Minutes of the Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Tuesday, December 6, 2011

Members (12): Thomas Drummer (Math), Ashutosh Tiwari (Chem), Craig Friedrich (MEEM), Eugene Levin (Sch Tech), Barry Solomon (SocSci), Paul Ward (Cog Sci), Mike Bowler (Rhet), Steve Seidel (CS), Mi Hye Song (Bio Sci), Tim Eisele (Chem Eng), Blair Orr (PCMI), Warren Perger (Non Dept Comp Sci)

Guests (6): Heather Suokas (Grad Sch), Debra Charlesworth (Grad Sch), Nancy Byers-Sprague (Grad Sch), Felicia Chong (GSG), Jacque Smith (Grad School), Erik Nordberg (Libr)

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

2) Review and approval of 11/01/11 meeting minutes.

3) Committee Reports:
   a. Thesis/Dissertation Guideline Review Committee (J. Smith): On behalf of Dean Huntoon J. Smith reported that the committee is working on the guidelines and progress is being made.

4) Old Business:
   a. Changes to GACS (J. Smith): On behalf of Dean Huntoon J. Smith gave the following update: The GFC’s concerns have been brought to the deans and Provost and discussions will continue. The concept of allowing voluntary committed cost-share for proposals in which cost-share is identified as a review criterion has been discussed with Julie Seppala. Julie will bring this topic to the Research Advisory Council. If people can provide Julie Seppala with examples of solicitations that include such language that would be helpful to her so that she can have some concrete examples of the types of language that people encounter. T. Eisele from Chemical Engineering submitted a proposal on December 5 with the type of language referred to above. He will forward the example along to Julie Seppala and will carbon copy Dean Huntoon.
   b. PhD Guidelines (Dean Huntoon): Postponed until the January 17 meeting.
   c. TOEFL Minimum Score (J. Smith): At the last GFC meeting J. Smith asked that the members bring this proposal back to their departments for feedback. It is proposed that a recommended minimum score of 55 iBT for TOEFL be put in place. Applicants receiving a score of less than 55iBT would be rejected by the Graduate School and their files would not be forwarded to departments/programs for review. This does not affect departments/programs criteria. This would not be put on any website. This would be for internal use. If somebody has a TOEFL score below 55 iBT, the University does not have English language resources on campus for them. If we do not have resources to help these students to be successful the Graduate School would like to lighten the load of workflows being sent to departments and reject them within the Graduate School. This will be voted on during the January 17 meeting.

5) New Business:
   a. Automated Probation and Suspension (N. Byers-Sprague): This fall probation and suspension will be automated. The new policies are in place for probation and suspension. In a couple of weeks student records will show no prior probation. After the fall semester, students will be on probation for the first time. The letter will be generated by email for all of your students who are on probation. The department chair, advisor, graduate program director, and student will get a copy via email. In addition to the email, the student will also receive a hardcopy of the letter. If a first year, first semester graduate student receives an I (incomplete) in a special topics course (which would be taken off campus and the student’s only course) due to reasons outside of the student’s control will they be put on automatic probation? Yes, the advisor and graduate program director can communicate with Nancy about the circumstances and resolve the issue. Nobody will be put on automatic suspension at the end of the fall semester (this automated process will begin at the end of the following spring semester) but you can suspend students that qualify by communicating the need to N. Byers Sprague. Are all of the probation consequences made
at the department level? For example, a student in mechanical engineering is not qualified for a GTA position upon suspension. Is there a University policy that says that? No, there is not a policy that says that. This may fall more in the code of conduct rules. The Dean of Student’s office would be monitoring this. D. Charlesworth will look into this. N. Byers Sprague will be sending out an email to the directors tomorrow informing them that if they want to move towards probation, suspension, or dismissal for anyone who is failing to make good progress for any reason other than GPA or research grades, you need to let N. Byers Sprague know. How many notices get sent out each semester? It seems to average around fifty. Will the GPA be updated when a course is retaken? That is a separate issue but the Registrar’s office is working with Information Systems to turn on the automatic GPA recalculation. This was turned off in the past because very few graduate students repeated a course. It happens more frequently now. D. Charlesworth adds that she has updated the website with the most current appeals, dismissal, suspension, and good academic standing policies.

b. Outstanding Student Awards Nomination Deadline (N. Byers Sprague): The Spring banquet will be much earlier than usual - Feb 4. As a result, nominations for Spring/Summer Outstanding awards will have to be made by January 20th at the latest. Please start discussions soon. N. Byers Sprague will send out a reminder early January. Thank you for your cooperation on this and sorry for the early deadline.

c. Conditional vs. Provisional Admission (J. Smith): There has been confusion as to which term, conditional or provisional, should apply so Dean Huntoon has combined the terms and will now be called provisional admittance. Provisional admission is a departmental program decision. Your department will define the provisions as well as the time line given to meet the provisions. Deficiencies that may be considered for provisional admission are low or missing test scores, poor English language proficiency, or missing prerequisite courses. Specifications of a request for provisional admission may also be included in a student’s statement of purpose. Graduate directors will comment in workflow if they are admitting provisionally, the conditions, and the timeline. Students will be coded in banner which will allow us to run reports on provisionally admitted students. Graduate programs will monitor provisionally accepted students and notify the Graduate School about students who do not complete the requirements. A suggestion was made to add a deadline date in banner so that when a report is run you can see if a student’s deadline is about to expire or has expired.

d. Reduced Binding Options- Info Item (D. Charlesworth): The Graduate School sends the pdf documents of a thesis, dissertation, or report requesting binding to the Library and they act as the middle man to send them to Heckman Bindery for the document to be bound. We have experienced an increase in documents and in students requesting binding. We have also seen a lot of errors in the bindery. Some errors are due to the multitude of options students have to choose from. The Library has asked the Graduate School to limit the number of options that the students can select so that it streamlines processing on their end. The option would be black covers with white print and plain paper. The student could still select whether they want double or single sided, pages printed in color or not, but all the documents will be printed the same way. We will provide information to students who wish to have their document bound themselves. This will be implemented spring 2012 semester.

6) Motion to adjourn at 4:45 pm.