Minutes of the Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Tuesday, February 5, 2013

Members (13): Thomas Drummer (Math), Keat Ghee Ong (Biomed), Craig Friedrich (MEEM), Zhenlin Wang (CompSci), Greg Waite (Geo), Kari Henquinet (PCorps), Erika Hersch-Green (BioSci), Kim Fook Lee (Phys), Ashutosh Tiwari (Chem), Noel Urban (Envir), Mike Bowler (Rhet), Eugene Levin (SOT), Audry Mayer (SocSci)

Guests (7): Jacqueline Huntoon (Grad Sch), Debra Charlesworth (Grad Sch), Nancy Byers-Sprague (Grad Sch), Kevin Cassell (GSG), Sarah Lucchesi (Lib), Terry Sharik (SFRES), Heather Suokas (Grad Sch)

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

2) Review and approval of 01/15/13 meeting minutes.

3) Committee Reports:
   Graduate Tuition and Stipend Review Committee (Dean Huntoon): The report was discussed.

4) Old Business:
   a. Proposal for Professional Master of Geographic Information Science (T. Sharik/A. Maclean): Last month the council was asked to bring the proposal to their departments and come to this meeting prepared to vote.
      • (C): There is a call for a non tenure track position.
      • (Q): Is this intended to be an accelerated master’s program?
      • (A): Yes, that was one of the reasons for this degree proposal. There are currently ten students interested in joining this program upon its approval. The students realize how many more job opportunities will become available to them.
      • (C): Dean Huntoon clarifies that in the past proposals would be brought to dean’s council, on to GFC, and then to Senate. Because we are already in spring semester and time is short, the Provost asked that the GFC and the Senate Academic Policy Committee consider this proposal concurrently. Comments from GFC will be merged with comments received from Academic Policy and then the revised proposal will go to the Senate.
      • (Q): Is FW5554 an existing course? Can any student take this course even if they are not in this program?
      • (A): The course number is new but the course itself exists in part already as part of Forestry’s field camp. Yes, any student can take it.
      • (D): Motion to approve the proposal passed.
   b. Proposal for Determining When International Students Need ESL Services (Dean Huntoon): Will be discussed at the next GFC meeting.
   c. Proposal for Allowing Multiple Attempts at Oral Exams (Dean Huntoon): TO DO: Please take the proposal (find on handouts section of the GFC website) back to your departments and bring feedback to the next GFC meeting.

5) New Business:
   a. Proposal to Modify (revenue-neutral modification) Research Only Mode (P. Moran): The proposal is to change the following three things - name from “Research Only Mode” to Dissertator Mode”, allow all students in this mode to take up to three credits of advanced graduate electives each semester at no extra cost if there are seats available in the class and if their advisor approves, increase the cost of the nine mode credits so that the revenue going into the grad tuition pool is no less than it is now with the small fraction of the research only mode students who take extra electives and pay for them. The increase would be fifty dollars more per
student. An unintended consequence of the present policy is that students are not taking advanced graduate elective courses (either because they are unwilling to pay the expense themselves or because departments are unwilling to pay the expense). The proposed modification will show that Michigan Tech values continued learning.

- (Q): Would everybody in research only mode have to pay the additional fifty dollars? Would all departments have to pay this even if they rarely have students interested in taking additional courses?
  - (A): Yes, even if a student does not take advantage of the additional courses, they or their department would still need to pay the extra charge.
  - (Q): If the student has completed their coursework, why would they want to take an additional course?
  - (A): Some courses beyond required classes are important to a student’s research or career goals.
  - (C): The cost should not be transferred to everybody, especially to the student or department that is not going to take advantage of additional courses.
  - (Q): Was any analysis conducted to predict how many students would actually take additional courses if they were free. What if many students take advantage of this opportunity and the extra fifty dollars no longer covers the expense.
  - (A): No.
  - (Q): The number of students should be monitored because if a lot of students take additional courses will there be another cost increase per student? Might it be better to offer students who want to take an additional course a reduced rate?
  - (A): The goal is to get more students to take additional courses. Why would anybody correlate that with an increase in a loss of revenue?
  - (Q): What if advisors get their students into research only mode so that they can take courses free of charge? This does create a loss of revenue.
  - (A): No, it does not create a loss of revenue because to get to research only mode you have to take your required courses.
  - (C): In Geology there are no course requirements.
  - (Q): If it is important to a department or an advisor why don’t they just fund the student to take the additional course rather than impose this extra cost onto everybody?
  - (A): Maybe we should get rid of research only mode then.
  - (C): A process or form would need to be developed to ensure that the student received approval from their advisor.
  - (Q): Would this be applicable to MS students as well as PhD students?
  - (A): Yes.
  - (C): The goal of research only mode is for our students to focus on their research.
  - TO DO: Please take the proposal (found on the handouts section of the GFC website) back to your departments and bring feedback to the next GFC meeting.

6) Motion to adjourn at 5:02 pm.