

Janet Walberg Rankin

Annual Activity Report

Graduate School

Dates included: July 1, 2012- July 1, 2013

Description of appointment:

My appointment is 50% to the graduate school as Associate Dean throughout the year and 50% to my department (*Human Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise*) during the academic year. This was set up as 50% of academic year plus 1.5 months of summer salary for the Graduate School and was operationalized this year by working at the graduate school M-W afternoons, T and F mornings throughout the year.

Duties & accomplishments for Graduate School 2012-2013

A. Courses in Transformative Graduate Education

1. Coordinator of GRAD5004 GTA workshop- final enrollment 633 in Fall 2012

a. Coordinated enrollment-

- a. Worked with Jeremy Sippel to get internal enrollment system functioning as necessary and with the registrar to have our system load the enrollment into Banner system;
- b. Communicated with GPC to use our enrollment system;
- c. Dealt with exceptions or individuals who cannot be present for Phase I of workshop with contracts for alternative plans (~18 students).

b. Invited presenters and developed workshop schedule-

- a. Requested proposals for sessions, organized into schedule, communicated with presenters through Spring, Summer and Fall.
- b. Recruited 15 presenters for Phase I, 56 sessions in Phase II including 16 Ethics in Teaching sessions

c. Did evaluations of presenters in Phase II using survey.vt.edu. Shared results with each presenter and summary with Dean.

d. Worked with Monika Gibson and Student Services to reserve rooms, refreshments and meals for Phase I.

e. Worked with FDI to develop on-line enrollment system for Phase II sessions

f. Coordinated and managed the Scholar site.

g. Responded to frequent queries from GPC, GPD and enrolled students before and during workshop.

h. Worked with the GA who assisted with verification of attendance, recorded attendance, communicated with students, graded assignments.

i. Graded about 1/3 of assignments and did final grades for class.

j. Met with students to develop plans for those who receive "I" in workshop to remediate after the semester.

k. Did an overall survey to get sense of student feedback on course; shared with Dean

- a. Of those who responded to the anonymous final survey, 66% (up from 61% in 2011) rated the class of moderate to excellent value, 31% some value, 3% no value.

b. Of those who responded to the anonymous final survey, 77% either expected to learn something and did or expected the class to be a waste of time but learned more than they expected.

2. Instructor for GRAD5304 Preparing the Future Career Professional
 - a. Refined course syllabus and assignments from previous year
 - b. Developed lectures and in-class activities and led classes on job demographics, searching for and applying for jobs, communication in the workplace, translating your skills into start-up company, dealing with difficult situations in the workplace, leadership vs management, team work, social intelligence, work-life issues.
 - c. Invited relevant speakers related to start-up for profit and nonprofit businesses, importance of diversity in the workplace, ethics (Mark Verneil, Rick Claus, Richard Turner, Steven Darr, Skip Garner).
 - d. Evaluated student assignments and final project.
 - e. Assigned grades for the class.
 - f. Student evaluation score for "overall this instructors teaching was effective" from SPOT instrument was 5.67 out of 6.

- B. Attend and participate in standing committees and commissions
 1. Attend weekly Deans' meeting and staff meeting in Graduate School.
 2. Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies (twice per month)- participated and voted in place of Dean DePauw.
 3. Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies (twice per month)- attended but do not vote.
 4. CARS-CAGS (twice per month meetings plus monthly lunch meeting)- participated as a member.
 5. Member of advisor committee of IMSD grant representing graduate school.

- C. Continuing Education & professional service
 1. Conference of Southern Graduate Schools
 - a. Attended meeting (February 2012 Jacksonville FL)
 2. Virginia Council of Graduate Schools
 - a. Attended meetings (Longwood University, July 2012).
 - b. Contributed to discussions, as needed, related to NSF grant for increasing faculty in STEM fields (VAGEP).

- D. Graduate School programs & policies
 1. Annual progress review of graduate students
 - a. Requested and received submitted reports from departments, worked individually with departments that had questions or needed help in developing a system of evaluation.
 - b. Downloaded and saved the electronic submissions on Graduate School server.
 - c. Worked with Jeremy Sippel to make the process of submission compatible with FERPA.
 2. Coordinator for numerous Graduate School awards: Preston Masters Thesis Awards (3), Outstanding Dissertation Award (2), Graduate Student Teaching Excellence Award (1 winner, one Honorable Mention), Graduate Student Service Excellence Award (1 winner,

one Honorable Mention), Outstanding Graduate Student Awards (one MS and one PhD from each college), Outstanding Interdisciplinary Student Award (1), Outstanding Graduate Alumni Achievement Award (1)

- a. Worked with Monika Gibson and Pat Goodrich to improve forms, communication process, and selection process for awards.
 - b. Invited and coordinated the selection committees for each award (except Outstanding Graduate Student Awards as this done directly and independently by each college)
 - c. Communicated with nominees and winners
 - d. Participated in awards banquets and interviews for PR pieces
3. Began development of an on-line Graduate Teaching Assistant Handbook using Wordpress to replace that last done in 2003. To include headings such as:
 - a. Discussions and Forums about Teaching
 - b. Policies and Procedures
 - c. Roles and Responsibilities of GTA
 - d. Improving and Being Recognized for your Teaching
 4. Assist with Graduate School on-line catalog approvals after submission by programs and colleges—degrees, program description, facilities.
 5. Assisted with development of forms and translation of policies, as needed.
 6. Assisted with update of Graduate Catalog to coincide with new policies or improve clarity.
- E. Daily graduate school decision making and student counseling
1. Course withdrawals after deadline
 2. WG approval
 3. Resignations
 4. Approval of Special Study requests
 5. Requests for tuition relief
 6. Grade changes
 7. Issues with student progress
- F. As needed
1. Assisted when potential donors or visitors come to the Graduate School
 2. Participated in alumni meals, celebrations, reunions, graduate school functions
 3. Assist with strategic planning discussions for Graduate School.

Future Goals

1. Further develop the idea of “Advanced/Distinguished GTA” designation to recognize and reward excellent, experienced GTA

Specifically, I would like to further explore the development of a GTA classification that reflects high experience, training, and expertise. The vision would be that this designation would provide the students with:

- Some title to show their accomplishments and level of expertise as a GTA
- Eligibility to teach more challenging courses such as CLE courses, larger sections,

- A modest extra stipend to increase their pay (possibly paid by the Graduate School)

Along with these opportunities, these GTAs would have additional responsibilities that might include:

- Serve as a mentor to new GTAs
- Present at least one session at the GTA workshop and serve on an advisory panel for development of the GTA workshop
- Help devise an on-going GTA resources and assistance website that could be used by GTAs throughout their experience at Virginia Tech

Possible requirements for those nominated might be:

- Completion of GRAD 5004 and 5104 (or equivalent)
- Nomination by a faculty member or supervisor
- Provision of a teaching dossier summarizing accomplishments that includes evidence of teaching excellence that could include student evaluations, supervisor evaluation, examples of innovative teaching techniques

I have done some mining of websites to determine some similar programs at other institutions. I would like to contact these institutions to get more details, explore and discuss the general idea with relevant individuals/groups at Virginia Tech before putting together a proposal. I expect the GTA assigned to the GRAD5004, GRAD 5204, and GRAD 5304 classes to assist with this project as possible.

3. Continue to develop an updated GTA Handbook in new on-line format.

The last version of a GTA Handbook was produced in 2003. There are errors and out-of-date information in the Handbook. In addition, the current format as a pdf file does not make it easy to search and use. I have mined websites of various graduate schools to see what formats and information they provide for GTA. I have developed a general plan that will involve a website or blog site to provide the material in appropriate "chunks" (e.g. policies for teaching classes, resources for dealing with difficult students, resources to improve teaching, etc). I am in the process of rewriting parts of the document and identifying the key links to campus resources that would be helpful to GTA. I have begun a Wordpress website to organize this information for students. I expect the GTA assigned to the GRAD5004, GRAD 5204, and GRAD 5304 classes to assist with this project, as possible.