

## School of Graduate Studies and Research

### Grad Act Narrative

#### Student Success Initiatives

**Change in the interpretation of the “I” grade for graduate students:** When a graduate student receives an “I” grade, the number of credit hours for the course and the zero quality points for the “I” grade are calculated into the grade point average. The graduate student’s academic standing will be a function of the resulting grade point average. Although the “I” grade carries the quality point value of zero, it does not assume the qualitative designation of the “F” grade. **The “I” grade alone will NOT result in academic suspension.**

**Change in the “C” grade suspension policy (effective Summer I 2011):** The policy that dictated that a graduate student who accumulated two courses with “C” grades be suspended from the School of Graduate Studies and Research be suspended was removed by the Graduate Council on March 16, 2011. A graduate must maintain a 3.0 GPA. When a graduate student’s GPA falls below 3.0, the rules of academic probation then apply.

Major emphasis is being placed on **graduate student advisement** and the documentation of that process. The school of Graduate Studies and Research recognizes the need to support graduate students’ timely progression to degree and is working with graduate students, faculty, and programs to ensure that all stakeholders understand their roles in the process. During the 2010-2011 fall semester, the Graduate Student Association held an information meeting for graduate students where they reviewed the advisement documents and the timelines related to the process. The graduate dean has also shared this information at department meetings, Graduate Council meetings, and other faculty forums.

The Graduate Council reviewed and **revised the comprehensive examination policy** during the 2007-2008 academic year. Since that time, all graduate programs have revised comprehensive examination processes and procedures to be consistent with the School of Graduate Studies and Research policy. Areas of particular emphasis are the types of support that graduate students can expect from their programs in preparation for the comprehensive examination, the number of attempts allowed, and the grading process.

**The Graduate Student Association was established** in 2009-2010; its first slate of officers was elected for the 2010-2011 academic year. The purpose of the Graduate Student Association the GSAGSU is to unite the graduate students across all graduate programs so that their interests can be represented to the campus and the university administration. Its goals are to:

1. promote academic and career achievement;
2. provide graduate student representation in the student governance process;
3. facilitate graduate student collegiality; and
4. serve as the liaison among graduate students, the School of Graduate Studies and Research, and the University.

## Changes in admission requirements

The GPA requirement for admission to the School of Graduate Studies and Research was changed by the Graduate Council in January 2011 (effective for Summer I, 2011).

**Regular Admission:** For regular admission to the School of Graduate Studies and Research, an applicant must:

- Have a bachelor's or master's degree from an institution which is accredited by an appropriate regional or national accrediting agency;
- Have a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 (4.0 scale) or better on all undergraduate work and a 3.0 overall on graduate work.
- Submit official scores for Graduate Record Examination. Candidates for the MPA Program may submit scores on the GRE or GMAT. Scores must have an administration date no more than five years prior to the date of admission.
- Have three recommendation forms or letters of recommendation on official letterhead sent directly to the School of Graduate Studies and Research from individuals who can attest to the applicant's academic ability, written and oral communication skills, personal and professional ethics, and interpersonal skills.

**Conditional Admission:** Conditional admission may be granted to applicants who fail to meet criteria for regular admission. Conditional admission may be granted to applicants who meet one of the three following criteria:

- a minimum of 2.30 GPA (4.0 scale) on all undergraduate work;
- a minimum 2.65 GPA on the last 60 hours of undergraduate work, **or**

Conditional status may be changed to regular status when the applicant has:

- Earned a "B" average (3.0) in twelve (12) semester hours graduate study with not more than one grade of "C" in any course, and
- The major program has completed the "change of admission status" form and returned it to the School of Graduate Studies.

Some graduate programs have added elements at the program admission level to provide the program with more information that is specific to the content areas (nursing, social work, public administration, and developmental education).

## Efforts to meet workforce development needs

Graduate programs have advisory boards that consist of external stakeholders who provide input to the programs regarding knowledge and skill expectations and needs of prospective employers. In addition to providing valuable input to the programs for curriculum purposes, this also ensures that graduates leave the programs workforce ready. For example: Faculty members teaching in MSN program serve on local and state conference boards. These positions offer them the ability to identify workforce development needs and address the needs in the curriculum. In addition, faculty members attend nursing conferences as well as participate in nursing conferences. Their participation offers them the opportunity to dialogue with other experts in the area, identify workforce needs and devise a plan to address the needs.