Minutes of the Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Tuesday, March 2, 2010

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

Members (8): Bill Yarroch (ASE), James Pickens (SFRES), Beth Flynn (HU), Amy Marcarelli (Bio Sci), Steve Seidel (Comp Sci), Chris Middlebrook (Elec & Comp Eng), Greg Waite (Geo), Dave Fritz (GSG)

Guests (4): Heather Suokas (Grad Sch– recording secretary), Nancy Byers Sprague (Grad Sch), Jackie Huntoon (Grad Sch), Carl Anderson (Coll of Eng)

2) Review and approval of 02/02/10 meeting minutes.

3) Old Business
   a. Graduate Certificate in International Profile Proposal (B. Orr): Dr. Orr was not in attendance. This will remain on the agenda.
   b. Proposal to Modify the “Senior Rule” Policy (N. Byers Sprague): This has been reorganized and some text changes have been added based on the concerns that were discussed at last month’s meeting. Individual departments will decide on GPA requirements and what level students need to be before they engage in this. Departments also may set a lower maximum amount of credits in regards to double counting (according to the policy the maximum is six). Included in the handouts section on the GFC website is the document complete with track changes. Questions: How will the department inform students or how will the student know that their department may have different rules/guidelines? Will signatures be refused or will the department post (put in writing) their requirements? This may be a case by case basis. Departments could post guidelines on their website and/or inform faculty of the rules. Where does this go next? This will be forwarded to the Senate (because of the potential of double counting credits). Motion to approve the revised document passed.
   c. Committee Reports (J. Huntoon):
      Graduate Program Review: No new updates.
      Dismissal/Appeal/Grievance Policy: No new updates.

4) New Business
   a. Promising Practices (J. Huntoon): The Council of Graduate Schools (Communicator) published “Promising Practices Identified by the PhD Completion Project.” For the past several years the Council of Graduate Schools has been funding universities to participate in the PhD Completion Project which is intended to identify best practices that contribute to successful obtainment of PhD degrees. The Graduate School at MTU volunteered to be involved but CGS only wanted schools who were graduating one hundred or more PhD students a year (in order to get a large enough sample size). Some of the best practices that they have identified are student selection and admission, mentoring and advising, research experience, etc. (Please refer to the GFC website for this complete document). One of the most important selections is the mentoring and advising piece. One of the things that are identified over and over in terms of good student outcomes is high quality mentoring. Some components of quality mentoring are: as soon as a student comes to campus they should be given an interim advisor that shows them the ropes and tells them what is expected of them. The student is also given a peer mentor. Universities should create an environment that is conducive to success (welcoming). Dean Huntoon encourages departments to read these over. Questions: Is there writing assistance for graduate students on the MTU campus? The writing center offers support to undergrads as well as graduate students. This needs to be communicated to the grad students. A lot of them do not know that this type of service is available.
b. Humanities Courses that Train and Orient New Graduate Students (B. Flynn/C. Rudkin): There are courses that the Humanities Department has been offering for a long time that the campus is not aware of. One of these things is a one credit pro-seminar that is offered. The focus of this seminar is professional development. (The complete syllabus for this class can be found on the GFC website) The class begins with reading the graduate handbook. Faculty are asked to come in and talk about their research for three weeks early in the fall term. The texts are: *A Guide to Professional Development for Graduate Students in English, Graduate Study for the 21st Century: How to Build an Academic Career in the Humanities* and *Student to Student: A Supplement to the RTC Handbook and Graduate Professional Development Guides*. Responses to the readings are part of the class grade. The one formal assignment is a five page essay to be included in the *Student to Student* document. The essay provides suggestions to incoming students on how to be a successful graduate student in the program (this semester three students are writing about stress reduction). A graduate student, Jessica Bos accompanied Dr. Flynn and said a few words about this course: This course is unique and valuable on this campus. No other courses teach graduate students how to get started. The Humanities program also has a peer mentoring program in place. Bos clarified that the Civil and Environmental Department offers a first-week orientation session. Biology recently added a course that will be aimed at professional development. Graduate student Casey Rudkin explained that Humanities also offers a GTI Orientation Workshop for students who teach UN 200. The GTIs need to develop their own syllabbi for their UN class. The GTIs arrive two weeks before classes start; therefore they have two weeks to become oriented. (See the GFC website for the complete eight day workshop schedule). By the time this orientation is done the GTI has a general grasp of what MTU culture and departmental culture are like and what Humanities is looking to teach. One of the things that make this orientation successful is that Humanities has a common core, and each class revolves around that common core. HU5931 (Practicum on Pedagogy-two credit course) backs up the GTI orientation and is a training course that continues throughout their first year. This ensures that GTIs are up to date on composition, composition theory, current trends in composition and communication. Students talk about successes and problems that they have encountered during class. This prepares graduates to hit the ground running.

c. Graduate Certificate in HEDV Engineering (C. Anderson): The roots of this certificate started a little over a year ago. General Motors called the College of Engineering and asked if they could teach a course in drive transfer technology. A fraction of their engineering work force needed to be retrained. The College of Engineering was able to comply. This spring they have ninety five students enrolled (mix of distance learning students and on-campus students). The curriculum development is well funded. There is a team of co-pi's working on curricula development including mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, material science and chemical engineering. Topics include engines and batteries, power electronics and vehicle dynamics. (The complete proposal can be found on the GFC website). Questions/comments: Can you bold the courses that are new? Yes, Dr. Anderson will add this revision. Will it be sustainable to offer these additional courses within current faculty loads? Yes, the chairs have approved this. How many students do you anticipate enrolling each year? Hard to predict but they are planning on twenty-five to thirty-five a year. Do the students have to be degree seeking to obtain this certificate? No. Please include catalog descriptions of the new courses. This will also be added to the revised document. Under number nine please include text that says students will be charged computer access fees relative to their home department. The comments/questions will be addressed in a revised document and brought back to the next GFC meeting.

5) Dave Fritz (Vice President of GSG) thanked faculty for participating and volunteering their time to be judges at the Graduate Research Colloquium. It was a successful event.

6) Motion to adjourn at 5:02 pm.