Graduate Faculty Council Meeting  
Tuesday, March 01, 2016, 4-5 pm  

Minutes  

Members (16): Andrew Storer (SFRES), Craig Friedrich (MEEM), Ashutosh Tiwari (Chem), Zhenlin Wang (CompSci), Mari Buche (DataSci), Tom Merz (Bus Admin), Kelly Steelman (CogSci), Jiguang Sun (Math), Eugene Levin (SOT), Ebenezer Tumban (Bio), Scott Marratto (RTC), Yoke Khin Yap (Phys), Veronica Webster (CivEnvEng), Feng Zhao (BioMed), Leonard Bohmann (Meng), Noel Urban (Envir), Judith Perlinger (Atmos), Tim Eisele (ChemEng) Kari Henquinet (PCorps)  

Guests (7): Debra Charlesworth (Grad Sch), Nancy Byers Sprague (Grad Sch), Nicole Rubino (Grad Sch), Sarah Lucchesi (Lib), Alex Guth (Grad Sch), Robert Froese (SenateRep)  

1) Meeting called to order at 4:05 pm.  
2) Review and approval of 12/08/15 meeting minutes.  
3) Old Business:  
4) New Business:  
   a. Applied Physics PhD (Yoke Khin Yap & J. Jaszczak)  
      - Initially a name change proposal was reviewed and approved by GFC. The name change proposal moved to the Senate. The Curricula Policy Committee of the Senate would like it reformatted and approved as a new PhD proposal rather than a name change. We will have an online ballot in two weeks to vote on the reformatted change.  
      Q) What changes have been made to the proposal other than reformattting? (L. Bohmann)  
      A) The design of the new program is exactly the same as the name change proposal, it was just reformatted as a new program proposal.  
      - Physics is regarding it as a spin-off of the existing program. The existing program will be shelved upon approval of the new program.  
      - Any questions should be directly emailed to Yoke Khin Yap. A compilation of the question and answers will be distributed to GFC.  

   b. GTA Training per Board of Trustees (P. Murthy)  
      The Board of Trustees initiated discussion on this topic at the December meeting. The Board wants to know if there is a mandatory, standardized training program in place for GTA’s. And how are we sure that all GTA have some basic proficiency before being put in front of a classroom? Is the completion of
training being tracked so that mandatory training is provided to all GTAs in a timely manner? The BOT wanted Grad School to outline, at the Feb 2016 meeting, what training programs are currently in place, what is mandatory across the university and what we are proposing to do in order to address this issue.

An email was sent to all department chairs asking for GTA orientation/training processes currently in place. The Graduate School began working with Mike Meyers, the Humanities department and IPS. Departments use GTA’s in different ways. (See Handout: Graduate Teaching Assistant Training) The role and responsibilities of GTA’s are quite different and cannot be covered in in just one training. When we surveyed the departments we found that 13 out of 17 departments have formal training in place, many of which are very extensive.

We do not have University-wide mandatory training for GTAs. The Course of action being considered is outlined in the GTA Training Handout. What is being proposed is to develop a list of proficiencies that GTA’s need to meet depending on whether they are graders, lab assistants, recitation instructors etc. GTA’s need to be proficient in disciplinary knowledge, pedagogy, English proficiency, and acculturation. The requirements will be slightly different depending on the role.

The Board of Trustees suggested that both international students as well as domestic students have training in acculturation.

The Graduate School will develop a list of proficiencies in all four areas for the roles GTA’s play on campus and this will be distributed to the departments. The departments are free to add or change to the list of proficiencies depending on the role of the GTA. All the departments will need to clarify how GTAs are meeting the necessary proficiencies. Departments can take advantage of the training courses that the University currently offers or may utilize/develop their own training.

CTL, IPS, Humanities department already have a handful of courses in place to meet GTA needs. Resources that currently exist to meet the proficiencies are indicated in the Handout. Many departments have their own formal training in place.

Deb Charlesworth has been tracking the responsible conduct of research training in Banner. We will be setting up something similar to track the training of GTA’s.

We will be distributing a list of proficiency’s in the next month along with a form that will allow the departments to respond as to how the GTA’s are meeting proficiency in the 4 areas.

The list of proficiency’s will be voted on by this group prior to sending it out to the departments.

Q) Will this come as a proposal to GFC so that we make have input on the final policy? (A. Storer)

A) The list of proficiency’s will come to GFC. This will allow us to approve it prior to sending it out to the departments.

Q) Will there be anything about evaluating outcomes?
A) Lab teaching assistants, recitation instructor, and instructor on record all receive student evaluations. Graders and lab prep do not receive student evaluations.

- This may not be required of all TA’s, Pushpa will check to see if this is standard procedure.
- It would be good to know if students felt the grading was being done fairly and consistent with rubrics.

How closely are departments monitoring grading by GTAs? How closely are departments evaluating their GTA’s?

Q) Is the aim here to develop a series of things that will then be assessed? Is the idea to create something that would be a standardized training instrument or is this just for assessing on the basics of these proficiencies?

A) Courses have been in place or are being developed independent of this requirement. Many of them overlap with the issues we are looking for. We are taking advantage of what is already available and departments can decide if they will assign specific courses to their GTA’s or if they will have their own training.

- The Center for Teaching and Learning has a number of 4-hour modules that they can run for specific departments or they can create a module if the ones currently available do not serve the department’s needs. You don’t have to generate the training yourself.
- Whether programs decide to develop their own training courses or use university wide training courses, they will be tracked centrally so that we will know what the students have completed.

Q) If a student is starting as a TA as soon as they arrive, can we put in a requirements that there will need to be trained in the early part of the class?

A) There is currently an English assessment for international TAs. We will now need to put it in the formal guidelines that students must pass the English assessment course in order to be put in front of a classroom. For other issues like acculturation or pedagogy they can be in front of a class and continue to take seminars or courses over the first few weeks.

Q) Will this be a part of the graduate orientation week? Will they have a course in what is expected?

A) Departments will let the Graduates School know how they are planning to have their GTA’s meet these proficiencies. This will be department specific.

c. Graduate Student Learning Goals and Assessment (P. Murthy)

The HLC has asked that we conduct Graduate Program Self-Review and Graduate Program Assessment. Graduate Program Self-review and Graduate Program Assessment serve different purposes. Please see Handout “Graduate program Review and Assessment” for details. The Handout contains:
• Sample Graduate Learning Goals (GLOs) and potential measures of GLOs for PhD and Research-MS programs. GLOs for coursework MS as suggested by Lumina Foundation is also included.
• Templates and rubrics for evaluation of GLOs are also included.

Alex Guth and Pushpa Murthy looked at Graduate Program Assessment from about 15 schools to come up with this document.

Each department will need to develop GLOs, potential measures of GLOs and templates and rubrics for the evaluation of GLOs for all graduate programs in their departments. Departments can use these documents as a starting point and change the GLOs for their programs as they deem appropriate. Departments should start the process this Spring semester.

Q) Once we have this in place, at what point can we go to the HLC and say “this is our program, does this meet your needs?”
A) Jackie, Jean, and Alex will be going to the assessment academy. The first meeting is at the end of the month. While in Chicago at the HLC and we can run these questions by them.

Q) Are grades alone acceptable for measuring performance?
A) What we are going by is what many other universities are using. Some are also using placement exams when they come into the program. Grades alone are not an acceptable measure but one of many measures. The same GLO is being measured at different points of the students’ progression through the program. A student will have assessment scores given to them at various times during their time here and the last ones will be after the thesis defense.

The HLC can tell us they are not happy with that and we may need to make changes.

5) Motion to adjourn at 5:04 pm.