Minutes of the Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Tuesday, April 3, 2012

Members (15): Thomas Drummer (Math), Ashutosh Tiwari (Chem), Sam Sweitz (SocSci), Blair Orr (PCMI), Dave Watkins (Civil), Andrew Storer (SFRES), Greg Waite (Geo), Keat Ghee Ong (Biomed), Tom Merz (Bus), Craig Friedrich (MEEM), Kim Fook Lee (Phys), Mi Hye Song (BioSci), Steve Seidel (CompSci), Judith Perlinger (Atmos), Warren Perger (NonDept-CompSci)

Guests (7): Jackie Huntoon (Grad Sch), Heather Suokas (Grad Sch), Debra Charlesworth (Grad Sch), Nancy Byers-Sprague (Grad Sch), Jacque Smith, Felicia Chong (GSG), Erik Nordberg (Libr)

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

2) Review and approval of 03/13/12 meeting minutes.

3) Committee Reports: Thesis/Dissertation Guideline Review Committee (Dean Huntoon): The GFC members were emailed a copy of the revised guidelines on 3/21/12 and asked to bring their (and their department’s) questions/comments to the meeting. Please refer to the handouts section of the GFC website to review the changes and guidelines. Questions (Q) / Answers (A) / Comments (C) / Decisions (D):

• Q: When will the changes take effect? A: New forms will need to be created so the goal is to have everything in place for the 2012 fall semester.
• C: Dean Huntoon has received positive feedback from some of the graduate students regarding the table layout, flowchart, and page layout picture examples that are now included in the guidelines.
• C: Dean Huntoon also adds that another change is that in the past it was required that students be registered for a minimum of one credit until they finish their degree, the proposed requirement is that students who complete everything that requires faculty input and review will be eligible to enroll in a special section for the following semester. They will be charged a resubmission fee that is equal to twenty-five percent of the current cost of one credit of tuition. This will allow students to continue to work with graduate school staff to complete the editing without being charged full tuition. This change was made because it has been reported that faculty feel pressured to sign off on a document because a student does not want to pay for an additional semester. This alleviates the time crunch and financial burden.
• Q: Will the Graduate School check formatting with these new changes? A: Please read section 3 (Formatting Guidelines). Everything that is underlined in that section is required and the requirements will be checked by the Graduate School.
• Q: Is it necessary to include reports in these guidelines? A: One department recommended that reports be included because in their department a report is just as important as a thesis. Being that departments can set their own rules and regulations, if one department wants to set high standards for reports they can. Departments can always set stronger requirements than the Graduate School, but they cannot have more lenient requirements.
• D: The consensus is that reports should be removed from the guidelines. A motion was made and passed to remove the reports from the guidelines.
• C: Dean Huntoon asks if anybody finds typos or has editorial comments to please email her.
• D: Motion to approve the document passed.

4) Old Business: Dean Huntoon was tasked by the Executive Team to set up a tuition/stipend review committee. Dean Huntoon would like to table the old business below until the committee has had a chance to meet and look at all this.
a. Graduate Application Fee (Dean Huntoon): One comment that has come up on more than one occasion is that rather than add an application fee which might deter students who are qualified from applying, we should implement a priority deadlines. Only students who apply before the deadline will receive consideration for financial aid. Another suggestion that has emerged is to be clear about required and recommended TOEFL and GRE scores (for each subscore category). Each different program can list what is required vs. what is recommended.
b. Enrollment Deposits (Dean Huntoon): Tabled.
c. Preliminary Application Review in the Grad School (Dean Huntoon): Tabled.
d. Late Registration and Course Cancellations (Dean Huntoon): Tabled.

5) New Business:
a. Requirements for Coursework Only Applicants (Dean Huntoon): Two weeks ago Dean Huntoon had a luncheon for the coursework only chairs/deans and graduate program directors to talk about the rules, regulations, and some ideas that have been circulating. The notes will be compiled and brought back to the group next academic year.
b. Retake Course When Receiving Less Than a B? (Dean Huntoon): Graduate students are unable to use a BC/C grade except with permission of the department. The Registrar’s policy is that students can only retake a class in which they get a C or less. The Graduate School and the Registrar’s Office were under the impression that graduate students can retake a BC/C course but we have not been able to find this rule in writing. D. Charlesworth was able to locate the Senate Proposal (4-12) that approved the following text: “Graduate students must earn grades that meet the scholastic standards of the Graduate School in order to apply the credits earned to a graduate degree or graduate certificate. Courses taken as a graduate student with grades that have not met the scholastic standards of the Graduate School may be repeated.” Dean Huntoon will ask the Registrar’s Office to update their website. (Note: Dean Huntoon made the request to the registrar’s office the day after the GFC meeting.)
   i. Q: Can a C grade be used with permission from the program?: A: The policy text says, “This requirement can be adjusted at the discretion of a student's graduate program to allow for use of “BC/C” grades in up to six (6) credits from outside the student's primary field of study.”
      • Q: Should the text “from outside the student’s primary field of study” be removed? As plan D grows, some departments feel that C grades should not be allowed within a student’s field of study but a B/C should be allowed. There are enough students who maintain a B or better average but get one B/C. A problem arises when that course is not offered again for another year. A suggestion is to also add that individual departments may have stricter standards.
      • D: At the first meeting of the following year, the proposal to strike the text “from outside the student’s primary field of study” will be considered.
c. Grievance Policy – Info Item (Dean Huntoon): Probation and suspension processes have been automated over the past semester. There is also an appeals process. (Please click this link to read the policy: http://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/administration/academics/policies-procedures/appeal/) A formal grievance policy has also been put into place for students. (Please click this link to read the policy: http://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/administration/academics/policies-procedures/grievance/). Students have begun to file grievances so the committee has had to be convened. T. Drummer has been invited to serve on the committee and has agreed. The committee will be meeting in the near future.

6) Motion to adjourn at 4:55 pm.