Graduate Faculty Council Meeting
Tuesday, November 10, 2015, 4-5 pm

Minutes

Members (16): Andrew Storer (SFRES), Thomas Oommen (Geo), Kari Henquinet (PCorps), Qinghui Chen (Kines), Craig Friedrich (MEEM), Ashutosh Tiwari (Chem), Zhenlin Wang (CompSci), Mari Buche (DataSci), Kelly Steelman (CogSci), Jiguang Sun (Math), Eugene Levin (SOT), Ebenezer Tumban (Bio), Scott Marratto (RTC), Yoke Khin Yap (Phys), Tim Eisele (Chem), Judith Perlinger (IAS)

Guests (7): Debra Charlesworth (Grad Sch), Nancy Byers Sprague (Grad Sch), Nicole Rubino (Grad Sch), Jen Sams (Lib), Will Lylte (GSG), Alex Guth (Grad Sch)

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

2) Review and approval of 10/06/15 meeting minutes.

3) Old Business: No Old Business.

A) Proposal to change the name of the PhD in Applied Physics (Y. Khin Yap)
Yoke Khin Yap has sent a message to the six students in the program. Two students will be defending this semester, one next semester and the other three are 1st year students who understand and accept the changes being made to the program. Yoke Khin has also asked them to come in and speak with him directly. There is no reluctance from students that are currently in the program. There is very little change in the curriculum. It is mostly a name change from PhD in Engineering Physics to PhD in Applied Physics in order to reflect the expertise of the faculty that are involved with this program at this time. Motion Approved.

B) Computer Science Proposal for 3+1+1 program (Z. Wang)
This proposal is for international undergraduate students whose home institution has a previous agreement with Mich Tech. The students attend courses at Mich Tech in their last year but their bachelor’s degree will be awarded by their home institution. This proposal is for them to have the ability to stay at Michigan Tech for an additional year to collect a master’s degree from Mich Tech under the accelerated master’s program. This is very different from the original intent of the accelerated master’s program. At the moment, the accelerated master’s program enables students who are going to receive their undergraduate degree from Mich Tech to use 6 of their BS credits towards their MS. Therefore, they only have to complete another 24 credits under an accelerated master’s program. One of the complicating facts that has been brought up about this is that the accelerated master’s program indicates that the total number of credits between the undergraduate and the graduate degree must be 150 or more. This could become problematic because of the differences in how each institution counts their credits. However, we may just need to address this and clarify as this proposal moves forward if we are supportive of that.

Q: Does the grad school have an opinion on the use of the accelerated master’s in this way? A: I think this is the first proposal of this type that has come forward, so we are waiting to hear what everyone else thinks about this issue. No we do not have a position. Since the last meeting I have made a few changes to the proposal. If a student stays here for one year as an international student he will be taking at least 24 credits, of these
credits, up to 6 can be counted towards a graduate degree. If the 24 credits is considered not enough we can increase to 30 but typically 24 to 30 is an average load for an undergraduate degree. Another key update is to make sure this is financially sound for the university. Even though we will be losing 6 credits in tuition we will be gaining 24. Students are more likely to stay another year to receive a Masters with this incentive. Every additional student we attract will cover the loss of 4 students. If this proposal moves forward there will have to be a proposal to modify the rules on the accelerated master’s degree. We could make it an amendment to the existing policy or we can make it separate specifically to this department. An overall amendment to the existing policy would allow other departments to do similar programs without continuing to recreate similar proposals. The wording could be as such that the last 24 credits must be MTU credits even though the degree was awarded by another university. The proposal should still include universities that we have agreements with. The wording could be such that we have these 3+1 agreement with outside institutions and that if there is an agreement in place then this amendment to the accelerated master’s policy would apply.

Q: Would they also be eligible for senior rule since they would be in their senior year? A: I don’t think so. Senior rule should not apply. Technically they are not a senior at Mich Tech. We will have to write it out that Senior Rule will not apply to students in this situation and registrar’s office will have to be notified.

A proposal will be developed for the next GFC meeting that we can circulate ahead of time that summarizes the changes that would go into the accelerated program. If we approve this today we are basically saying once we have the wording right we will be approving the modification to the accelerated program.

Q: To be eligible for the accelerated master’s program a student must be a junior to apply? A: You have to be accepted into the master’s program prior to completing your Bachelors. It will depend on the department’s deadlines. If a department has a rolling deadline then technically we can accept them into the program the day before they graduate. The policy states that once they obtain junior level status and up to the time they are awarded their bachelor’s degree.

Q: With the 24 credit requirement is there a requirement about what sorts of credits they would be getting at Mich Tech? Does the current program specify if they are taking all major specific courses or could they come over and just take general education courses? A: A program would have to make sure that at least 6 of those credits would be transferable into the master’s program. Students would be sent to Mich Tech to complete higher level courses the home school wouldn’t offer. Specifically in junior and senior year when all courses should be core or elective courses.

Q: Is there going to be GPA requirement? A: If we follow the accelerated masters model they will have to have at least a 3.2, do we want to inforce that? I can also add this to the proposal.

Q: Do we want overall GPA or do we want just their GPA from Mich Tech? A: We can make it both. At least 3.2 overall and at least 3.2 at Mich Tech. This will guarantee the quality. If other programs come forward and do something similar then the department would specify their own requirements of students. Motion approved with the amendment that we would add the 3.2 GPA.

C) Graduate Program Review Update (Associate Dean Murthy)

We have 4 departments who have volunteered. Forestry, Material Science, Chemistry and Humanities. We have collected the data and next week we plan to set up meetings with the departments to share the data. In January, we will have a follow up meeting with the 4 departments to talk about the issues that they would like to address after looking at the data and specific questions we might have for them to think about before they write their
review. We will have a better sense after we come back from thanksgiving break. Some departments have asked that we meet with the Chair and the Director of the Graduate Program Committee others have asked to meet with the Chair and all of the graduate programs committee members. Different departments have asked us to meet with different leaders in their department. Whomever you would like to have us share the data with. We are looking forward to starting the review.

Q: Will the 4 that are part of this be able to request additional data between the initial data sharing and the meeting in January? A: Absolutely. We are sharing what we think is the essential minimum data that you need but depending on the department you might want additional data.

Q: What is the rough time line of the completion of this process? A: We want it to be done by April. The second meeting may be better in February and not January. Just a conversation to discuss what the department has learned from the data, questions and issues that may need to be addressed. At the end of March we will get a letter from the department, a draft, saying how they are evaluating their department. We will then finish up in April where the graduate school will send the letter to the Dean saying what you suggested and where you expect to be in the next 2 years.

Q: A major concern is how extensive should the report be. How many hours will you need to invest to prepare some of these reports? A: It could be 2 pages, 5 pages, or 20 pages because it is a self-assessment. We want the department to decide how complex you would like to go to evaluate your program.

4) New Business:

A) Professional Training time limits for the international students, CPT and OPT (D. Slade)
I want to talk about CPT, curriculum practical training. OPT is offered after a student graduates from Mich Tech but CPT happens while they are still a student. Government regulations say that there are only two ways a student can take advantage of CPT. One, if it is an integral part of their academic program, a required component of their academic program or if it is credit bearing. Since none of our program require our students to have work experience we promote all of our international students to take advantage of CPT through co-op credit. It was a grey area for a long time but this was one way that we could streamline the process for our students to still be able to take advantage of work experience. Requirements of CPT: 1) They have to complete their first year of studies. 2) Students can do up to 364 days of CPT and still qualify for OPT. Students typically want to take all 364. As an F1 Visa student their primary purpose for being here is to be a student. An F1 student has to make satisfactory academic progress. I want to be in a position to demonstrate to the government that our students are making satisfactory academic progress. If they are out of session, they are not enrolled or physically here at the University for a full year, that potentially puts a student in a difficult situation and can potentially put us in a difficult situation. What I propose is to only allow students to take two consecutive semesters of CPT, this doesn’t mean that they can’t come back take classes for a semester and then go back and take another semester of CPT, limiting their ability to do CPT consecutively for only 2 semesters. Now that is saying that they are working off campus, if they are working on campus they can work up to 20 hours while they are studying during the school year. In the summer they can work up to 40 hours on campus. One caveat, a student could take CPT for fall and spring and then work 40 hours in the summer on campus. So they have potentially gone a whole year without taking any academic courses. I think this would be the only loophole that would come into play.

Q: So these three semesters would delay their graduation? A: They will delay it anyway if they take one semester of CPT.
Q: Is there any GPA requirement? A: No, but career services requires a 3.0 for graduate student co-op’s.

Q: Do you have to report their satisfactory academic progress before or after they do CPT? A: The government wants us to demonstrate throughout their course work. They want to make sure they are making satisfactory academic progress towards their degree. If they are out of session for a full year how do I demonstrate that they are making this progress. I want to have a way for the students to still be able to take advantage of CPT opportunity as well as maintain their status as a student and demonstrate somehow that they are taking course work and they are doing what they need to do to graduate.

Q: When they do a Co-op they do get a grade correct? A: Yes, they get a grade and they technically have to be enrolled full time. The coop is only one credit and is technically not academic. If they register for one semester of co-op they are considered full time because there is a curriculum around the co-op program.

Q: I am still not clear of the change that you are suggesting? A: That they are only allowed to take 2 consecutive semesters of CPT. Right now I do not have a cap and there are not any limits. This would be an institutional policy. Every university does it a little different. The government allows us to have institutional policies as long as we are following the guidelines of their visa. Other institutions that have CPT say that if it not an integral part of their academic study you cannot take advantage of CPT.

Q: They can work in summer 40 hours on campus. Off campus? A: Not off campus, they have to be approved through CPT to work off campus.

Q: With the mechanical department we do allow at most one co-op credit to be counted toward a degree in lieu of a seminar that we require 2 of. Students generally plan their schedule so that the co-op is their final and 30th required credit. So they do CPT their last semester and essentially they are gone and they will never come back cause they will transition into OPT. So that would still be allowable under this? A: As long as the department signs off on the paper work.

Q: I can see one other possible issue, I know we have had a PhD Student who was doing their research under co-op and in that case that third semester they would have to be enrolled in 9 credits but they could still be at ford, they wouldn’t physically have to be here because they are enrolled in 9 research credits? A: Correct, if they do it that way they have the option to do that. I do not have a problem with that.

Q: My issue is why we are comfortable saying that they are making good progress after 2 semesters but not after 3? If the government allows us to go 364 days, we should not be more conservative than the federal government legally allows. The courses that they took last before they left for CPT do not change whether it has been 1 semester or 3 semesters. The same benchmark of progress is being used each semester they are gone so it should not matter if they are gone 3 rather than 2. This would only take away flexibility from students who might benefit from this.

In the interest of moving things forward I would suggest that we give this some thought before our next meeting. If we could get a brief proposal that indicates what the situation is at the moment and what the change is that you would like to make and then discuss that nest time.

B) Registration hold on missing Advisor and Committee Recommendation form (H. Hiner)
Students would have a hold put on their account if they have not submitted their advisor and committee recommendation form by the end of their second semester. The reason behind this is prompted by the reimplementation of digital measures. We are trying to get the data accurate and timely. In the graduate area it is a small piece. The graduate advisee
area is not up to date. Currently there is a system in place where a form is submitted but it is not required at a certain point and from what is understood reminders are sent out for students to do it but nothing compels them to. The hold would require the student to submit the form in a more timely fashion. I would point out that this means that the faculty are going to get more accurate information and therefore there are less things that they have to put in or try to change in digital measures. If they change their advisor or a committee member they can revise the form to reflect that. We will discuss this again at our next meeting and vote.

Q: Routinely in Humanities students don’t have their advisors set up by the second semester partly because of the nature of the program. So what about situations like that? A: How the hold would be waived would have to be worked out for situations like this. Would there be a program director for the entire department that could be the advisor default? The director would then carry the load until someone is an advisor for the individuals.

C) MS in Cybersecurity Proposal (Z. Wang)
This is a master’s program that is being proposed by three units across campus. The department of computer science, electrical engineering, and the school of Technology. There will be three tracks. Each track will contain 4 courses offered by each unit. There will be a total of 30 credits. There will also be elective courses. It has been looked at by the Deans Council and approved. We will have a further discussion about it and vote, so that it can go to the Senate at the next GFC meeting.

5) Motion to adjourn at 5:02 pm.