Minutes of the Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Tuesday, October 5, 2010

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

Members (17): Bill Yarroch (ASE), Andrew Storer (SFRES), Mike Bowler (Rhet & Tech), Amy Marcarelli (Bio Sci), Steve Seidel (Comp Sci), Tom Merz (Bus), Barry Solomon (Env Pol), Craig Friedrich (ME-EM), Blair Orr (Peace Corp), Dave Watkins (Civil), Seth Donahue (Bio Med), Eugene Levin (Sch Tech), Greg Waite (Geo), Tom Drummer (Math), Marta Wloch (Chem), Paul Ward (Cog & Sci), Chris Middlebrook (Elec & Comp)

Guests (7): Jackie Huntoon (Grad Sch), Debra Charlesworth (Grad Sch), Jacque Smith (Grad Sch), Nancy Byers-Sprague (Grad Sch), Bill Rose (Geo), Shekar Joshi (SFRES), Sean Gomman (GSG)

2) Review and approval of 09/07/10 meeting minutes with the following changes: Sam Sweitz represents Industrial Archeology and was not at the last meeting, as recorded. Barry Solomon represents Environmental Policy as opposed to Industrial Archeology. Academic Good Standing is not tabled; it is pulled from the agenda.

3) Committee Reports:
   a. Dismissal/Appeal/Grievance Policy (Dean Huntoon): Handouts include a slightly revised version from last month. The committee met to clarify academic sanctions that can be placed on students that can eventually lead to suspension and/or dismissal. This will give students a clear way to appeal those decisions and also give students a way to report a grievance. The final version of this will look slightly different because it will be modified to fit the University’s policy on policies but the content will be the same. Recommendation for the Graduate Student Government to review and then dean Huntoon to pass onto the Senate passed.
   b. Graduate Program Review (Dean Huntoon): Dean Huntoon requests tabling until the next GFC meeting.

4) Old Business
   a. Graduate Certificate in International Profile Proposal (B. Orr): Does anybody have questions on the revised and up-to-date document? Page 3 under curricula design (2a and 2b) the proposal states that you have a choice of three credits at level III or higher for a language course or a score on the language proficiency test which would allow the student to enroll in a level III or higher language course. Why wouldn’t a student just do the test and not the course? The student can just take the test if that is what they want to do. On page four, part C: Required International Experience, says the student must take a minimum of six credits at the university or research center outside of the U.S. over at least one complete academic term but then the next sentence says students may take the credits while enrolled as a graduate student at Michigan Tech. How do the Peace Corps students fit into this? This should be reworded to state that Peace Corps students are included in this. Text will be added. Motion to approve passed and dean Huntoon will pass onto the Senate.
   b. PDF Submissions for Report Option Students (N. Byers-Sprague): The staff at the Library were wondering if it would be agreeable to have students who are submitting a hard copy report also submit a PDF format report so that it is more available through the library. Motion to approve passed.
   c. Graduate Committees: Co-Advisor as External Member (N. Byers-Sprague): The question is: does a co-advisor who is not in the student’s primary department really fulfill all the roles that an external member should fulfill? If the GFC does not think so, we should start disallowing the co-advisor to be the external member if that co-advisor is outside the student’s primary department. How does the Graduate School define the role of an outside committee member? They suggest there are several roles that an outside committee member might fulfill. One is to ensure that the process is fair, both to the student and to the University (watching for favoritism or the opposite of favoritism). Two is that the person should be very familiar with the processes and what the requirements are within the University as well as their department. That is why we want the primary advisor to be associated with the student’s home department because things may vary between departments. Overall an external member would bring expertise from outside the primary department and breadth. It seems like it would be difficult for an external member to judge unfairness. On the other hand an external member would serve as an impartial witness. In regards to non-departmental degree programs, it is important to have people on the committee who are not already affiliated to get involved so that it helps the campus find out what is going on in different areas. If you are already part of a non-departmental degree program then presumably you know each
other and work together so the idea would be to bring in somebody from outside that group that could contribute in the future. It seems as though an off-campus member would not be able to give protection to the student but there are other committee members that can contribute where others are lacking. A definition could be added saying something to the effect of, the committee would serve the functions of fairness, breath and expertise. Additional issue pertaining to advisors is adjunct faculty being an advisor. A subcommittee will be formed. Call for volunteers for an Advisory committee subcommittee: Blair Orr, Steve Seidel and Nancy Byers-Sprague. The committee will work on this and bring the revised proposal back to GFC.

d. Graduate Certificates - Senate Proposal 11-10 (N. Byers-Sprague): Should the GFC suggest that a friendly amendment be added to the Senate Proposal 11-10? Motion to approve the wording and for this to be sent to the Senate as an amendment passed.

e. Master’s Path (N. Byers-Sprague): This is being changed to “Provisional/Conditional Admission.” The handout will be updated and brought to the next meeting.

f. Going Green with Rejection Letters (J. Smith): As soon as a department notifies the Graduate School that a student has been rejected it is entered into banner and at that point the information is available to the student via husky hub. The Graduate School’s focus is on getting information to the accepted students first and therefore the rejection letters are going out last. A majority of these rejection letters are being sent internationally and a fair amount of the mail is being returned to us, whether it is due to the student moving or inadequate mailing addresses. In addition, the man power on rejection letters has been tracked and it takes 128 hours of work time to get these out. A temporary employee was hired last year to help with getting these letters mailed out. Eliminating paper rejection letters would also save the Graduate School over three thousand dollars. Jacque has talked to the computer programmers to see if it is possible for an email to be generated to the student when banner is updated and it can be done. This is the most stable form of communication available. An email will be sent to their MTU email address as well to their personal email address. How long will they have access to the husky hub and MTU email address? The thought is until the semester of potential entry begins. In this day and age it is acceptable to be informed by email. The email is in letter format (still be able to print it out for whatever reason). Motion to approve this concept passed.

5) New Business

a. SFRES Dual MS-Finland / SPRES Dual MS-Sweden /GEO Dual Degree-France /GEO Dual Degree-Italy (Dean Huntoon/B. Rose/S. Joshi): These dual degree proposals came out of the EU Atlantis proposals that were funded by the Department of Education and the European Union. They involve universities in the U.S. and universities abroad. Each of the proposals have more than one University in the U.S. and more than one University in the European Union but the dual degree agreements for us would be with Michigan Tech and one of the international universities. The proposals from SFRES are both in the area of forest science and the geology proposals are both in the area of volcanology, natural hazards, and geotechnics. When a student has completed their degree, they are presumably going to receive one of the master’s degrees in forestry or geology. What if there is not a comparable degree name in the international university? They will receive a MS in forestry (generic) and for the geology dual degrees they will receive a MS in geology from Michigan Tech. The partner universities have degree names that are comparable if not exactly the same. How many students are in the geology dual degree program right now? Eight. How many students who have originated from Michigan Tech are overseas right now? Two. How many are here from international universities. Two. How many for SFRES? Twelve going overseas and twelve are coming here from overseas. Motion to approve all four of the dual degrees passed. The dean will forward these to the Senate.

6) The next meeting of the GFC will be on November 2, 2010.

7) Motion to adjourn at 5:04 pm.