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Faculty Senate Bill 051.11/12: Graduate Assistant Allocations

Armstrong Atlantic State University

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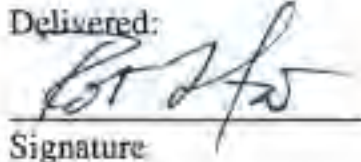
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Armstrong Atlantic State University
Faculty Senate Bill 051.11/12: Graduate Assistant Allocations

Presidential Action

Delivered:



Signature

10/25/11

Date

Approve: _____

Disapprove: _____

Remand: _____

Comments: (please attach an additional sheet if necessary)

Please see attached comments regarding report to be delivered at Faculty Senate Meeting of 1/23/12.

Signature:



Date:

1/23/12

Dr. Linda M. Bleicken, President
Armstrong Atlantic State University

Graduate Assistant Allocations

Whereas in the present Graduate Assistant distribution structure, no priority is given to the graduate programs;

Whereas the Graduate Affairs Committee's Ad Hoc Committee to investigate the distribution of Graduate Assistantships on campus has determined that Graduate Assistantship priority should reside with graduate programs;

Whereas the placement of Graduate Assistantships in graduate programs enhances the program and recruiting for such program;

Whereas many graduate programs have special needs that cannot be met without graduate assistants;

We ask the following processes and policy changes be adopted immediately:

- i. Applications for graduate assistantships would be completed by graduate programs wishing to have a Graduate Assistant, with a review committee assigned charged with ensuring that minimal criteria are met and that the Graduate Assistants are used in a manner that advances the educational experience of the student and fulfill a role in the scholarship, teaching or service missions of the university.
- ii. Accomplishment reports would be filed by faculty awarded Graduate Assistantships for the review committee to evaluate at the end of each academic year prior to renewing the Graduate Assistantship for a subsequent year. Members of the review committee should have graduate faculty status. After the Graduate Assistantship needs of the graduate programs are met, a list of others faculty (faculty not with graduate programs) who are awarded graduate assistantships should be circulated to all graduate program coordinators so qualified candidates can be identified in a timely manner, thereby also allowing these assistantships to be used as incentives for recruiting quality graduate students.
- iii. Efforts should be made by persons with the necessary authority to increase the number of Graduate Assistantships available to academic faculty (e.g., compare the number academic program Graduate Assistants with those in Student Affairs).
- iv. The procedure and policies in which tuition waivers are awarded through the Graduate Admission Office should be thoroughly reviewed and adjustments made to better utilize these waivers for student recruitment. Awarding waivers for a limited time for a particular student (i.e., four semesters) and instituting a process to ensure equity across each of the graduate programs is requested.

Graduate Assistant Task Force- Minutes from 9/14/11 meeting

Attendance: Anita Nivens, Becky da Cruz, Regina Rahimi, Melanie Mirande, Bryan Riemann

We met on 9/14 at 1:30 PM. The recommendations as a result of the meeting are as follows:

- a. Application and Award Notification Recommendations:
 - i. Recommend moving up the dates for being awarded GAs to the end of the fall semester to assist with recruiting. We recommend aiming for an October 15 application deadline for this coming year with notification by December 1.
 - 1. Rationale: this will allow program coordinators to better utilize GA for student recruitment.
- b. Application Recommendations:
 - i. Remove the "Type of Assistantship" and checkboxes from application and prompt applicants to describe the percentage of time GA would spend doing research, teaching and other duties.
 - 1. Rationale: Because some GA perform mixed duties, this will allow the applicant to more accurately describe the expected duties.
 - ii. Change "Department" to "Program" at the top of the application
 - 1. Rationale: This change is to be consistent with the GA program philosophy recommendations we are making (see next section).
- c. Graduate Assistant Program and Allocation Philosophy Recommendations:
 - i. Adopt the standard that graduate programs have initial priority over graduate assistant allocations. There are currently 17 graduate assistantships that are typically available each year; with 14 current graduate programs this would, at minimum, allow three graduate assistantship available for applications at large. If past trends continue, it is not expected that all 14 programs will always apply for a graduate assistant position, so it is likely several more assistantships would be available for the campus at large.
 - 1. Rationale: Currently, the relatively few graduate assistantships that are available are open to any faculty or staff member. This has resulted in some graduate programs being excluded from having a single student being awarded a graduate assistantship. In addition, many graduate programs have special needs that cannot be met without graduate assistants. Not only does this impact a programs ability to use a graduate assistantship for recruitment, it has also left some graduate programs with a void in their ability conduct program evaluation, research activities that impact faculty and students affiliated with the program, etc. By adopting this standard, equity across all programs would be ensured.
 - ii. Graduate assistantships should be used for graduate student recruitment as much as possible.

- iii. Applications for graduate assistantships would still need to be completed by the programs wishing to have a graduate assistant, with a review committee assigned still charged with ensuring that minimal criteria are met and that the graduate assistants are used in manners that advance the educational experience of the student and fulfill a role in the scholarship, teaching or service missions of the university.
 - 1. Rationale: This would contribute to avoiding some of the issues in the past such as programs using graduate assistants for clerical and secretarial duties. These sorts of activities are better suited to be assigned to work-study students.
- iv. Accomplishment reports should be filed by faculty awarded graduate assistantships for the review committee to evaluate at the end of each academic year prior to renewing the graduate assistantship for a subsequent year.
 - 1. Rationale: This would contribute to avoiding some of the issues in the past such as programs using graduate assistants for clerical and secretarial duties. These sorts of activities are better suited to be assigned to work-study students.
- v. Members of the review committee should have graduate faculty status.
 - 1. Rationale: Active graduate faculty members are optimally suited to evaluate what activities are appropriate and would enhance a graduate student's education.
- vi. After the graduate assistantship needs of the graduate programs are met, a list of others faculty (faculty not with graduate programs) who are awarded graduate assistantships should be circulated to all graduate program coordinators so qualified candidates can be identified in a timely manner, thereby also allowing these assistantships to be used as incentives for recruiting quality graduate students.
 - 1. Rationale: This again will help meet our recommendation that graduate assistantships be used to recruit excellent graduate students as much as possible.
- vii. We recommend that efforts are made by persons with the necessary authority to increase the number of graduate assistantships available to academic faculty.
 - 1. As stated in our previous minutes, it appears that currently student affairs has 15 GAs (10 in student affairs and 5 in the rec center) and athletics has 11 GAs. Academic programs do not have the same ability to raise revenue by increasing student fees. The fact that nonacademic units on campus have been allocated graduate assistantships further dilutes the resources available to faculty and academic programs. Further, it appears that student affairs and athletics are given graduate tuition waivers once they come up with the GA stipends. It is essential that this same practice also be available to faculty (i.e., faculty be allocated a tuition waiver once stipend money is raised). Again, it is

important to note that the costs of the waivers for student affairs and athletics is greater by 9 tuition waivers than what is available to faculty.

- viii. The procedure and policies in which tuition waivers are awarded through the graduate admission office should thoroughly reviewed and adjustments made to better utilize these waivers for student recruitment. Initial specific recommendations include awarding the waivers for a limited time for a particular student (i.e., four semesters) and that a process be developed to ensure equity across each of the graduate programs.
- d. Plan to move forward:
- i. We would like the GAC to review our recommendations and if deemed appropriate endorse them with a vote at the October meeting.
 - ii. Following approval, our task force will work on developing a draft evaluation rubric that would be used by the graduate assistantship review committee. The goal would be to have a rubric that could be used this year. It is likely that this rubric will be a work in progress and may require several iterations after it is used by the committee.