Minutes of the Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Tuesday, September 7, 2010

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

Members (16): Bill Yarroch (ASE), Andrew Storer (SFRES), Mike Bowler (Rhet & Tech), Amy Marcarelli (Bio Sci), Steve Seidel (Comp Sci), Alexey Smirnov (Geo), Ruth Archer (Bus), Sam Sweitz (Env Pol), Barry Solomon (Ind Arch), Craig Friedrich (ME-EM), Blair Orr (Peace Corp), Kim Fook Lee (Phy), Ching-An Peng (Chem Eng), Dave Watkins (Civil), Seth Donahue (Bio Med), Eugene Levin (Sch Tech)

Guests (5): Heather Suokas (Grad Sch– recording secretary), Jackie Huntoon (Grad Sch), Debra Charlesworth (Grad Sch), Jacque Smith (Grad Sch), Nancy Byers-Sprague (Grad Sch), Bill Rose (Geo)

2) Review and approval of 04/06/10 meeting minutes.

3) Election of Chair: Call for nominations. Dr. Yarroch volunteered and was elected.

4) Old Business
   a. Graduate Certificate in International Profile Proposal (B. Orr): Changes made: Item 6. Curriculum Design. If you are a degree seeking student only twelve credits are required. A non-degree seeking student is required to take fifteen credits (three additional language credits required). As an interdisciplinary certificate, a maximum of six credits is allowed in courses at the 3000 and 4000 levels. Proficiency in a foreign language is required for degree seeking students, three foreign language credits minimum for non-degree seeking students. Proficiency is detailed in section 6 (A) 2 in the handouts section. Item 10. In addition, the Administration and Policies section now says the certificate will be housed in the Graduate School. A committee will be appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School (for more details, see the handouts section). Questions/Comments: At Michigan Tech, first year foreign language is 2000 level. A change needs to be made in Item 6 (A) 1: 3000 level should be changed to 4000, as well in 2a and 2b. Dr. Yarroch asks that the members review this with their faculty and the GFC will vote on this at the next meeting.
   b. Academic Good Standing (R. Archer): Based on recommendations from Dean Huntoon, the School of Business greatly simplified the proposal. They used the original policy and removed the third paragraph (see handouts section). This leaves the policy to say that students must maintain an overall 3.0 GPA to remain in good standing. The second change: students can only repeat a course one time. Benchmarking was also incorporated into the revised policy based on recommendations from last year’s meeting. The University of Michigan, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Georgia Tech University, Missouri University of Science and Technology, Colorado School of Mines, Lehigh University and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute were all looked at. The findings were that these institutions have similar policies as the one that is being proposed here. The graduate program committee of the School of Business agreed with this proposal unanimously. Questions/Comments: This proposal is in line with the University of Michigan’s policy in which they require a B average. This makes things less restrictive so that you can earn a C in a course or two but you still need to maintain a B average. Can this revised policy include text that states that if you do repeat a course, both grades will be factored into your GPA? The registrar’s office treats all grades the same (undergrad and grad). If you repeat a course, the GPA will not reflect the first grade. A concern is that a student could maintain a 3.0 GPA even if they receive D or F grades. A student would not be able to apply a failed course towards their degree. Concern still stands for a student deciding that since they are allowed to get a D or C grade, they will not go to class. We could change the policy to say a student is not able to use D or F grades towards their degree schedule. If this is passed and it is a requirement, how many programs would have a more stringent requirement? Six department/program reps raised their hands. Two department/program reps would accept this policy and follow these requirements. The other universities mentioned in this proposal, which are very prestigious, are managing all these issues. Can this be done as a waiver process for the School of Business? This can be done as an exception if there are exceptional circumstances but if this is going to be a general policy for their program then it wouldn’t really be a waiver. Should this be proposed solely for the School of Business? Being that there is not a lot of favor for this, it will be tabled.
c. Committee Reports (J. Huntoon):
Dismissal/Appeal/Grievance Policy: This is a proposal to make it more straightforward for the faculty to go through the probation/suspension/dismissal process for graduate students. Right now it is very confusing and students are unclear about where they are in the process. The grievance policy has also been set up in order for the students to have some recourse to come back and either appeal or grieve that they have been treated unfairly. A call for volunteers to join this committee in order for the Senate to fast track these proposals knowing that faculty has gone over them with a fine tooth comb: Craig Friedrich, Andrew Storer and Amy Marcarelli.
Graduate Program Review: Call for volunteers for this committee: Blair Orr, Dave Watkins, and Barry Solomon.

5) New Business
a. 2010 Updates (H. Suokas): Proposals that were approved by the Senate last spring: Amendment for Proposal 20-04: Graduate Certificates, PhD program in Environmental and Energy Policy, PhD program in Geophysics, international dual degree policy, procedures to prepare and submit a thesis or dissertation and graduate certificate in Hybrid Electric Drive Vehicle Engineering. The following awards are now in process and online: Dean’s award for outstanding scholarship, graduate student service award and the outstanding graduate student teaching award.
b. PDF Submissions for Report Option Students (N. Byers-Sprague): Please review with your faculty and bring back comments to the next GFC meeting.
c. Graduate Committees: Co-Advisor as External Member (N. Byers-Sprague): Please review with your faculty and bring back comments to the next GFC meeting.
d. Graduate Certificates: Senate Proposal 11-10 (N. Byers-Sprague): Please review with your faculty and bring back comments to the next GFC meeting.
e. Master’s Path (N. Byers-Sprague): Please review with your faculty and bring back comments to the next GFC meeting.
f. Tracking Students Who are Both Certificate and Degree Seeking (Dean Huntoon): The Graduate School would like to begin to track students who are degree seeking and also earning a certificate. Does anybody have objections? If we do track them, students will have to apply or somehow let the Graduate School know that they want to earn the certificate (submit a form). Feedback will be given at the next meeting.
g. Going Green with Rejection Letters (J. Smith): Please review with your faculty and bring back comments to the next GFC meeting.
h. RCR Training (Dean Huntoon): This will be discussed at the next meeting.
i. Finishing Fellowships: Eliminating Competition in the Spring for Fall (D. Charlesworth): The graduate panel has had some difficulties evaluating finishing fellowship applications in the spring for students finishing in the fall. This will be addressed at the next meeting.
j. Addressing Dissents (N. Byers-Sprague): Please review with your faculty and bring back comments to the next GFC meeting.
k. Future Meeting Dates/Locations (H. Suokas): 10/05/10, 11/02/10, 12/07/10, 01/11/11, 02/01/11, 03/01/11, 04/05/11 (4 pm in the Alumni Lounge).

6) Motion to adjourn at 5:09 pm.