Minutes of the Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Tuesday, March 3, 2015

Members (17): Leonard Bohmann (MasEng); Mari Buche (DataSci); Qinghui Chen (Kin); Craig Friedrich (MEEM); Caryn Heldt (Chem Eng); Kari Henquinet (PCorps); Erika Hersch-Green (BioSci); Audrey Mayer (ScoSci); Tom Merz (BusAdmin); Shane Mueller (CogSci); Keat Ghee Ong (BioEng); Thomas Oommen (Geo); Warren Perger (ElecCompEng); Patty Sotirin (RTC); Jiguang Sun (Math); Ashutosh Tiwari (Chem); Zhenlin Wang (CompSci)

Guests (9): Brian Barkdoll (Senate); Deb Charlesworth (Grad Sch); Annelise Doll (Library); Amanda Girard (HU); Jacqueline Huntoon (Grad Sch); Amie Ledgerwood (Grad Sch); Abraham Romney (HU MTMC); Jacque Smith (Grad Sch); Nancy Byers Sprague (Grad Sch)

1) Meeting called to order at 4:03 p.m.

2) Review and approval of 2/3/15 meeting minutes.

3) Committee Reports:
   a. Graduate Faculty Review Guidelines. No report.

4) Old Business:
   a. Changes to Use of Term “Adjunct” Faculty (J. Huntoon): Update given by Dean Huntoon – At the last meeting, the GFC agreed to change the definition of adjunct faculty from its current meaning (people who have a faculty appointment at Michigan Tech and have an additional appointment in another unit without pay) to a meaning that is more consistent with how “adjunct” is applied at other universities.
   b. Proposal to apply the term “Affiliated” instead of the currently used term “Adjunct.” Following on from the previous discussion, the question that remains is: “What do we now call people who are tenured or tenure-track faculty that have academic affiliation with one primary unit but also contribute to the academic process in another department, school, or graduate program.” We are already using the term “joint” for faculty who are paid by more than one department, and our joint faculty prefer to retain the current use of this term without modification. The COE’s Eng. Council supported using the term “affiliated” for faculty who contribute to more than one unit, but are only paid by a single unit. Is it acceptable to apply the term “affiliated” to faculty members who have a regular faculty appointment at Michigan Tech, but also contribute to another department (unpaid)? Discussion regarding the various terms and how they are used at Michigan Tech followed. Discussion followed regarding the use of how the term “affiliated” would be used as well. Discussion followed as whether or not a vote was required for it to be passed on to the Senate. Proposal will be cleaned up and passed on to Senate without a GFC vote as this proposal was viewed as more appropriate for detailed consideration by the Senate
   c. Proposal to Change Rules for Graduate Committees – External Members (J. Huntoon): Based on data presented by D. Charlesworth at the last meeting, the proposal is to no longer require external committee members at the master’s level; however, external members can be required by programs. As always, programmatic requirements can be more strict (but not less strict) than Graduate School requirements. There is a lot of concern that it is difficult to find external members for committees, particularly with the growth of master’s committees; some other universities are no longer requiring external members for master’s committees. For PhD’s, external members would be defined as members of the graduate faculty who have greater than 50% appointment outside of the student’s academic home department or school. If there is a co-advisor involved, the external committee member would need to have greater than 50% appointment outside both the primary advisor’s department and the co-advisor’s department. People from outside the University appointed as ad hoc members of the graduate faculty and are
considered external for any student’s committee. Language approved by the Deans Council is in this proposal’s handout. Note that it is possible (and has been done before) that a committee can argue that someone could serve an external member in a case where their area of expertise is so far distanced from the internal committee members. It was then suggested that external members should not be required for PhD committees; the advisor and student could decide what type of expertise is needed. Some benchmark universities don’t require external members at the PhD level. For the Graduate School, this would alleviate trying to determine who is considered internal and external. This was the final decision of the GFC – graduate degrees would not require external committee members; however, the department, advisor, and/or student could decide if they would be needed. It was unanimous that this proposal (no external requirement) go to the Senate.¹

d. STEM Graduate Certificate Proposal (J. Huntoon): There was discussion regarding the outcome of the vote, and it was realized the minutes had a post-meeting note stating it passed. No discussion required as it will be presented to the Senate in the form approved by the GFC.

5) New Business:
   a. Multiliteracies Center (A. Romney and A. Gerard): The Center has been working a lot with the graduate students this year. Added recently were graduate writing groups; these are successful. Just added was an online appointment system; this allows the Center to more accurately track clients. This semester there have been ~1,000 visits; the highest from global issues students and undergraduate composition students (the primary population served by the Center). Center staff are interested in supporting graduate students. There have been ~20 students signed up for graduate writing groups, and they estimate 10-20 more graduate students are coming for regular appointments and one-on-one help. Center staff asked for suggestions as to what they could do to better serve graduate students. The GFC asked if there is something the Center would like faculty to do; Center staff replied that it would be helpful to know what faculty are looking for so that students who come to them would have a concrete goal in mind that could be shared with Center staff.
   b. Due to time constraints, D. Charlesworth quickly gave an overview of several items that will be discussed at a future meeting: Proposal to Change Binding Options; Proposal to Reduce Required Signatures for Dissertations, Theses, and Reports; Review of Formatting and Document Requirements; and Guide to Preparing a Dissertation, Thesis, or Report at Michigan Technological University. The Proposal to Change Binding Options shows how many steps and people are involved in the process, and how the new process would simplify things for everyone on campus. Student feedback showed we have too many forms and too many formatting rules for theses and dissertations. The Guide must be revised due to the new deadlines approved by the Senate. These should all be reviewed before the next meeting in order to vote on them. If anyone has questions between now and the next meeting, feel free to contact D. Charlesworth (ddc@mtu.edu).

   • **TO DO:** Please review and be prepared to vote during the 3/24/15 meeting.

6) Meeting adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

¹ Post-meeting update: On March 4, 2015, the Deans Council did not support the removal of the requirement for an external member for PhD committees and the proposal submitted to the Senate President by the Graduate School contains language approved by the Deans Council and also allows for affiliated or joint faculty to serve as external committee members as long as they are not also serving as a student’s primary advisor.