Minutes of the Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Tuesday, September 15, 2009

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

Members (15): Bill Yarroch (ASE), Nancy Auer (Bio Sci), Seth Donahue (Bio Eng), Ruth Archer (SBE), Shiyue Fang (Chem), Steve Seidel (Comp Sci), Chris Middlebrook (Elec & Comp Sci), James Pickens (SFRES), Greg Waite (Geo & Min Eng), Craig Friedrich (ME-EM), Phil Merkey (Non Dept – Comp Sci), Blair Orr (Peace Corp), Kim Fook Lee (Physics), Beth Flynn (HU), Brian Davis (Sch of Tech)

Guests (5): Heather Suokas (Grad Sch– recording secretary), Debra Charlesworth (Grad Sch), Jackie Huntoon (Grad Sch), Nancy Byers Sprague (Grad Sch), Randy Harrison (GSC)

2) Review and approval of 4/7/09 meeting minutes.

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

4) Old Business
   a. Procedures to Prepare and Submit a Thesis or Dissertation to Michigan Technological University’s Graduate School (D. Charlesworth): Dr. Charlesworth made the changes presented to her from the Graduate Faculty Council as well and the Graduate Student Council. She will be meeting with the committee to review the changes on 9/16.
      i. Graduate Student Orientation: Orientation was a success based on student, faculty and staff feedback. Dr. Charlesworth is in the process of picking a date for next year’s orientation which is dependent on undergraduate orientation. If any programs would like to have an orientation binder for their area, please contact Heather Suokas in the Graduate School (hlsuokas@mtu.edu). These are not available on line. The Graduate School prefers that the students come directly to the Graduate School to obtain a copy. Careful attendance is taken at the beginning and again at the end of orientation. Those students who attended are entered into banner. This is a mandatory orientation. An email is sent to the students each semester who have not complied. If the student has not complied by their second year in attendance, holds will be placed on their accounts.
   b. Proposal to Instate a Graduate Dean’s Teaching Award (J. Huntoon): Jianping Dong will work on a draft proposal and Dean Huntoon will review. The proposal should be rewritten to reflect a general set of guidelines so that each unit can set their own specific criteria. Programs have not yet been notified of the Graduate Dean’s List awards.
   c. Program Reviews (J. Huntoon): Dean Huntoon is in the process of introducing an Outcomes Assessment Plan for our Graduate Programs. Background: 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 serve on a committee and develop formal program guidelines. Volunteers: C. Freidrich (ME-EM), B. Orr (Peace Corp), B. Yarroch (ASE). Dean Huntoon will follow up with
G. Caneba (Chem Eng) for he had interest in this committee last spring. Dean Huntoon would like this completed before the end of the fall semester.

d. Committee Reports: Parental/Maternal Leave for Graduate Students: A draft proposal has been completed and was emailed to the GFC members. Extra copies were also available at the meeting to be picked up. These are to be distributed among the faculty in each member’s area. The faculty comments will be collected and discussed at next month’s meeting. Question: based on past years what is the estimated budget? $15,000 is the financial estimate.

i. Aside: The State of Michigan has discontinued the wellness program to help low income families with prenatal and after care. Our University does not pay for spousal insurance that could be used to defray the costs of pregnancy or after care. A student would have to purchase an insurance plan that is estimated to cost $3,000.00 in order to receive coverage for a spouse. There may be a collection of doctors, possibly through Aspirus Keweenaw that is helping low income families with their health care issues.

5) New Business

a. Sexual Harassment Prevention Training (D. Charlesworth): As of 01/01/10 all employees of Michigan Tech will be required to receive sexual harassment prevention training. Supervisors on campus have already received the training. Graduate students on payroll are also required to participate in the training and other graduate students are strongly encouraged to attend. Sherry Kauppi (Affirmative Programs) will be sending announcements. A procedure needs to be set in place for keeping track of graduate students employed on campus that have or have not participated in the training. Banner does not list graduate student supervisors, so the graduate program director will be notified if a student is out of compliance. Dean Huntoon looked into some options to guarantee compliance such as withholding pay, but that cannot happen. A hold can be placed on their registration. The training consists of an online tutorial session with a certificate of completion that is printed out upon completion of the training.

b. Dismissal/Appeal/Grievance Policy (J. Huntoon): Dean Huntoon called for volunteers to serve on a committee that will draft and implement a grievance policy. A dismissal is currently handled through the Graduate School based on two conditions: 1) The student’s committee members do not believe that the student is making good progress towards their degree 2) The student is not receiving sufficient grades and/or is not passing the qualifying exams. The Graduate School also needs a process to dismiss graduate students who fail their exams, as they will not be able to complete their degree.

i. Departments are encouraged to resolve grievances within their department, when possible, but there needs to be a clear process for them to seek outside assistance from the Graduate School when needed. Academic integrity issues are handled through the Dean of Students office. Research misconduct is handled through the office of Research Integrity and Compliance. If the research is federally funded the federal government must be notified in cases of alleged research misconduct. Volunteers: Jianping Dong (Math), Randy Harrison (GSC) and Chris Middlebrook (Elec & Comp Eng).

c. Update on New Federal Responsible Conduct of Research Requirements and Grad School Implementation (J. Huntoon): NSF now requires all institutions involved with research are required to be trained in responsible conduct of research. A committee consisting of D. Charlesworth (Grad Sch), J. Polzien (Res Integrity), and P. Gotschalk
(Student Affairs) is in the process of identifying learning outcomes for Michigan Tech’s RCR program. RCR will be touched on in orientation but more training will be given throughout the year. It is possible that students will take a one-credit course that will focus on RCR. This training will be designed to satisfy the federal requirements for post-doc mentoring. RCR training will also be required of all faculty, staff, and undergraduate students involved in research. This is required by the federal government.

d. Future Meeting Dates/Locations (H. Suokas): All the following meetings are scheduled from 4-5 pm in the Alumni Lounge A (MUB):
   10/06/09
   11/03/09
   12/01/09
   01/19/10
   02/02/10
   03/02/10
   04/06/09
   Dr. Yarroch also asks that you hold the 3rd Tuesday of every month from 4-5 in the event that we need two meetings in a particular month. Heather Suokas will update the GFC website with the next meeting date and email notifications will also be sent by Dr. Yarroch.

6) Motion to adjourn at 4:55 pm.