Minutes of the Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Tuesday, April 7, 2009

1) Meeting called to order at 4:08 pm.

**Members** (14): Bill Yarroch (ASE), Kim Fook Lee (Physics), Beth Flynn (HU), Shekhar Joshi (SFRES), Ruth Archer (SBE), Brian Davis (School of Technology), Gerald Caneba (Chem Eng), Greg Waite (Geo & Min Eng), Jianping Dong (Math), Dave Watkins (Civil & Env), Sam Sweitz (Env Policy), Nancy Auer (Bio Sci), Richard Honrath (Atmos), Blair Orr (Peace Corp)

**Guests** (4): Heather Suokas (Grad School– recording secretary), Debra Charlesworth (Grad School), Jackie Huntoon (Grad School), Dave Fritz (GSC)

2) Review and approval of 3/3/09 meeting minutes.

3) Old Business
   a. Procedures to Prepare and Submit a Thesis or Dissertation to Michigan Technological University’s Graduate School (D. Charlesworth): The committee needs to review the submitted changes. The Biology department needs to submit their suggestions to Dr. Charlesworth as soon as possible. There was a question regarding the implementation plan. Dr. Charlesworth will incorporate the plan into the revisions. There was a question regarding draft submission dates. For the last year and a half students have been required to turn in their draft to Dr. Charlesworth two weeks prior to their scheduled defense. After she looks over the draft the student receives a detailed review on what changes need to be made. This summer there will be a seminar on how to submit the new and updated forms available on the Graduate School website. There will also be a seminar on the new ADOBE Acrobat. These seminars will be available online and in DVD format.
   b. Proposal to Instate a Graduate Dean’s List (R. Archer, J. Huntoon): Ruth Archer, Dean Huntoon and Heather Jordan (Interim GSC President) worked on a draft of prospective Graduate Dean Awards. Each unit will set their own criteria. The idea is to be flexible. The object of these awards is to recognize graduate students for their outstanding achievement. This can be used on their resume or vitae. The Graduate School may also be able to state on the graduation program that the student is finishing with an award. Suggestions/Comments: Will there be a yearly call for nominations? Yes, an announcement will go out. How does this award affect the student’s standing while defending? This is an example of why each department will set their own criteria. They can include text to reflect defense issues if deemed necessary. Should there be mandatory criteria that all departments need to follow? No, because all departments are unique. Can text be added to include non-departmental degree programs? Yes, this will be added. Can we look into adding an endowment to these awards, possibly from the Tech Fund? Yes, this will be looked into. As of now text will be added to reflect that there is no monetary award. Can we change the name “Graduate Student Service Award” to “Graduate Dean’s Service Award?” Yes, this text will be changed. Can we add an award for Outstanding Teaching? There was a vote and all voted yes. Jianping Dong will write some text for this award. Can we separate MS from PhD and add criteria for each? Voting results: There will be text added to distinguish between MS and PhD nominees.
   c. Committee Reports: Parental/Maternal leave for graduate students: The committee is moving along and will have something concrete by next fall.
4) New Business
   
a. Diversity Initiatives and What Makes a Good Mentor (J. Huntoon): The Dean’s Fellowship has been introduced this year to increase the diversity on campus. GM has stopped Michigan Tech recruitment due to lack of diversity. The Graduate School received outstanding nominations, yet no underrepresented students were nominated. This fellowship helped bring the concept of mentoring to everybody’s attention. Criteria for this fellowship called for a formal peer-mentoring program and an interim advisor for incoming students. Students have responded in their Exit Surveys that there is a lack of mentoring on our campus. Mentoring is becoming an issue. For example, in order to receive NSF Post-Doc funding there needs to be a mentoring plan in place. Because our Post-Doc is handled through Human Resources, a university-wide Post-Doc mentoring program does not exist.
   
b. MS/PhD Degree Learning Goals and Assessments (J. Huntoon): Dean Huntoon is in the process of introducing an Outcomes Assessment Plan for our Graduate Programs. This was done years ago and a review of programs needs to start again. The plan would start with a department self assessment period in which the department collects data on what they would like their students to be able to do and know. A report would then be written with the compiled information. External reviewers would be brought to campus to review and give their recommendations for improvement. Dean Huntoon called for volunteers to help write guidelines for this program. Ruth Archer will share some information from the School of Business and Economics.
   
c. This is the last meeting of the semester. Meetings will begin again in the fall.

5) Motion to adjourn at 5:02 pm.