Minutes of the Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Tuesday, March 3, 2009

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

Members (15): Bill Yarroch (ASE), Kim Fook Lee (Physics), Beth Flynn (Humanities), Shekhar Joshi (SFRES), Ruth Archer (SBE), Shiyue Fang (Chem), Eugene Levin (School of Technology), Gerald Caneba (Chem Eng), Greg Waite (Geo & Min Eng), Jianping Dong (Math), Seth Donahue (BioMed), Dave Watkins (Civil & Env), Chris Middlebrook (Elec & Comp), Sam Sweitz (Env Policy), Jarek Drelich (Mat Sci)

Guests (9): Heather Suokas (Grad School– recording secretary), Jacque Smith (Grad School), Jackie Huntoon (Grad School), Jodi Lehman (Grad School), Jill Witt (GSC), Debra Charlesworth (Grad School), Jarrod Karau (AIS), Emmett Golde (EAS), Todd Vanvalkenburg (EAS)

2) Review and approval of 2/3/09 meeting minutes with the clarification that the Thesis and Dissertation Committee still needs to review comments from the 2/3/09 GFC meeting.

3) Old Business
   a. Procedures to prepare and submit a thesis or dissertation to Michigan Technological University’s Graduate School (D. Charlesworth): A summary of Current Comments on Thesis/Dissertation Procedures was distributed. The summary sheet includes comments from the GFC as well as the GSC. The Thesis and Dissertation Committee will review the comments and take them all into consideration. If additional comments are to be added to the summary sheet, now is the time to do so. (There were no additional suggestions). As far as the comment regarding the formatting requirements being too detailed, Dr. Charlesworth maintained that specific guidelines are necessary in this area to prevent students from picking “crazy” fonts. Dr. Charlesworth runs workshops throughout the year that correspond with these guidelines regarding the proper procedures for writing and submitting your thesis/dissertation as well as copyright/plagiarism issues. These sessions have been taped and can be accessed online: http://www.gradschool.mtu.edu/professional. More workshops coming in the future on using End Note (how to download and format references). The goal is to present a revised procedures document at the 4/7/09 GFC meeting.
   b. Proposal to instate a Graduate Dean’s List (R. Archer, J. Huntoon): Comments: There are different types of graduate students, which mean there are different types of criteria to judge. As of now, the GSC gives out leadership awards that require faculty nominations. There was a suggestion that departments start a similar award process such as leadership and research awards. There was a suggestion that the GSC and Graduate School work jointly to give awards. It was decided that a committee will be formed called the Graduate Student Awards Committee.
   c. Committee Reports: Parental/Maternal leave for graduate students: There are no updates.

4) New Business
   a. Demo of online reference system (T. Vanvalkenburg, E. Golde, J. Smith): The Graduate School has started a new online referee system. It is successfully up and running. When a student applies to Michigan Tech they are automatically generated an email and password. The password gives them access to the Husky Hub portal where they are now able to simply type in the email address of the referee. The referee will be sent an email
letting them know that there has been a recommendation request and a link will be provided to them with the appropriate form. The form includes a browse button which allows the referee the option of uploading material from a file. You can access the complete screen prints of this demo on the handout session on the GFC website. Once the referee submits the recommendation, it is immediately sent to the Graduate School and the portal is updated. The Graduate School does have plans to eventually set the system up so that the individual departments also get copies of these referees.

Comments: Some departments have their own referee requirements that differ from the standard form. This is something that can be looked at in the future. Can the Q menu be helpful for departments to look at submissions? Emmett said that is a long term goal for EAS. Is there a standardized way for faculty members to send out a letter to many different companies? Not at this time. Some universities use E portfolios for applicants in which departments can view the documents. Dr. Charlesworth will look into a Blackboard feature to view documents. Is there an option where the student can request to view the recommendation? No, as of now the student does not have view rights to the referee’s submission. Something in writing needs to be included on the portal and then the referee should be notified of the applicant’s decision in this matter. If the referee doesn’t complete the form in a certain amount of time, can we notify the referee? Emmett said there is a way to set up the system so a reminder email is sent out automatically. The form doesn’t have a line to identify where the referee is from. We can add a line that says, “Name of institution.” An issue of security was discussed. The portal is a password access site. Right now there is no way to validate submissions. This system will not be foolproof but it equals what is in place now (paper copies). The goal of the Graduate School is to get the application process away from paper copies. This will speed up the time in which we can review and accept applicants. One suggestion is to have the faculty member who is sending the recommendation to attach their web page URL.

b. Walk through of new Graduate School web site (D. Charlesworth): Dr. Charlesworth and Jodi Lehman updated the Grad School website in a format that will eventually be used University wide. Faculty and staff were interviewed in order to determine what Quick Links should be used on the main page. The web page now highlights students and their accomplishments. If any of the departments have a student they would like to see highlighted let Dr. Charlesworth or Jodi Lehman know. The Grad School has included announcements, events, calendars, and news items on the site and when the event date passes it is automatically pulled off the site. There are video clips, magazine articles, and the COE report along with an Alumni feature. Another new feature is the Graduate Faculty locator. You can search by name, academic affiliation, research institution or graduate program. Everybody is encouraged to review their program information that has been posted on the web and submit the changes within the next two weeks as well as any bugs you may find. Instead of using the back button you can now see where you have been (bread crumb feature) at the top of the page and simply click on the link that you would like to return to. You can also check out GSC’s new website, which the Graduate School has a link to on their web page.

5) Motion to adjourn at 5:02 pm.