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Policy on Terminal Degrees

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Senate Executive Committee Request for Information

Policy on Terminal Degrees

Submitted by Heidi Altman

10/31/2018

**Question(s):**

What is Georgia Southern's policy on JD/MD degrees? Is the JD/MD degree considered to be a terminal degree or its equivalent?

**Rationale:**

Faculty members at Georgia Southern have diverse educational backgrounds and include those holding JD/MD degrees (without the PhD degree). Both degrees are terminal degrees in the respective fields, yet there is no clear policy at GSU that would indicate if the JD/MD is a terminal degree or its equivalent. At the same time, the 2018-1019 Faculty Handbook Section 311 (page 43) states the "terminal degree or its equivalent is required for promotion to associate and full professor" which would indicate that a Georgia Southern faculty member with a JD or MD, who was promoted to these academic ranks, holds a terminal degree or its equivalent. The language seems ambiguous and seems to exclude these faculty members from qualifying for university level leadership positions that do not specifically list JD or MD in the required qualifications.

**Response:**

11/9/2018:

The SEC agreed that this request should include the scope of terminal degrees, not only the two mentioned here. For instance, the DrPH, MFA, EdD, and DNS (which are all offered at GSU) as well as professional degrees are terminal degrees in law, medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, and theology are recognized by the USG. The SEC approves this to move to the VP of Academic Affairs and the VP of Human Resources for clarification.

Minutes, 11-270-2018: RFI on Policy on Terminal Degrees (page 13)

Heidi Altman (CBSS) reported. The issue, according to Candace Griffith (Provost's Office), is that we don't have a list of terminal degrees. What determines terminal degree for promotion and tenure? Griffith responded that we ask whether a candidate could get a higher degree. We defer to department chair and dean to make the case rather than having a hard and fast rule. Credentialing and promotion are handled differently.