Minutes of the Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Tuesday, October 18, 2011

Members (13): Thomas Drummer (Math), Ashutosh Tiwari (Chem), Craig Friedrich (MEEM), Greg Waite (Geo), Eugene Levin (Sch Tech), Barry Solomon (SocSci), Paul Ward (Cog Sci), Andrew Storer (SFRES), Mike Bowler (Rhet), Keat Ghee Ong (BioMed Eng), Chris Middlebrook (Elec & Comp Eng), Warren Perger (Comp Sci), Kim Fook Lee (Physics)

Guests (5): Heather Suokas (Grad Sch), Debra Charlesworth (Grad Sch), Nancy Byers-Sprague (Grad Sch), Felicia Chong (GSG), Jacque Smith (Grad School)

1) Meeting called to order at 4:06 pm.

2) Review and approval of 10/04/11 meeting minutes.

3) Committee Reports:

4) Old Business:
   a. Category Revisions for Graduate Faculty (N. Byers-Sprague): What are the perceived benefits of these changes? This may be an easier way for data to be collected. If a person went onto the website and looked at the graduate faculty listing they would see a difference in people’s titles. Being that this does not seem to be a problem for most and based on the feedback given from the members of the GFC this proposal will not go forward and the graduate faculty categories will remain the same.
   b. Changes to GACS (Andrew Storer): Andrew will be drafting a counter proposal for the GFC meeting on November 1. The proposal will address the need to support junior faculty as well as state opposition of the chairs controlling the funds. The thought is that department chairs will use the funds for things other than tuition and fees. The proposal will also include the suggestion to put the funds into a separate IRAD account (controlled by the PI) for the faculty to use only for tuition and fees. The questions still remain, what is wrong with the current system and what are we trying to fix? Andrew will put a draft together and have either Tom or Heather distribute the document to the GFC members for feedback before the November 1 meeting.

5) New Business:
   a. Required Signature on Pre-defense Form (D. Charlesworth): Currently a pre-defense form requires a signature by the advisor, co-advisor, and the graduate program director. Deb received feedback indicating it may not be necessary to have the signature of the graduate program director. Deb can revise the document to omit the graduate program director’s signature for all departments or she can design a form that selectively chooses which programs would require the signature. The advantage to having the signature is it gives the graduate program director a heads up that the student will be defending soon. Deb will compose an email to GFC and the graduate directors asking whether or not their program would like the signature taken off of the form. Depending on each program’s needs you could choose for your MS program to not require the signature and your PhD programs to require the signature.
   b. Graduate Student Maximum Credits (C. Friedrich): Incoming master’s students in the Mechanical Engineering department register for classes before they arrive on campus. A problem has been arising, particularly with international students, with registering for an excessive number of courses which then closes those courses. The students then come to campus and drop a large portion of those credits. Craig spoke to the registrar’s office and there is no way to single out the ME program. They suggested limiting the number of classes students can register across the board. Would anybody be opposed to setting a limit of twelve? Questions/Comments: Would this include undergraduate courses? Yes, it would include undergraduate courses for graduate students. One program allows their students to register for thirteen credits. Can the limit be thirteen? Yes. Would getting permission to enroll above a certain number help
this situation? The limit can be set at thirteen with a statement that if students do need to register for more
they would need to seek permission from their department. Craig will contact the registrar’s office to see
what sort of process will work and he will bring the information back to the next GFC meeting.

c. Report Submission (N. Byers-Sprague): This proposal is to eliminate the option for the professional
binding of reports. The Graduate School would no longer provide the professional binding service.
Reasons: only one program requires professional binding, few students submitting reports wanted
binding, creates less confusion for students, minimized formatting corrections needed, library is moving
to more electronic, less paper volumes and currently all students must submit a pdf version of their report.
Students who wish to have their report professionally bound can do so using an off campus site. The
proposal which can be found on the handouts section of the GFC website lists three locations that offer
professional binding. The requirement would be for a single copy of your final report in a sturdy binder
and a printed degree completion form. Questions/Comments: would we still require professional binding
of thesis/dissertations? At this point in time, yes. In the department of Cognitive and Learning Sciences
the report is just as prestigious as the thesis. If somebody wants the option to bind their report, we should
be able to offer it to them. The library has asked the Graduate School to consider reducing some of the
professional binding because they process the orders and handle the outsourcing. The Graduate School is
attempting to move in an electronic direction. Nancy asks that you take this back to your department for
discussion and feedback.

d. Departments Entering Proposal Defense Results into Banner (N. Byers-Sprague): The approval of
dissertation proposal form is scanned and entered into banner by Nancy. Nancy has no other need for this
form. She asks if departments would be willing to have their graduate program assistants enter this
information into banner. This would go hand in hand with the graduate program assistant entering the
comprehensive exam into banner which they already do. Motion to approve passed.

e. Combining Plan C & D as “coursework only” (N. Byers-Sprague): Some departments have a plan C
which is coursework with an exam and some departments have a plan D which is coursework without an
exam. The Dean of the Graduate School is proposing combing Plan C & D and define them as
coursework only. You may have an exam in your department if you so chose. Defenses for these students
would not be announced therefore this would eliminate the need for pre-defense forms for coursework
only students. The degree schedule form and website will change from a student needing to select Plan A,
B, C, or D to selecting thesis, report, or coursework. Nancy indicates on the transcript whether the student
is coursework with an exam or coursework without an exam and she will continue to do so. Deb will
create a degree schedule form that alerts Nancy to programs that require an exam. Nancy asks that you
take this back to your department for discussion and also get feedback on whether or not your department
would still want the exam to be publicly announced.

6) Motion to adjourn at 4:56 pm.