

DRAFT- Notes from UGC Discussion

On November 13, 2020 the University Graduate Council discussed data it had collected from across the University regarding how dissertation supervision is assigned to faculty in different departments and colleges, and how faculty are compensated for their effort supervising dissertations. As expected, practices varied significantly across programs and disciplines. Nonetheless, there were some common features in those practices, and the Council was able to reach a consensus on several guiding principles that it feels could be applied universally at FAU without undue burden to any program.

On the central question of whether or not specific university-wide policies are warranted, our consensus settled around the following key points:

1. Chairing of dissertation committees is an essential function of the university. Faculty effort in this activity should be acknowledged consistently and uniformly across the university. The Provost's office, whether in the form of a Memo or official policy, should communicate to faculty and administrators that annual assignments must accurately reflect these efforts, consistent with value placed on the activity and the amount of time that must be invested in supervising doctoral students. Such efforts must be equally valued across colleges.
2. The specific category in which the effort is listed on annual assignments may be left to the academic colleges, and administered by the College Deans and Department Chairs in consultation with their faculty. Likewise, programs and departments should be allowed to institute additional policies or requirements in response to discipline-specific standards.
3. In the majority of cases, and in keeping with the spirit of the university-wide value placed on chairing dissertation research, overloads or other compensation for this effort should be discouraged. Colleges and departments may grant faculty limited course releases for supervising multiple dissertation, and may then offer those same faculty limited overload assignments in order to present their full curriculum, but the use of overload assignments to support dissertation supervision directly seems problematic to the Council, and prone to creating conflicts.
4. At the same time, programs that are experiencing consistent shortfalls in resources, such as the program must rely on overloads to offer the curriculum, should receive priority for the funding of additional faculty lines.