Handouts of the Graduate Faculty Council

Michigan Tech
Proposals for Discussion/Investigation

Based on the results of my recent meeting with Engineering Council I would like the chairs of the Departments of Engineering to more formally consider the two proposals listed below. I plan to bring these proposals to the Graduate Faculty Council as well during the fall semester of 2012. I hope that this memo will stimulate discussion within departments so that the Graduate Faculty Council can make informed decisions and provide me with helpful advice.

My goal in proposing these ideas is to: 1) make clear to students and employers the difference between a coursework-only and a research-based (thesis or report) program, 2) make it easier for departments who wish to offer both types of programs to distinguish between the two, and 3) meet the growing need among students for a post-graduate degree in their discipline in order to meet the needs of their employers.

1) Rename coursework master’s programs (currently known as plan C or plan D master’s) at Michigan Tech so that they are of the form: Master of “Subject” rather than Master of Science.

a. For example, in the College of Engineering, the names could be of the form: “Master of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering” or “Master of Engineering in Electrical Engineering”, etc. This approach makes use of the “Master of Engineering degree terminology which is already recognized and in use at Michigan Tech.

b. If a program in the College of Engineering wished to leave off the term “engineering” in the name of its coursework only degree program an alternative could be of the form: “Master of Materials Science” or “Master of Earth Science”, etc.

c. For other disciplines, names of coursework master’s degrees could be of the form: “Master of Chemistry” or “Master of Applied Mathematics”, etc.

2) Revise the admissions requirements for coursework master’s programs.

a. Require:

i. Proof of bachelor’s degree from an accredited University

ii. Transcripts

1. Each program would be able to set minimum expectations for entry (e.g., GPA, appropriate prerequisites, etc.)

iii. TOEFL for international students

1. Each program would be able to set minimum expectations for the different components of the test.

iv. GRE/GMAT or other standardized test

1. Each program would be able to set minimum expectations for the different components of the test.
b. Do not require:
   i. Statement of Purpose
   ii. Letters of Recommendation

Notes:

As always, departments can require more than the University (that is, they can be more strict than the University, but not less strict).

If these proposals are adopted, students who wish to change from a coursework to a research-based degree program they will need to request a change of status and obtain approval from the appropriate program and the Graduate School. The process would be similar to what is currently done when students wish to transition from a master’s degree program to a PhD degree program or vice versa.