Minutes of the Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Tuesday, November 4, 2014

Members (16): Andrew Storer (SFRES), Louisa Kramer (Geo), Kari Henquinet (PCorps), Erika Hersch-Green (BioSci), Caryn Heldt (ChemEng), Shane Mueller (CogSci), Warren Perger (ElecCompEng), Noel Urban (NonDeptEnvir), Keat Ghee Ong (BioMedEng), Qinghui Chen (Kines), Craig Friedrich (MEEM), Judith Perlinger (Atmos), Audrey Mayer (SocSci), Ashutosh Tiwari (Chem), Yu Cai (SOT), Tom Merz (Bus)

Guests (9): Debra Charlesworth (Grad Sch), Sasha Teymorian (GSG), Nancy Byers Sprague (Grad Sch), Annelise Doll (Library), Theresa Jacques (Registrar’s), Jarood Karau (IT), Josh Olson (IT), Heather Suokas (Grad Sch), Brian Barkdoll (Senate)

1) Meeting called to order at 4:03 pm.

2) Review and approval of 10/14/14 meeting minutes.

3) Committee Reports:
   a. Graduate Faculty Review Guidelines (Dean Huntoon): To be discussed on 11/11/14.

4) Old Business:
   b. Assuring Graduate Students’ Compliance w/Existing Safety Policy (A. Storer): To be discussed in more detail on 11/11/14. An email summarizing issues raised in the Department of Chemistry has been shared with the Compliance Office. The key issues were raised were 1. The large number of chemicals that a graduate student may utilize during their time here and the fact that more than one student accesses the same supply of a chemical, 2. Department safety officer should not be the ones signing off on the form - the advisor and chair should do this and 3. Most teaching labs have a lab manager or supervisor who is responsible for ensuring that the lab is in compliance and who works with the TAs to ensure this each semester. A copy of a form used in the Department of Chemistry was included in the email. The email and form will be part of the handouts for the more detailed discussion on 11/11/14.

5) New Business:
   a. Update from IT (J. Olson/J. Karau): Please see the handouts section of the GFC website for complete presentation.
      • (Q): In regards to slide 7 (Implementing Windows SCCM and Fischer Identity Management) will these features be compatible with VPN (when off campus or having to remote in) and Mac?
      • (A): This will be looked into and the answer will be emailed to H. Suokas to distribute to the council.
      • (Q): The WorkFlow system is horrendously slow when accessing application images. Is there anything that can be done?
      • (A): This will be looked into and the answer will be emailed to H. Suokas to distribute to the council.
      • (C): Some in the Social Sciences department feel as though Student Affairs is prioritized in terms of IT support.
      • (A): The IT management team has been discussing that issue. Student Affairs is not prioritized but the perception is being addressed.
   b. Accelerated MS Deferrals (C. Friedrich): To be discussed on 11/11/14.
d. Prerequisite Checking (T. Jacques): As a general rule, the Registrar’s Office does not check prerequisites for graduate students. A few years ago the School of Business asked that the Registrar’s office turn on the prerequisite checks for their students. This worked fine. Last year Mechanical Engineering asked for the same service. The unintended consequence was that mechanical engineering students were unable to get into the classes whereas students from other departments were able to get in (because their prerequisites were not checked). Would you like the Registrar’s Office to start checking prerequisites for graduate students across the board? Keeping in mind that if you add prerequisites to your courses they should probably be graduate level. This will ensure that they have an opportunity to take the prerequisite. If you list undergraduate courses for your prerequisites, you may need to grant prerequisite waivers. Also, what do you want the minimum grade to be? Passing for undergraduates is a D so that is their minimum grade.

- (Q): If a unit does not want to have their prerequisites checked then they could just remove prerequisites from their classes?
- (A): Yes.
- (Q): Would removing prerequisites have to go through the binder process?
- (A): Yes.
- (Q): Why do some departments want their prerequisites checked?
- (A): In Mechanical Engineering some graduate courses are directly built upon specific undergraduate courses. Faculty finds themselves teaching the graduate course at the level of the least prepared student. It detracts from the course. Since “turning on” the prerequisite checks, the quality of the courses has risen.
- (Q): Would the Registrar’s Office write up a document that explains the issues?
- (A): Yes. This will be provided before the meeting on 12/4/14.
- TO DO: Take this back and discuss with your departments. Consider how this would impact your individual programs.

e. Changing History (T. Jacques): Dean Huntoon sent a memo on August 6, 2014 to the Provost, Academic Deans, members of the Graduate Faculty Council, and members of the Graduate Student Government addressing the issue of “changing history.” In the past students who were switching from a research-based master’s degree to a coursework-only degree were being allowed to “change history” by re-coding some of the research credits they earned as coursework credits. This will no longer be allowed. If students find themselves in the situation of needing to change from a research-based to a coursework only degree they will need to contact their Graduate Program Director who will need to send a memo on their behalf to Nancy Byers Sprague in the Graduate School. The goal of the Registrar’s Office and the Graduate School is to ensure that the student’s academic record is a true reflection of what the student actually did. The Graduate School staff will consider these requests for a modification of students’ degree schedules on an individual basis.

- (C): The memo states, “the current rules regarding the types of credits that can be applied toward a specific degree will be reviewed by the Graduate Faculty Council...” This will be an upcoming agenda item.
- (C): Some good advice for faculty is to have them review their course rosters at the beginning of the semester to ensure that the students who are enrolled in their research classes are really doing research. Evaluate whether they should really be in an independent study. This advice should be passed on to others in your department.

f. Graduate Research Colloquium (S. Teymorian): To be discussed on 11/11/14.

6) Suggestion to Add an Additional November Meeting (A. Storer): The council agrees another meeting is needed to work through items on the existing agenda. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, November 11, 2014.

7) Motion to adjourn at 5:00 pm.