Minutes of the Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Tuesday, January 14, 2014

Members (16): Andrew Storer (SFRES), Simon Karn (Geo), KariHenquinet (PCorps), Erika Hersch-Green (BioSci), Ashutosh Tiwari (Chem), Audrey Mayer (SocSci), Jiguang Sun (Math), Tom Merz (Bus), Caryn Heldt (ChemEng), Veronica Griffis (Civ&Env), Warren Perger (Elec&Comp), Patty Sotirin (Rhet), Shane Mueller (CogSci), Zhenlin Wang (CompSci), Craig Friedrich (MEEM), Yu Cai (SchTech)

Guests (8): Jackie Huntoon (Grad Sch), Debra Charlesworth (Grad Sch), Nancy Byers-Sprague (Grad Sch), Amberlee Haselhuhn (GSG), Laura Brown (Comp Sci), Mari Buche (Bus), Heather Suokas (Grad Sch), Sarah Lucchesi (Lib)

1) Meeting called to order at 4:05 pm.

2) Review and approval of 12/10/13 meeting minutes.

3) Committee Reports:
   b. Thesis/Dissertation Review Committee (D. Charlesworth): The following recommendations have been made (please see the handouts section of the GFC website for complete list of recommendations with reasoning):
      1. Change and clarify the deadlines for completion of a degree within any given semester. These changes, if this proposal is accepted, would first be implemented in fall 2014.
      2. Discontinue reviewing draft dissertations, theses, and reports. Instead, provide a simple checklist of the most common items students need to consider as they prepare the final document for submission.
      3. Do not accept documents with any formatting errors.
      4. Revise web site, Guide, and title/approval page template based on student and faculty input to make content clearer and friendlier.
      5. Provide more training opportunities to students and advisors to better understand document preparation. Examples could include workshops on copyright and hands-on formatting assistance. These workshops would emphasize why the formatting requirements are needed and how they will help prepare students professionally for future career activities such as paper and proposal submission.

         • (Q): What happens when a student schedules their defense but the student and/or committee determines that more time is needed and the date keeps changing?
         • (A): If a student holds their defense after the deadline then their degree will not be completed until the following semester.
         • (Q): If the student needs to finish the following semester, how many credits do they need to register for.
         • (A): If the student has successfully defended (passed) then the student can enroll fulltime at one credit for up to two semesters following the defense semester which includes summer.

         • TO DO: Please take the proposal (handouts section of the GFC website) back to your departments and bring feedback to the next GFC meeting. Please be prepared to vote. If there are questions that you would like answered before the next GFC meeting please direct them to A. Storer or D. Charlesworth.

4) Old Business:
a. Rhetoric and Technical Communications Program Name Change – PhD and MS (P. Sotirin): Members were asked to bring this proposal back to their departments and to be prepared to vote at this meeting. Questions and concerns from last month’s meeting were recorded and responded to which can be viewed on the handout section of the GFC website.
   
   • (Q): There has been some concern that this should be proposed as a new program rather than a name change. Has the department considered that option?
   • (A): Yes, this has been discussed in great length. This program is not being proposed as new because it is taking our current program and moving it into the 21st century. It is not a new program.
   • (Q): Do you have a timeline in mind for when you plan on reorganizing the curriculum?
   • (A): The hope is to finalize the curriculum this semester.
   • (D): Motion to approve the proposal passed.

b. Data Sciences Master’s Program Proposal (L. Brown/M. Buche): Members were asked to bring this proposal back to their departments and to be prepared to vote at this meeting. Questions and concerns from last month’s meeting were recorded and responded to which can be viewed on the handout section of the GFC website.
   
   • (C): As opposed to what is in the current proposal it has been determined that there will be one GTA line rather than three. This as determined by the Provost.
   • (C): Cognitive and Learning Sciences may have a course or two that would qualify for this program.
   • (R): This should be communicated to the department. Please send appropriate course(s) to L. Brown, M. Buche, or S. Nooshabadi.
   • (Q): From which departments would you expect undergraduate degrees to populate this program?
   • (A): Primarily (but almost any department on campus would qualify a student) Math, Computer Science, and Management Information Systems.
   • (Q): Do the twelve credits of core courses have prerequisites?
   • (A): Yes. Undergraduates who are interested in this program should be planning what courses they should take in order to meet the requirements.
   • (Q): Will there be a placement exam to assess the student before being accepted into the program?
   • (A): No. It will be up to the committee, advisors, and/or faculty who are reviewing the student’s application packet to determine if they qualify or not.
   • (D): Motion to approve the proposal passed.

c. Data Sciences Certificate Program Proposal (L. Brown/M. Buche): Members were asked to bring this proposal back to their departments and to be prepared to vote at this meeting.
   • (D): Motion to approve the proposal passed.

d. Non-departmental/Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs (Dean Huntoon): Members were asked to bring this proposal back to their departments and to be prepared to vote at this meeting. On the handout section of the GFC website you will find program characteristics and governance.
   • (D): Motion to approve the proposal passed. The Dean will forward this to the Senate as an information item.


6) Other:

   a. Informal Poll: How do departments evaluate their current graduate students? Cognitive and Learning Sciences has a process or conducting an annually or each semester written review of graduate students in their PhD program. What are other departments doing – annually vs. each semester, MS and PhD, etc?
Chemistry conducts their evaluations every semester. Each student has a form that needs to be filled out to show compliance on three or four areas. This system has been helpful in identifying problems early and having the information available to either address problems so the student has an avenue for improvement or take action when action is needed.

Environmental Policy has a similar process as Chemistry. A form is sent to all faculty asking for evaluation of the students. The director sends out the forms and evaluates them as they are returned. They are then forwarded to the student’s advisor.

Forestry does not have a process. Individual faculty decide whether or not they want to periodically evaluate a student. Some do it every semester, some do it rarely, and some do not do it at all.

Math does not have a process. Some faculty do meet with their students each semester to discuss progress and to see if additional help is needed.

7) Motion to adjourn at 5:00 pm.