Minutes of the Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Tuesday, September 6, 2011

**Members** (13): Bill Yarroch (ASE), Ashutosh Tiwari (Chem), Craig Friedrich (MEEM), Blair Orr (PCMI), Paul Ward (Cog & Learn Sci), Greg Waite (Geo), Yu Cai (Sch Tech), Andrew Storer (SFRES), Keat Ghee Ong (Biomed), Steve Seidel (CompSci), Barry Solomon (SocSci), Kim Fook Lee (Phys), Thomas Drummer (Math)

**Guests** (8): Heather Suokas (Grad Sch), Debra Charlesworth (Grad Sch), Jacque Smith (Grad School), Nancy Byers-Sprague (Grad Sch), Felicia Chong (GSG), Pushpa Murthy (Chem), Sean Kirkpatrick (Biomed), Dave Reed (SponPro)

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

2) Review and approval of 04/05/11 meeting minutes.

3) Committee Reports:
   a. Non-departmental External Committee Members (J. Hwang): J. Hwang was not in attendance. There have been no committee reports since this was formed. Based on that, the committee is dissolved.

4) Old Business:
   a. Revisit Grad Student Award Nomination Process (Dean Huntoon): Last April the Council was asked to bring back the following changes to their departments: text change to the Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching Award, “Each academic school or department may recommend at least one and no more than 2.5% of its graduate students to receive this award each academic-year semester.” This wording as opposed to current text that states “no more than 20%.” The reason for the change is because once this award was put into practice it was realized that during the time it takes for students to complete their degree all students could be nominated to receive this award. The award is meant to recognize outstanding students. If everybody receives the award it takes away from the prestige. The dean also recommends the following text change to the Award for Outstanding scholarship, “Each academic school or department may recommend at least one and no more than 1% of its graduate students to receive this award each academic-year semester.” This wording as opposed to current text that states “may recommend up to 10% of its total graduate student enrollment.” Again, the Graduate School wants these to be awarded to outstanding students, not for every student in the department. Motion to approve passed.
   b. Supplemental Application Materials (J. Smith): Up until very recently the Graduate School was handling all application material via paper files and any sheet of paper that arrived in our office was sent through campus mail to the department. Now with the workflow system all material is sent electronically. Prospective students are sending a large number of supplemental materials and it is unclear as to what is of value to the departments. Examples of some of the paper flow coming through the Graduate School that may not need to be sent electronically are publications, writing samples and certificates. The idea is to narrow down what is actually sent electronically to the following materials: application, statement of purpose, test score report, transcripts, resumes/vitas, letters of recommendation, financial documents, visa and passports. All other material will be sent to the department via campus mail. A comment in workflow will indicate that your department will be receiving additional material in campus mail. The council was asked to give feedback after last April’s meeting. Jacque did not receive feedback. Motion to approve passed.

5) New Business:
   a. Elect a Chair (Dean Huntoon): Four nominations were received via email. Two nominees have declined. The remaining two nominees are: Thomas Drummer and Andrew Storer. Thomas Drummer accepted the nomination and the motion to approve his nomination passed.
   b. RCR (D. Reed): In 2007 the America COMPETES Act passed which requires institutions applying for federal funding to include “a plan to provide appropriate training and oversight in the responsible and
ethical conduct of research to undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers participating in the proposed research project.” D. Reed detailed the NSF requirements, institutional responsibilities, sponsor requirements, the University response, the proposed courses and workshops, the recommended schedule for completion and the consequences for not completing the training. For details and to view the presentation in its entirety please refer to the handouts section of the GFC website.

c. Biochemistry & Molecular Biology PhD Proposal- Non-departmental (P. Murthy): Faculty in Chemistry, Biological Sciences, and Forestry has felt there is a need for a PhD in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. What is happening now is that there are students in Chemistry doing research in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology whose PhD degree says PhD in Chemistry but the work they did is more Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. Similarly this is also happening in Biological Sciences and Forestry. When these students go out looking for jobs it is not obvious to companies or to other institutions when their PhD says Chemistry that their research is actually in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. This has been an issue for many years. The lack of the degree program makes it difficult to attract students who want a degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. As of now Chemistry, Biological Sciences, and Forestry are not able to individually offer 5000 or 6000 level courses in this area. Many times a course focused on Biochemistry and Molecular Biology would be offered in Chemistry and Biological Sciences and Forestry would not know about it and enrollment would be low. The three departments would like to propose this non-departmental PhD program and also offer a set of core courses that are required for students who enroll in this program. These courses will be taught by faculty in all three departments. They are not asking for additional resources because they currently have faculty and labs available for these courses. Questions/Comments: This is needed. Michigan Tech is way behind the curve. Is there a MS available? No, that is not being proposed at this time. Is there an undergraduate degree? Yes, there two tracks (Chemistry and Biology) with a total of about fifty students combined. Which program will receive credit for the student? This will work like other non-departmental programs. The student will be counted in the department in which their advisor lies. This will go to the CPC (Curricular Policy Committee) next. Andrew Storer asks to bring this proposal to the CPC now to get a head start on it. Nobody objects. Take the proposal back to your department for review and share with colleagues. Please be prepared to vote on this on September 20.

d. Biomedical Engineering MS Proposal (S. Kirkpatrick): Biomedical Engineering is proposing a MS in Biomedical Engineering to compliment the PhD program. They plan to establish a plan A, B, and D MS program. There is a definite need for this program. Biomed has 282 undergrads in their program. There are no additional resources requested for this proposal. They would like this program up and running by fall 2012. They have several students interested in entering the program. Questions/Comments: Are there any objections to the CPC looking at this proposal in advance of the GFC vote? No. Why are there no core courses listed? Biomedical Engineering is very interdisciplinary. Please read over the proposal and be prepared to vote on September 20.

6) The GFC will meet on September 20 (two weeks from today, September 6).

7) Motion to adjourn at 5:09 pm.