of Special Committees
   a) Graduate School’s Graduate Exhibition Committee – Richard St. Clair, Chair
      Informational item
      1) Presentation of Graduate Exhibition video entries
6. Special Reports
   a) Graduate and Professional Student Association
7. Unfinished Business
8. New Business
9. Comments and Recommendations for the Good of the Graduate Community
2014–2015 Graduate Council
Minutes of the Meeting: February 18, 2015

Graduate Council met on Wednesday, February 18, 2015, at 3:30 p.m. in 102 Kern Graduate Building. Dr. Regina Vasilatos-Younken, Interim Dean of the Graduate School, chaired the meeting. The minutes of the meeting of January 21, 2014 were approved.

Communications to Graduate Council
None.

Announcements/Remarks by the Chair

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken called on Lori Anne Stania, Director of Graduate Student Services who is a member of the LionPATH Steering Committee representing the Graduate School, and Dr. David Spencer, Graduate Council representative from the College of Engineering and a member of the LionPATH Faculty Advisory Committee representing graduate faculty advisers, to share any updates they each may have regarding Project LionPATH, as appropriate. Both Ms. Stania and Dr. Spencer indicated that there were no updates to share today.

Reports of Standing Committees of Graduate Council

Committee on Committees and Procedures
Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. David Spencer, Chair, Committee on Committees and Procedures.

Dr. Spencer indicated that the Committee had nothing to report.

Committee on Programs and Courses
Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. Joan Redwing, Chair, Committee on Programs and Courses.

Dr. Redwing presented the Graduate Council Curriculum Report for Feb. 11th, 2015, as an informational item to Council on behalf of the Committee on Programs and Courses:

Graduate Council Curriculum Report, 02/11/2015

There were no questions or comments.

Committee on Academic Standards
Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. James Kasting, Chair, Committee on Academic Standards.

Dr. Kasting presented to Council proposed revisions in terminology in the guidelines for submitting proposals for off-campus programs, substituting the preferred term “blended program” for the currently used term “hybrid program” (Appendix A). The proposed change in terminology from the Committee was approved.

Dr. Kasting also presented to Council a proposal for a new policy allowing for a limited role for graduate student instructional assistants (GSIAs) to support graduate courses. After discussion, members of
Council voted to approve an amendment to the section the proposed policy that limited grading by GSIs of any single assignment to no more than 30% of the total course grade to include a recommendation that no single GSIA could grade more than 50% of the total course grade for an individual student in the course. The amended policy was subsequently approved (Appendix B).

Committee on Fellowships and Awards

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Ms. Barbara Struble, who was reporting on behalf of Dr. Krista Wilkinson, Chair, Committee on Fellowships and Awards.

Ms. Struble noted that members of the Committee will be reviewing applications for the Academic Computing Fellowship Award and the AT&T Graduate Award, which are due on March 1. She also noted that the Committee will be making recommendations to the Dean of the Graduate School regarding Penn State’s nominations for the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) Distinguished Dissertation Award Competition. The fields for this year’s competition are Biological and Life Sciences, and Humanities and Fine Arts.

Committee on Graduate Research

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. David Spencer, Chair, Committee on Graduate Research.

Dr. Spencer indicated that, at its last meeting, the Senate Committee on Research (SCOR) heard a presentation on a policy change regarding F&A. The policy can be found at https://guru.psu.edu/policies/RAG04.html#C.

Committee on Graduate Student and Faculty Issues

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. Roger Finke, Chair, Committee on Graduate Student and Faculty Issues.

Dr. Finke reported that the Committee has been tasked with selecting speakers for the Graduate School’s commencement ceremonies and would welcome recommendations. Suggestions for speakers should be chosen from within the Graduate Faculty whenever possible and should be received at least one semester in advance of the commencement ceremony for which the recommendation is being made.

Reports of Special Committees

Graduate School’s Graduate Exhibition Committee

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. Richard St. Clair, Co-Chair, Graduate School’s Graduate Exhibition Committee.

Dr. St. Clair reported that plans for the 2015 Graduate Exhibition are progressing nicely. He reminded members of Council that the performance portion of the Exhibition will be held on Friday, March 20 at Esber Recital Hall and the poster and visual arts portion will be held on Sunday, March 22 at the HUB. The video entries will be judged in advance of the Exhibition, but will be played at the HUB during the
poster and visual arts portion on March 22. He noted that exhibitor registration has closed and the exhibitor totals for each category as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dr. St. Clair indicated that the Committee is still in need of 113 judges for the poster and visual arts portion of the Exhibition. While judging is open to members of the University community and the public, Dr. St. Clair noted the Committee is most in need of faculty judges and encouraged members of Council and faculty within their respective programs to sign up. Individuals interested in judging can register via the Graduate School website through March 13.

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken suggested that the video entries, which should not exceed 2 minutes each, be presented to members of Council at the next meeting.

**Special Reports**

**Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA)**

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Messrs. Morteza Karimzadeh and Douglas Whalen, representing the GPSA.

Messrs. Karimzadeh and Whalen indicated that the GPSA had nothing to report.

**Unfinished Business**

None.

**New Business**

None.

**Comments and Recommendations for the Good of the Graduate Community**

None.

There being no further comments or discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:42 p.m.

**Next meeting:**

Wednesday, March 18, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m., 102 Kern Graduate Building
Jean,

I would like to suggest a small change to the guidelines for submitting proposals for off-campus programs, [http://www.gradschool.psu.edu/faculty-and-staff/faculty/proposalsubmit/](http://www.gradschool.psu.edu/faculty-and-staff/faculty/proposalsubmit/), where the term “hybrid program” is used. Per the glossary published on the Penn State Weblearning site -- [https://weblearning.psu.edu/resources/penn-state-online-resources/glossary/](https://weblearning.psu.edu/resources/penn-state-online-resources/glossary/) -- “blended program” is the preferred terminology.

**Blended Program:** Blended programs are programs that consist of online courses, resident, and/or hybrid courses (i.e., a combination of two or more of these formats). Courses in blended programs are generally not themselves a mixture of online and resident instruction, but are individually either resident, online, or hybrid. At Penn State, such programs are called Blended Programs. (See also “Hybrid Courses.”)

**Hybrid Course:** Courses that combine Web and traditional face-to-face classroom instruction. Hybrid courses are organized to reduce or replace the number of required face-to-face class sessions in order to improve effectiveness and flexibility for instructors and students and/or to achieve other efficiencies. Hybrid courses reduce by approximately 40% or more of the number of required classroom sessions, although some classroom sessions are required. (See also “Blended Programs.”)

With Hershey now proposing a blended program in Public Health, and others being discussed by EMS and IST, it would be good to use standard terminology across the university.

Best regards,

David
Introduction

The intent of this document is to outline guidelines and procedures by which a department or other academic unit may obtain approval to offer new graduate degree programs that are either extended* or off-campus**, or approval to offer extended or off-campus delivery of existing graduate degree programs to different locations and on different schedules to accommodate local demands. When proposing such extended or off-campus delivery of existing programs*** (with no changes to the program otherwise), the following information must be provided to and will be assessed by the Graduate Council Committee on Programs and Courses. For such delivery of new programs, review will be through the full Graduate Council curricular review process.

*Extended graduate degree programs are those that are extended from the University Park campus or other approved graduate center (Behrend College, Great Valley School of Graduate Professional Studies, Capital College, College of Medicine) to another University location.

**Off-campus degree programs are those offered at a non-University location (e.g., World Campus, corporate facility, school district, etc.), which includes both programs delivered in a traditional face-to-face format and those delivered at a distance.

***To determine whether a program change proposal is necessary, consider the following: delivery of any graduate (500- and 800-level) course to students at an off-campus location, either in face-to-face instruction or through distance delivery technologies, requires academic approval as noted below.

Up to three existing graduate courses may be offered to students at an off-campus location with approval from the chair of the Graduate Council Committee on Programs and Courses and the Dean of the Graduate School through an expedited process; see guidelines and request form for the Expedited Review Process for Limited Off-Site Course Offerings.

Approval to offer four existing graduate courses up to half of the course credits required for completion of the degree to students at an off-campus location requires submission of a program change proposal by the graduate program to offer a blended program.

Approval to offer more than half of the course credits required for completion of the degree to students at an off-campus location requires submission of a program change proposal by the graduate program to offer the degree program off-site.

Note - These guidelines should be used in concert with "Residency and Related Policies for Off-Campus Graduate Programs."
Common Requirements for New Extended or New Off-Campus Degree Programs and Extended or Off-Campus Delivery of Existing Degree Programs:

- Justification statement including: 1) evidence of demand for the program in the new location, with market survey data if appropriate; 2) the projected size of the program and its anticipated duration; 3) evidence concerning the academic unit's ability to offer a quality program in an off-campus environment; 4) a statement demonstrating the impact of the proposed new program or off-campus delivery of an existing program on other programs (undergraduate and graduate) offered by the academic unit (and in particular, on faculty load), as well as on programs offered by other units; and 5) a statement indicating fiscal responsibility for the program.

- A program description in a format for the Graduate Bulletin that includes the following: 1) a statement of admission requirements, e.g., standardized test scores, GPA, recommendations, etc. (Note - Admissions criteria for off-campus degree programs must be the same as those for the same degree program offered to students in residence); 2) complete degree requirements; 3) a list of required courses. In addition, a description of the course sequence and typical scheduling pattern should be provided, but need not be part of the Bulletin description. For proposals involving off-campus delivery of existing degree programs, if any changes to admission or degree requirements are being proposed as a result of off-campus delivery, a side-by-side comparison of the existing program requirements and the revised requirements must be provided, along with a statement justifying all proposed revisions; such proposals will undergo the full Graduate Council curricular review process.

- A statement demonstrating how the essential elements of residency (as defined in "Residency and Related Policies for Off-Campus Graduate Programs") will be achieved for off-campus programs. Three years after program inception a report must be made to the Graduate Council Committee on Programs and Courses that provides evidence concerning how the essential elements of residency have actually been incorporated into the program and demonstrates that high-quality graduate education has been delivered in the off-campus program (see Reporting Checklist for Programs Approved to be Offered Off-site/Online). During this three-year period, the Graduate School is charged with monitoring program delivery and quality.

- Program operation and maintenance including: 1) identification of a program director who must be a member of the graduate faculty in the academic unit offering the degree; 2) evidence of how academic advising, counseling, and learning support will be provided to students; 3) description of available facilities including research facilities, libraries, technological resources, etc.; and 4) a statement regarding any technological resources and related specifications that students will be expected to have (e.g., laptop and specifications for operating system, camera, etc.; internet access specifications; etc.).

- Written responses indicating consultation with other units affected by or that potentially would have interest in the proposed program. In addition, if the program is to be offered online or use technology as the primary delivery method to serve off-campus students, the World Campus must be consulted at the earliest possible stage of program development and a letter of consultation must be provided from the World Campus Director of Academic Affairs for Graduate Programs.

- Off-campus programs must incorporate a mechanism for assessing program quality through student surveys for feedback at critical milestones in the program as well as a student exit questionnaire at the time of graduation.
Additional Requirements for New Extended or New Off-Campus Degree Programs

- Objectives of the program including: 1) an explanation of how the new program meets the educational objectives and/or strengthens existing programs of the college(s) and the University; 2) an explanation of why this program is appropriate for off-campus delivery; 3) a description of what students may expect to accomplish through the new program; and 4) a statement of how the new offering does not unnecessarily duplicate other degree programs.
- A list of new courses to be established as a part of the new degree program.

Additional Requirements for Online Graduate Courses and Graduate Degree Programs, Hybrid Graduate Courses, and Blended Graduate Degree Programs

Information technology available in the 21st century has presented higher education with a host of new educational opportunities. Accompanying them, however, are a host of potential issues. Key among them is the issue of maintaining a high standard of instructor-student engagement in graduate education. In determining the standards for instructor-student engagement, a number of factors need to be taken into account.

- Technology-enhanced graduate education can come in many forms, such as: resident courses supplemented by information technology applications; blended learning formats that involve some resident and some online students in the same “classroom”; completely online courses.
- Online education does not necessarily mean asynchronous and self-paced learning, or the absence of instructor-student interaction.
- While technology provides myriad opportunities to enhance education, it is up to the instructor and standards groups to choose the best way to deploy the technology.

For students enrolled in off-campus degree programs, and eligible for and seeking federal financial aid, the Federal Register[1] requires “significant instructor-initiated interaction” for courses to qualify as distance education (versus correspondence courses), including online courses. Proposals that involve distance-delivery of courses must describe the kinds of instructor-initiated interaction that will occur in each course, including: mode of communication, frequency of communication, and expectations for student responses. Proposals must describe all student course deliverables and graded artifacts for the course. Proposals also must describe any special considerations needed in order to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (for example, audio or video content or interactive web content).


The following sites provide further relevant information:
Graduate Degree Programs Bulletin
Articles of Authority, Bylaws, and Standing Rules of Graduate Council
Fulfilling the Essential Elements of Residency in Off-Campus Graduate Degree Programs

The intent of this document is to encourage creative ways of addressing student and community needs in off-campus graduate degree programs, while ensuring that such graduate degree programs maintain academic standards parallel to those of more traditional programs. For the seven essential elements of residency, alternative techniques and technologies are suggested as ways of providing in off-campus graduate degree programs benefits comparable to traditional residency.

A glossary of terms related to e-learning and distance education is available through the World Campus website.

Element 1: Interaction between faculty members and students above and beyond direct instruction

The objectives of out-of-class interaction include socializing students to their professional fields, providing a broad exposure to developments in the disciplines, supporting the students in their academic programs and career and professional development, and building a community of scholars and professionals. On campus, these objectives are typically met through advising sessions with faculty members and through participation in a variety of informal and formal events in which students and faculty can share ideas and experiences.

Techniques for achieving interaction include

Mentoring, academic counseling, and career counseling. Faculty members can offer one-to-one advice and counsel on a range of academic and professional issues beyond the scope of a specific course. Advisers can provide academic and career-related counseling.

Off-campus example: Mentoring and counseling can be conducted via a variety of means assisted by technology, including email, audioconference, or videoconference. If a course uses interactive video, the faculty member can arrange for the video connection to remain open after class to permit video-based office hours.
Open discussions. Faculty members can arrange for open discussion of ideas and issues related to the professional field but not limited to specific course content. Discussions can be moderated or unmoderated.

Off-campus example: Open discussions can be conducted in real-time chat areas online or as threaded (topic-specific) discussions using online conferencing applications or social media. They can also be conducted via audioconference or structured as additions to videoconferences, for example.

Non-class lectures and seminars. Lectures and departmental or interdepartmental seminars presented by other faculty members or visiting scholars offer students opportunities to interact with faculty representing a range of knowledge and perspectives.

Off-campus example: Technology-assisted conferencing via a variety of means (e.g., audiconference, videoconference, podcast) allows faculty members to provide off-campus students opportunities to interact with specialists from either the campus or around the world. The guest speaker can provide an advance set of readings for discussion or make an online presentation, then be available to answer questions or participate in online discussions over a period of several days.

Element 2: Interaction between peers (i.e., among students in a given program)

The primary objective of interaction among students in a given program is to permit students to share and benefit from the diverse social and educational experiences other students bring into the program. In a resident program the students are able to benefit socially and educationally from interaction and shared experiences in classes as well as other activities, including student- and campus-sponsored events and organizations. Resident students also have the advantage of exposure to interaction with students in other disciplines on campus through classes and campus events.

Techniques for achieving this type of interaction include

Collaborative work groups. Group or team projects allow students to pool their varied knowledge, skills, and experiences in solving a content-based problem or in developing a course-specific project. Collaborative groups can be monitored or facilitated by a faculty member or graduate teaching assistant.

Off-campus example: Technology can be used to connect and support synchronous or asynchronous group collaboration on case-study preparation, project development, class presentations, etc. Audioconferencing, for example, can connect students at different sites for real-time development and presentation of a variety of collaborative projects including debates and panel presentations.

Peer counseling. Senior graduate students can provide advice on academic issues such as preparation for exams and administrative procedures. They can also provide important support
for less-experienced students by offering encouragement and advice relating to the challenges of juggling multiple roles and responsibilities.

**Off-campus example:** A variety of technology-assisted media can provide students in a program with synchronous or asynchronous opportunities to interact with other students who have successfully coped with a variety of graduate student experiences. Interactions can also be scheduled via telephone conversations.

**Discipline-based student clubs and inter-disciplinary social organizations.** Student clubs give graduate students in a particular field of study an opportunity to meet and mix with peers who share similar academic interests and goals. Organizations that include graduate students from a range of disciplines offer a chance to socialize or otherwise interact with peers representing a variety of backgrounds and experiences.

**Off-campus example:** Students can use technology to form discussion groups based on mutual interests, whether academic or social. Social media sites can support the exchange of information among students interested in a particular area of study or in a particular hobby or pastime.

**Element 3: Access to information and instructional resources (such as libraries, laboratories, and research facilities)**

The objective of providing access to information and instructional resources is to expand the educational experiences afforded to the students beyond what can be provided by instructors. For most resident students, this provision can be assumed because graduate programs are generally structured around information resources available on the campus on which the program originates.

**Techniques for achieving this access include**

**Providing access to content experts other than the program's instructors.** Inviting guest lecturers to a class or outside experts to campus to offer seminars or workshops enriches the learning experience by providing other perspectives on or extended knowledge of topics or subject areas.

**Off-campus example:** A variety of means assisted by technology, such as videoconferencing, for example, offer ways to connect students directly to extra-institutional content experts. Online seminars and workshops with experts around the world, structured and facilitated by the instructor, greatly expand the geographic range from which these experts can be drawn.

**Providing access to a broad range of discipline-specific and interdisciplinary resources.** Libraries and other repositories of information complement the information and knowledge provided in the classroom. From these and other sources students gather the raw materials they need to develop a personal knowledge base and a coherent approach to their field of study.

**Off-campus example:** DVDs, online searches, and electronic connections to library and other data collections offer access to vast collections of data and information. Course Home Pages can
offer course-specific resources or direct students to related sources of information. Students can combine these resources with others available onsite and with course content to enhance learning and expand their knowledge base.

**Providing access to research facilities.** Research projects introduce students to the ways in which knowledge in their fields is constructed and validated. The research process gives students a way to participate in the discovery of new knowledge and opportunities to integrate what is learned in the classroom with what is learned empirically.

*Off-campus example:* Often students in off-campus programs are pursuing professional master’s degrees in a field in which they are currently employed. In such cases, their work environment offers opportunities both for conducting original research and for putting the results of that research into practice. Such "situated" research and practice provides an excellent way for students to integrate classroom knowledge with new knowledge gained from research and practice.

**Element 4: Exposure to and socialization in the field of study**

The objective of exposure to and socialization in the field of study is to provide students with a range of educational experiences that introduce them to the language and issues of their disciplines. Seminar series, workshops, research exhibitions, discussions with professional peers, informal departmental activities, and other shared experiences serve this purpose for resident students.

**Techniques for achieving this socialization include**

**Seminars.** Seminars can introduce students to current issues of research and/or practice and provide a forum for interaction with colleagues within the student's field.

*Off-campus example:* Groups of peers can use a variety of means assisted by technology to discuss a seminar topic introduced by an outside expert or a member of the group. Discussion can be synchronous or, carried out over a period of days.

**Skill-enhancement workshops.** Workshops on specific aspects of professional practice, such as writing for publication or designing effective conference presentations, offer students opportunities to build skills necessary to actively contribute to their fields.

*Off-campus example:* Faculty or practicing professionals can present skills workshops via a variety of means assisted by technology, including audioconference, videoconference, or podcasts, for example. Depending on the requirements of the content, both presentation and interaction can be either synchronous or asynchronous.

**Research displays.** Exhibitions or displays of in-process or completed research allow students to get an overview of the types and areas of investigation being conducted in their fields. These activities can facilitate networking with those who share students' research interests or suggest possible directions for personal research.
Off-campus example: Students can develop multi-media "poster-sessions" of their research for display in cyberspace. They can also view the results of others' research and react to/discuss the displays over a period of days or weeks via a variety of means assisted by technology.

Discussions with professional peers. Discussion with peers at conferences or other meetings of discipline-related professional groups allows students to exchange ideas and network with practicing professionals in their fields.

Off-campus example: Off-campus students can be encouraged to participate in regional and/or national conferences and professional society meetings in their geographic areas. Additionally, faculty members can structure and facilitate student participation in the online pre- and post-conference discussions that are associated with many academic conferences.

Element 5: Ready access to suitable academic advising and support services

The objective of ready access to suitable academic advising and support services is to ensure that students are receiving the guidance and personal support required to complete their programs in a successful and timely manner. Resident students can take advantage of their presence on campus to schedule meetings with program advisers or career counselors, if necessary.

Techniques for achieving this support include

Meetings with an academic adviser or student support staff. Academic advisers offer guidance in establishing and completing a course of study that reflects a student's academic goals. Faculty members or student support staff can notify students of and explain departmental and institutional policies that govern advanced academic programs.

Off-campus example: Faculty or staff advisers can conduct individual academic counseling sessions via a variety of means assisted by technology (audioconference, videoconference, social media, etc.). General policies and procedures should be posted on program websites for access at the students’ convenience, and support related to administrative functions (registration, payments, grades, etc.) should be available online as well as by telephone or email. The faculty member with general responsibility for the off-campus program should be available by telephone or email during specified “office hours” to answer questions or direct students to the right source of information about broader issues relating to a student's program.

Meetings with a career counselor. Career counselors provide advice relating to entry into or advancement in fields related to the student's course of study.

Off-campus example: Students at remote sites can meet with career counselors in a variety of ways assisted by technology, including telephone, email, or videoconferencing sessions. General information such as position listings, information for developing resumes, tips for job interviews, etc., should be posted on program websites for access at the students’ convenience.

Element 6: Contribution of graduate students to the degree program, the college, and the University
The objective of contributions from graduate students of diverse backgrounds is to share the social and educational experiences students bring into the program, the college, and the University to the benefit of other students, faculty, and the University overall. In a resident program this is made possible through interactions of students, faculty, and other University personnel in classes and other formal and informal events.

**Techniques for facilitating student contributions include**

**Introduction of new students.** Programs use a variety of methods to introduce new students to returning students and to faculty members. "Veteran" students can interview new students in order to identify perspectives and contributions that these students bring to the program or to the University as a whole. This personal and professional information can then be disseminated via the program’s informational materials.

*Off-campus example:* Program or departmental newsletters with new-student information can be disseminated to students and faculty via a variety of technology-assisted means. Programs also may develop web pages that include information about the professional interests and contributions of both new and continuing students, and students can develop personal web pages or social media sites through which to share information about themselves.

**Informal Seminars.** Many graduate students in professional degree programs bring with them considerable knowledge and experience gained through real-world practice. Informal seminars offer opportunities to exchange knowledge and engage in peer networking around topics of mutual professional interest.

*Off-campus example:* Technology allows students to conduct real-time presentation and discussion of perspectives gained through previous educational experiences or in professional practice. Many conferencing services can support an asynchronous seminar format, with new students posting information and then responding to queries or facilitating related discussions.

**Element 7: Identification with Penn State**

The objective of identification with Penn State is to provide students with a unique educational experience that reflects the history, reputation, personnel, and resources of Penn State. In resident programs, this objective is met by students’ presence on a Penn State campus or campuses and exposure to Penn State traditions.

**Techniques for achieving this identification include**

**Formation of connections through initial and continuing communications.** Official correspondence from the program or the University can establish a sense of institutional identification through welcoming messages and communications of interest about Penn State.

*Off-campus example:* Like their on-campus counterparts, off-campus students receive official communications that establish their relationship with a department and with the University. Prominent display of Penn State logos and other identifying symbols on all communications,
including course materials, can help establish a student's identity as a Penn Stater. Small "gifts" such as Penn State bumper stickers or folders can be useful in establishing a positive feeling toward the institution, as well as giving off-campus students a way to display their institutional affiliation. All Penn State students routinely are assigned Access Accounts, which will ensure that off-campus students are able to interact electronically with the University and its resources.

**Formation and maintenance of connections through University publications.** General University and department-specific publications can be used to keep students informed about people, activities, policies and procedures, etc.

*Off-campus example:* Off-campus students can access University publications online. Some publications, including the student-published newspaper the Daily Collegian, provide informative and entertaining ways of establishing a sense of identification with the University. Programs comprising primarily or entirely off-campus students can develop online materials specifically designed to foster a sense of inclusion in and connection to the sponsoring department and the University.

**Formation and maintenance of relationships with the Penn State chapter of academic or professional societies.** Membership in academic and professional groups fosters a sense of identification both with a larger community of scholars and/or practitioners and with those who have shared or are currently sharing a common academic experience.

*Off-campus example:* Students can be informed of and encouraged to join appropriate academic and professional societies. Off-campus students can find information about the availability and location of chapters in their geographic area online. Programs can also establish a mentoring system whereby Penn State graduates are matched up with current off-campus students in their geographic region for the purpose of helping them connect to local University
POLICY REGARDING STUDENT INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANTS IN GRADUATE (500- AND 800-LEVEL) COURSES

The purpose of this policy is to describe when and how students may assist Graduate Faculty members in the instruction of graduate-level coursework (i.e., 500- and 800-level courses).

When properly supervised, graduate student participation in course instruction is a valuable opportunity for professional development. At the same time, however, graduate student assistance in the instruction of a graduate course must not be allowed to compromise the curricular goals, level of instruction, course environment, student evaluation fairness, or student confidence in the fairness of their evaluation. To insure these things, this policy exists to provide positive guidance to graduate (500- and 800-level) course instructors and graduate program heads on the roles that graduate students may play in course instruction, the qualifications that students playing these roles must have, and the supervision that the graduate course instructor of record must provide when graduate students assist in graduate course instruction.

Under no circumstances are undergraduate students permitted to assist in the instruction or assessment of a graduate course. Undergraduate students may be enlisted to provide clerical support for the Instructor of Record, or assist in the support of special IT infrastructure for a graduate class. When employed in this way, undergraduate students must meet the same qualifications, and be supervised in the same way, as would a graduate student assigned the same role.

For the purpose of this document we refer to graduate students formally assigned or informally requested to assist in the instruction of graduate-level courses as Graduate Student Instructional Assistants (GSIA).

The proposed policy has four elements:

- Responsibilities of the Instructor of Record in courses with GSIA.
- Qualifications of GSIA.
- Allowed GSIA roles.
- Responsibilities of GSIA.

Requests for exceptions to any element of this policy must be made to the Graduate School. Only the Graduate School may grant exceptions to this policy or any of its parts.

Preamble

This policy applies to the use of graduate students asked to assist in the instruction of 500- or 800-level graduate courses. Its purpose is to clarify the limited roles that graduate
students may play and the additional responsibilities of the Graduate Faculty members who are the Instructors of Record in these courses.

This policy applies only to the use of graduate students to assist in graduate course instruction. Nothing in this policy is meant to restrict the kind of assignments or coursework asked of students enrolled in a graduate course. For example, this policy does not apply when enrolled students are assigned, as part of the course pedagogy, to lead a class discussion. This policy does apply, however, when a graduate student not enrolled in the course is asked to provide a guest lecture or lead a class discussion as part of the course instruction.

The respective Head of each graduate program is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.

Responsibilities of the Instructor of Record in Courses with GSIs

The Instructor of Record, who must be a member of the Graduate Faculty or approved in advance to teach 500- or 800-level courses, is always fully responsible for all aspects of a course and its instruction. When GSIs assist in the instruction of a graduate course, the Instructor of Record has additional responsibilities related to the involvement the GSIs assigned to the course.

- GSIA Qualifications: GSIs must be qualified for their role in any course for which they provide assistance. The Instructor of Record is responsible for verifying the qualifications of all GSIs relative to their role in course instruction. The necessary general qualifications are described in Qualifications of GSIs below, with additional role-specific qualifications outlined in the Allowed GSIA Roles section. The general and role-specific qualifications outlined in this policy are to be considered the minimum requirements for GSIs. It is the responsibility of the instructor of record to ensure that GSIs are fluent in the material of the course for which they will provide assistance and, as such, the instructor of record can, at his or her discretion, impose more rigorous qualifications.

- Supervision: The course Instructor of Record is responsible for actively supervising all GSIs involved with the course. Prior to beginning their duties, all GSIs shall meet with the Instructor of Record, who will describe the scope and limitations of their duties and set expectations for the course. Additional role-specific supervision is described in Allowed GSIA Roles below.

- Managing Conflicts of Interest: The Instructor of Record is responsible for identifying and managing any conflicts of interest between GSIs, or between GSIs and enrolled graduate students, that may affect any aspect of the course or its instruction. Conflicts of interest include, in particular, but are not limited to the following:
  - A prior or current romantic relationship;
  - A prior or current friendship;
Prior or current roommates;

Prior or current lab- or office-mates;

A prior or current history of conflict;

In cases where it is identified that a GSIA assigned to a course has a conflict of interest with a graduate student who is enrolled in the course, the Instructor of Record must assign all grading of work for the enrolled student to another GSIA assigned to the course, or grade that student’s work him/herself.

To assist in identifying conflicts of interest, graduate students being considered to serve as GSIA for a graduate course must complete and sign a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form (URL for downloading Form) and submit to the head of the unit offering the graduate course at least two weeks prior to the start of the semester in which the course is offered. If any student with whom the GSIA has a conflict of interest registers for the course (or a conflict arises with any student in the class otherwise) after the start of the semester, the GSIA should immediately disclose the conflict by submitting a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form as instructed above.

Consult the Assistant Dean for Graduate Student Affairs in the Graduate School for advice about managing conflicts of interest.

Qualifications of GSIA

All GSIA, regardless of the role they play in course instruction, must meet the qualifications described in this section. In addition to these qualifications there may be other role-specific qualifications. These additional, role-specific qualifications are described in the ALLOWED GSIA ROLES section of this policy.

- No GSIA may be enrolled in the course to which he/she is assigned, or with which he/she is asked to assist.

- Prior to beginning their duties, but no less recently than one year prior to the end of their course assignment, all GSIA shall review the FERP (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) Tutorial provided by the Office of the University Registrar, and pass the associated FERPA quiz.

- In general, a graduate student considered to serve as a GSIA should ideally be an advanced or senior doctoral student who has completed the required coursework for his/her degree program, to assure mastery of the discipline, as well as to avoid conflicts whereby a peer enrolled in a course in which the GSIA will be grading
assignments/assessments might then have the roles reversed and be in a position to grade the work of the former GSIA.

Allowed GSIA Roles

Qualified GSIAs may provide limited assistance in the instruction of a course while under the active supervision of the course Instructor of Record. General qualifications required of all GSIAs, regardless of the role they play, are described in policy section QUALIFICATIONS of GSIAS. This policy section describes the roles GSIAs may play, the required supervision, and any additional qualifications that a GSIA filling a specific role must have.

The roles that GSIAs may play are limited to the following:

- Performing clerical tasks, research, or IT support associated with course instruction.
- Marking course assignments and examinations for later review by the Instructor of Record or other designated member of the Graduate Faculty.
  - Role specific qualifications: GSIAs who mark assignments or exam shall have previously passed the course or equivalent with a ‘B’ or better.
  - Supervision: The Instructor of Record is responsible for meeting with GSIAs assigned this role to provide and discuss the grading rubric or its equivalent, and for verifying that the rubric has been correctly applied.
  - Restriction: A GSIA cannot grade any single assignment constituting more than one-third of the entire course grade.
- Drafting a contribution to an assessment instrument (e.g., assignment, exam question, laboratory report) for review by the Instructor of Record or other designated member of the Graduate Faculty.
  - Role specific qualification: GSIAs who draft assignment or exam questions shall have previously passed the course or an equivalent with a ‘B’ or better.
  - Supervision: When a GSIA is assigned this role, the Instructor of Record is responsible for providing the GSIA with the specific goals associated with the assessment instrument and expectations for the GSIA’s contribution to it.
- Supervising or conducting course discussion sections, laboratory sections, or quiz or other non-lecture sections associated with the course.
Role specific qualifications: GSIAs assigned this role shall have previously passed the course or an equivalent course with a ‘B’ or better.

Supervision: GSIAs assigned to supervise or conduct course discussion sections, laboratory sections, quiz or other non-lecture sections shall meet with the Instructor of Record weekly to review the previous week’s meetings and discuss course goals for the following week’s meetings.

- Consulting with enrolled students and answering their questions (e.g., during office hours).
  
  Role specific qualifications: GSIAs assigned this role shall have previously passed the course or equivalent course with a ‘B’ or better.

  Supervision: GSIAs assigned to any of these roles shall meet with the Instructor of Record weekly to review the previous week’s meetings and discuss course goals for the following week’s meetings.

- Preparing and delivering one or more guest lectures as part of the course curriculum.
  
  Role specific qualifications: GSIAs asked to prepare or deliver any guest lectures as part of the course curriculum must

  - Be expert, at the level of the course, in the material for which they are responsible. For 500–level courses, expertise is determined by virtue of the GSIA’s research. For 800–level courses, expertise is determined by appropriate professional experience.

  - Have formal experience in teaching (for example, in an undergraduate course).

  Supervision: When a GSIA fulfills this role, the Instructor of Record is responsible for meeting with the GSIA and defining the scope and level of the lecture(s) to be delivered.

  Allowance: No more than 10% of the total lectures for a course may be provided by GSIAs.

  For purposes of professional development of the GSIA delivering guest lectures in a graduate course, within the parameters described above, student feedback, as well as evaluative feedback by the instructor of record or other graduate faculty member with expertise in the course content, should be provided to the GSIA wherever possible.

The roles described above are the only roles that GSIAs may play in the instruction or support of a graduate course. For the purpose of clarification only, the following are examples of duties for which GSIAs may not be assigned responsibility:
• The instructional content of the entire course.

• Selection of student assignments for a course.

• Planning a course examination.

• Unsupervised or un-reviewed grading of any evaluation instrument

• Determining the final course grade for students.

• Adjudicating any conflict of interest or concerns regarding grading or guest lecturing by another GSIA.

Responsibilities of GSIA

GSIA are responsible to the Instructor of Record for the tasks assigned to them.

Prior to beginning their duties, GSIA are responsible for meeting with the Instructor of Record, or another designated member of the Graduate Faculty affiliated with the course, to clarify their duties and associated expectations.

GSIA are responsible for informing the Instructor of Record of any conflicts of interest that might interfere, or be perceived to interfere, with the performance of their duties.
Graduate Council Curriculum Report

The Graduate Council Curriculum Report (GCCR), which includes all graduate program curricular proposals approved through the Graduate Council curricular review process, is published 12 times each calendar year.

Questions/comments regarding the GCCR or its contents may be directed to the Director of Graduate Education Administration.

March 11, 2015

No graduate program proposals have been approved through the Graduate Council curricular review process for publication in this edition of the Graduate Council Curriculum Report.

Note: Graduate course proposals approved through the Graduate Council curricular review process, as well as information about postbaccalaureate/graduate credit certificates approved by college/school administrators for graduate education, are published in the Senate Curriculum Report.