Minutes of the Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Tuesday, January 15, 2013

Members (11): Thomas Drummer (Math), Keat Ghee Ong (Biomed), Craig Friedrich (MEEM), Zhenlin Wang (CompSci), Greg Waite (Geo), Kari Henquinet (PCorps), Paul Ward (CogSci), Mi Hye Song (BioSci), Judith Perlinger (Atmos), Tom Merz (Bus), Kim Fook Lee (Phys)

Guests (6): Debra Charlesworth (Grad Sch), Nancy Byers-Sprague (Grad Sch), Kevin Cassell (GSG), Sarah Lucchesi (Lib), Michael Falkowski (SFRES), Heather Suokas (Grad Sch)

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

2) Review and approval of 12/04/12 meeting minutes.

3) Committee Reports:
   Graduate Tuition and Stipend Review Committee (Dean Huntoon): The report is almost complete. It is currently circulating among committee members who were asked to provide final feedback by 5 pm on 1/16/13. Dean Huntoon is hopeful of submitting the final report to the Executive Team by week’s end. After the Executive Team reviews the report she will share it with GFC members.

4) Old Business:
   a. ESL Services (Dean Huntoon): Dean Huntoon followed up with B. Smith after her visit to the GFC meeting on 12/5/12. Dean Huntoon and B. Smith came to the consensus that if students are being admitted with TOEFL scores below 75, they should enroll in an ESL course. Dean Huntoon is looking for feedback. Is this reasonable? Please bring back comments from your department/program to the next GFC meeting. Dean Huntoon has also been discussing creating a graduate level communication course (for example, technical writing) that would be counted towards the student’s degree. Some departments (for example Mechanical Engineering) have their own courses tailored for students who are at the proposal writing stage. Mechanical Engineering will be doing this as a special topic course so that it shows up on their transcript. Dean Huntoon says ideally it would be within the student’s home department because then it can be tailored for a specific discipline.
   b. Update on Proposal to Modify Senate Policy 418.1 (H. Suokas): The change will allow students to use up to 6 credits of BC/C grades from either inside or outside the student’s primary field of study at the discretion of a student’s graduate program. The Instruction Policy Committee has reviewed the proposal and has recommended that this proposal be introduced at the next senate meeting on 1/23/13.

5) New Business:
   a. Information Item: Graduate Research Colloquium (K. Cassell): Every year the Graduate Student Government sponsors the Graduate Research Colloquium where graduate students are invited to present research, etc. These events in the past have been quite small. This year the goal was to make this a bigger event and they have succeeded. They have gone from fifty-three presenters last year to one hundred and seven this year. K. Cassell is asking for your and your department’s support by attending (and inviting your students to attend, including undergrads) and possibly serving as a judge, considering having your department sponsor a session, and by helping to nominate people for the GSG merit awards (each faculty member can nominate one students for the exceptional student scholar and one student for the exceptional student leader awards and can also nominate a faculty colleague for exceptional graduate faculty mentor). Your attendance shows the graduate students that the faculty care and value what they are doing. For more details please refer to the email sent by Kevin Cassell to the GFC email list on 1/24/13 or contact him
directly. This will be held on February 21 and 22 at the MUB. To prepare for the event the GSG is sponsoring an “Effective Presentation Skills” lunch and learn for graduate students to attend. They have also asked the Library to sponsor a workshop on how to create posters. Alumni and people from local industry will also be invited to attend. The deadline for submitting a poster or presentation has passed. The schedule will be sent out soon (please refer to Kevin’s email sent on 1/24/13).

b. Information Item: Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching Award/Outstanding Scholarship Awards (N. Byers Sprague): Please send your nominations to Nancy by February 1. The students will be recognized at the Student Award Banquet held the night of February 22.

c. Proposal for Allowing Multiple Attempts at Exams – Qualifying/Comprehensive, Proposal Defense, Oral Defense (Dean Huntoon): Dean Huntoon will be presenting a formal proposal from the Graduate School at the next GFC meeting on multiple attempts at exams. The new policy will allow for three options, 1) pass, 2) conditional pass, 3) fail and you get to try again. The current form/procedure is pass or fail.

d. Proposal for Professional Master of Geographic Information Science (M. Falkowski): This proposal has been presented and approved by the dean’s council. This is an accelerated masters program through the School of Forestry. Rationale: there are many positions within governmental agencies as well as private organizations that require GIS skills far beyond what is currently being taught at Michigan Tech. This is designed for students looking to be GIS professionals. The curriculum will be made up of existing courses. Additional space is not needed. One faculty member will be hired. In order to meet budget requirements four and a half students will need to enroll which is a reasonable goal. The dean of Forestry is very supportive and enthusiastic about the proposed program. Please read the proposal, bring back to your department for feedback and bring comments and be prepared to vote at the next GFC meeting on 2/5/13. If while reading through the proposal, you have questions or comments please email them to Andrew Storer and carbon copy Dean Huntoon.

e. Information Item: UN5953 – Continuous Enrollment for students who are in their last semester (Dean Huntoon): From now on the Graduate School will be checking with the student’s advisor and graduate program director before we give them a “P” grade. It was brought to the Graduate School’s attention today that there are students who enroll in this course semester after semester and receive “P” grades from the Graduate School when perhaps their advisor would have given them a “Q” grade.

6) Motion to adjourn at 4:45 pm.