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MEMO

TO:                Deans, Department Chairs/Program Heads, and Graduate Coordinators
FROM:          Mark Riley, Dean, The Graduate School
SUBJECT:     Spring 2020 Graduate School Reminders
DATE:           December 6, 2019

**\*Please give careful attention to this memorandum. \***

**Spring 2020 Committee Analysis Report**

Each semester in accordance with university policy concerning the supervisory committee, the Academic Dean of each college is required to certify to the Dean of the Graduate School that the department or college has entered the composition of each student supervisory committee into the online Graduate Student Tracking system (GST) in a timely manner, but no later than the second week of classes in the semester the student intends to defend.

Steps to run report and submit documentation:

1. Each department should run the Committee Composition Analysis report in GST for both doctoral and master’s – thesis track students (not just those registered to graduate).
2. For students whose committees have a status of Pass or Locked, coordinators should confirm with students each semester if their committee has been altered since it was last updated. If departments do not have a committee revision form in use, you may use the attached template for students who need to update their committees on record.
3. If the status column is blank or Fail, coordinators should contact their students to obtain the committee composition and enter the members in GST under the Student Committee tab.
4. Committees must be entered in GST as soon as students form their committee, and updated regularly as changes occur. No changes to the committee should occur after the second week of the semester of defense, except under extenuating circumstances.
5. The Academic Dean or Dean’s Office representative **should** evaluate the reports to determine that all committees are entered in a timely fashion. Only students not far enough along in the program to have a committee formed should remain blank.
6. After the Academic Dean or Dean’s Office representative has confirmed that all of the college’s students have committees, he/she should send an email to James Beck (jpbeck@fsu.edu).
* The email should simply state that the “college’s committee analysis process is complete and all master’s thesis and doctoral dissertation students with formed committees have had their committee compositions entered/updated in GST.”
* Do not include the names or IDs of individual students in the email.
* Committees need to be certified and emails need to be received by **January 31, 2020.**

**Spring 2020 TA Certification Reminder**

Each semester in accordance with the standards outlined in the “University-wide Standards for Graduate Teaching Assistants” at Florida State University, the Academic Dean of each college is required to certify to the Vice President of Faculty Development and Advancement and the Dean of the Graduate School that each graduate student who serves as a graduate teaching assistant (TA) in the classroom or online is academically qualified to teach at the level she or he is appointed and for international graduate teaching assistants (ITA) that they are also competent to teach in spoken English. The necessary qualifications for teaching are stated in the “University-wide Standards for Graduate Teaching Assistants” posted [here](http://policygradschool.fsu.acsitefactory.com/sites/g/files/upcbnu541/files/University%20Wide%20Standards%20for%20Graduate%20Teaching%20Assistants%20FINAL%20120314.pdf). Furthermore, the Policy for Credentialing Faculty Members can be [here](https://regulations.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu486/files/policies/fda/FSU%20Policy%203A-2_20191031.pdf). It delineates the academic qualifications required to be identified and listed as an instructor of record.

An online portal was created within the Graduate Student Tracking (GST) system to facilitate and streamline the certification process. The TA certification submission process is outlined below.

Steps for submission of documentation:

1. Each department should evaluate all of their current and/or new graduate students to determine at which levels each is qualified to teach and if the student meets the requirement for competency in spoken English. This evaluation can be done by running the TA Student Level Evaluation report in GST. Programs should run this report **in advance** to determine the pool of students qualified and therefore eligible to serve as a TA. Please be aware that students eligible at Levels 1 & 2 may not be qualified to serve at Levels 3 & 4. The reports can be run to distinguish the levels. The reports provide essential information for making valid appointments.
2. **Note:** Students who do not meet the criteria for certification are denoted in GST (red “x” visible), and should not be appointed as a TA. A program should reassign such students to a non-TA position if they wish to continue funding them. If a program believes the data is not correct in GST or believes it has a justifiable reason for an exception, it should contact James Beck in The Graduate School.  After the department has confirmed the qualifications and eligibility of their students, appropriate appointments should be made, after which a memo should be sent to the Academic Dean’s Office stating that their TAs are qualified to teach and the TA certification process is complete.
3. The Academic Dean or Dean’s Office representative **should** evaluate the TA certification entries in GST and confirm that the college’s TAs are properly qualified.
4. After the Academic Dean or Dean’s Office representative has confirmed that all of the college’s TAs are qualified, he/she should send an email to James Beck (jpbeck@fsu.edu).
* The email should simply state that the “college’s TA certification process is complete and that all TAs are competent in spoken English and qualified to teach at their level of appointment.”
* Do not include the names or IDs of individual students in the email.
* Please send the email after it has been confirmed that all TAs are certified in GST.
* TAs need to be certified and emails need to be received by **January 10, 2020**

**Graduation Clearances Reminder**

As a reminder, in Fall 2018, The Registrar’s Office revised their graduation clearance procedures for graduate students. It was decided that The Registrar’s Office will continue to check for university-wide requirements for all graduate students; however, they will not be checking for program-specific requirements. As such, moving forward, for graduate students who have applied for graduation, The Registrar’s Office will **NOT** check for the following, as they are deemed program-specific requirements:

* Thesis, defense, or manuscript clearance for non-thesis plan codes
* Comprehensive exam or passing grade on comprehensive exam
* Total hours for degree beyond minimum of 30 hours
* Treatise manuscript clearance (unless in thesis plan code)
* Internship, clinical, recital, or fieldwork hours

\*Given the information above, it is imperative that programs make sure to place their graduate students on the correct track/program plan in Student Central in a timely manner. This is the responsibility of the program. For questions or assistance with this, please contact The Registrar’s Office.

**Dual Degree and Time Extension Request Forms**

Dual degrees are two degrees earned simultaneously when a graduate student is accepted by both departments/programs and a Dual Enrollment Request Form is approved by the appropriate academic deans and the Dean of the Graduate School. There is no formal relationship between the two-degree program requirements in a dual degree situation.

\*As a reminder, Dual Enrollment and Time Extension Request Forms need to be submitted for review and approval at the proper time. It is not appropriate to wait until the student has reached the final semester and applied for graduation to submit these forms for retroactive approval. For example, it would not be appropriate to wait until Summer 2019 to submit a dual enrollment or time extension request form for review/approval, if the student actually needed it back in Spring 2016. It is imperative that units carefully monitor their graduate students and be sure these forms are submitted at the correct time to ensure proper advisement and avoid any delays in graduation clearance.

**Combined and Joint Graduate Pathway Tracking and Promotion**

Each pathway requires an application for admission and is available only to academically talented students, as determined by the program faculty. The policy for combined and joint graduate pathways can be found [here](https://policy.gradschool.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu541/files/Media%20Folder/Files/Combined%20Bachelors_Masters%20and%20Joint%20Graduate%20Pathways.pdf). All programs must code their combined and joint pathway students correctly in Student Central for tracking purposes. I have outlined the technical steps below on how this should be done. Please be sure that the following steps are taken to follow the proper tracking protocol.

\*Another reminder, all colleges and departments should review their internal websites, bulletin language, handbooks and marketing/recruitment materials for accuracy and consistency to be sure that these pathways are being correctly promoted. Please keep in mind that they should not be considered nor referred to as “degree programs,” but rather, as “pathways.” As such, on your website, be sure they are not listed under a degree program subpage. “Dual degrees” are not combined or joint pathways, and this term should not be used to describe a pathway.

Combined Pathway Tracking:

When a student is admitted to a combined pathway, the advising track for the combined pathway should be added in Student Central.

* This should be added to the student’s current Undergraduate Program/Plan stack.
* The Academic Dean’s office should add a row to the Student Program tab similar to adding a second major or changing a major. The Program Action should be PLNC.
* On the Student Plan tab, a row should be added and the Academic Plan of COMBINEAV should be selected. You must ensure that the plan sequence for this new advising track is not “10”.
* Then Save.

Joint Graduate Pathway Tracking:

Joint graduate pathways should have two program/plan stacks active simultaneously with the appropriate joint pathway academic plan code for each. For example, if a student is in the MSW/JD joint pathway, he/she will have a graduate career program/plan stack and a law program/plan stack. The graduate career will have the Social Work/Law plan and the law career will have the Law/Social Work plan. There are specific joint plan codes for each program. If a student has recently been admitted to a joint graduate pathway and you need the additional program/plan stack created, please email the request to RegistrarProcessing@admin.fsu.edu.

Please contact James Beck at (jpbeck@fsu.edu) if you have any questions about the policy and the Registrar’s Office if you require assistance in setting up the program plans in Student Central.

**Graduate Certificate Policy**

It is imperative that units comply with all aspects of the Certificate Policy, especially the requirement that students apply for admission and be accepted as soon as possible (and prior to completing the second course in the program). If a student is accepted into the certificate program, it is the unit’s responsibility thereafter to notify the Registrar’s Office immediately. This is important for tracking and reporting purposes for the university and SACSCOC accreditation. For example, units should not be waiting until a graduate student has reached the final semester and applied for graduation to attempt to admit the student into the certificate program. The certificate policy can be found on the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement’s website [here](https://regulations.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu486/files/policies/fda/FSU%20Policy%203A-1.pdf).

**Substantive Change Policy**

As we prepare for upcoming SACSCOC review, I also want to bring to your attention the revised Substantive Change Policy. University policy requires that we notify SACSCOC of substantive changes. A common substantive change is when we deliver more than 50% of an educational program at an off-campus location or enter into a cooperative academic arrangement with another institution to deliver coursework. Review and approval of a substantive change by SACSCOC requires significant lead-time, often more than 6 months.

The following are our current sites that are approved to offer more than 50% of a degree program:

1. Panama City, FL
2. Republic of Panama
3. Asolo Conservatory in Sarasota (not the Ringling)

**NOTE:** We cannot deliver more than 50% of a degree program to an off-campus location, including coursework that requires students to gather together in one location, without review and approval of a prospectus by SACSCOC. Internships, clinical sites, and practicums are not counted toward the 50%. Also, coursework delivered to an off-campus location in which 25-49% of a degree program can be obtained requires notification, but not approval, by SACSCOC prior to implementation. University policy indicates that no certificate hours may be earned at an off-campus site with the exception of credit earned at Panama City, Florida.

Failure by the university to submit and get approval for substantive changes may result in the loss of federal financial aid. Please contact Ruth Feiock (rsfeiock@fsu.edu) if you have questions about the SACSCOC requirements.

Sincerely,

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Dean, The Graduate School
Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor
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