

GRADUATE ASSISTANT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, May 3rd, 2018

9:00-10:30 am

1. *(Follow-up from spring '17 and fall '17 meetings)* Tuition remission language on GA offer letters

- a. What have you done to ensure that departments are making crystal clear to the students they employ that those student will need to pay the difference between their tuition remission and their department's differential tuition?
- b. What are you doing to audit offer letters to ensure they aren't making promises that violate Grad School policies?

2. Collaborative data gathering

In the course of the four semesterly-GAAC meetings, it has become apparent that we have a data problem. The Grad School lacks a comprehensive, quantitative and qualitative, understanding of the condition of graduate employees. GAAC has attempted to gather this data, the grad school has generally not, and GAAC's numbers and qualitative data are often called into question. Even when the grad review committee reached similar conclusions to GAAC's, those were no acted on.

- a. How can we remedy this going forward to ensure that you are well-informed about the status of graduate employees with data you'll believe and act on?
- b. The 4G survey was shrouded in secrecy for some reason. We would like to collaborate on data gathering, but this left an unnecessarily bad taste in our mouths. What will you do to ensure that data gathering is genuinely collaborative?

3. *(Follow-up from last several semesters' meetings)* Statements of Mutual Expectation

- a. There have been many commitments to communicate what SMEs are by the provost and the previous Deans, and yet we find supervisors and department leaders still unclear. What are you doing to make sure **all** supervisors understand what SMEs are, and how they will be completed?
 - i. We would like to know concrete steps, and where
- b. What are you doing to make sure that the new policy language is followed, and initiated by supervisors rather than graduate employees?
- c. How will you be auditing the process? How will you ensure that grad employees are not being pressured to sign SMEs to which they do not agree?

4. Reoccurring core issues

a. Salaries

- i. (Follow-up from fall meeting and spring meeting with Dean Fetter) What will the university do to make increasing graduate salaries a MD legislative lobbying priority?
- ii. We are thankful that the legislature gave us a COLA, but that COLA does not even offset the inflation since salaries were last raised. This is a competitiveness problem for UMD, as well as a livability problem for all of us. Aside from the legislature, what are your next steps to bringing grad salaries in line with cost of living?
- iii. (Follow-up from spring '17 and fall '17 meetings) You've talked about increasing non-stipend support for graduate students. What updates are there about these efforts?

b. Hours

- i. Follow-up on spring meeting with Dean Fetter: you had proposed a study to determine how much grad employees were being worked over or under their 20 hours a week, since you doubt our numbers.
 1. What is the status of this study idea?
 2. What timetable will you commit to resolve these abuses of power?
- ii. Follow-up on fall 2017 meeting: We raised the concern that many department were prohibiting students, either explicitly or implicitly, from taking on extra work off campus to make ends meet. What has been done, and will be done, to ensure that departments are not violating the grad school's policy?

5. Grievance procedure changes

- a. When we had our fall meeting, Dean Fetter had just received the recommendations from the grievance committee. When we met with him in February, he said the Graduate Council would be voting on the new policies on Feb. 26.
 - i. Where are these proposals currently?
 - ii. What are you doing to make sure they move forward in a timely fashion?
- b. (Follow-up from spring meeting with Dean Fetter) We've made clear prior to this, and again in meeting with Dean Fetter directly, that the grievance policy is not used because students find it cumbersome, and because it puts power into the hands of those accused of abusing it. What steps are you going to take with the new policies to make sure that graduate employees feel it is affective, and something they can access?

c. (Follow-up from fall '17 meeting) Will you make template grievance forms available and publicize them?

6. Miscellaneous Policy Improvements for Graduates

a. Paid sick leave policy: how will the university be complying with the new law for graduate employees?

