Minutes of the Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Members (14): Andrew Storer (SFRES), Keat Ghee Ong (Biomed), Louisa Kramer (Geo), Kari Henquinet (PCorps), John Durocher (BioSci), Ashutosh Tiwari (Chem), Audrey Mayer (SocSci), Jiguang Sun (Math), Noel Urban (Non-Dept.Env), Mari Buche (Bus), Caryn Heldt (ChemEng), Andrew Swartz (Civ&Env), Warren Perger (Elec&Comp), Patty Sotirin (Rhet)

Guests (7): Jackie Huntoon (Grad Sch), Debra Charlesworth (Grad Sch), Nancy Byers-Sprague (Grad Sch), Jacque Smith (Grad Sch), Amberlee Haselhuhn (GSG), Laura Brown (Comp Sci), Dan de Beaubien (IT), Josh Olson (IT)

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

2) Review and approval of 11/05/13 meeting minutes with two amendments which will be updated and added to the GFC website.

3) Committee Reports:
   b. Thesis/Dissertation Review Committee: This committee has met and has a report. You will find the report on the handouts section of the GFC website (January 14, 2014 meeting).

4) Old Business:
   a. Rhetoric and Technical Communications Program Name Change (R. Strickland): In changing the name the key word “Rhetoric” has been maintained. To educators in the Humanities, this term implies “communication,” and signals the program’s commitment to understand communication in relation to its “historicity” and systemic functions. The second term—“Theory”—indicates the program’s focus on issues of the relationship between humans and their technologies. For scholars in the Humanities, the term invokes a tradition of scholarship concerned with the modern world’s changing relationships among individuals, our languages and social structures, and the physical environments. Networked environments and social media such as Facebook and Twitter are profoundly changing the ways people communicate in all areas of work, family and social life. These developments call for new ways of communicating that incorporate visual design with conventional text, and deploy various rhetorical strategies across different delivery platforms such as mobile phones and tablets. The fast-paced developments in digital media require the teaching of new skills, and new ways of teaching. The term “Theory” expresses the program’s commitment to explore and develop these methods and to prepare graduates to take them into their future classrooms and workplaces. The third term—“Culture”—reinforces the program’s emphasis on communication and social interaction. The term also refers to the expertise in areas such as diversity and globalization. Globalization is transforming our workplaces and our societies. Students who can recognize and understand cultural differences will be better equipped for the job market and for their future lives.

   • (Q): Was consideration given to propose this as a completely new program or spin-off?
   • (A): Yes, that was considered. After quite a bit of discussion and consideration it was determined that it made more sense to change the name.
   • (Q): Are there plans to change the curriculum?
   • (A): Yes, but that is a separate process.
   • TO DO: Please take the proposal (handouts section of the GFC website) back to your departments and bring feedback to the next GFC meeting. Please be prepared to vote.
a. Update on School of Technology’s Dual Degree Program: Geodesy and Remote Sensing (Dean Huntoon): There were some concerns passed on from the Curriculum Policy Committee. These concerns are being addressed. A dual degree proposal cannot be a way to establish a new degree. A dual degree program should be for the purpose of attracting new students. These programs are reviewed at a minimum of once every five years. The balance of revenue and student mobility is looked at carefully.

5) New Business:

a. Data Sciences Master’s Program Proposal (L. Brown/M. Buche): This proposal describes a plan for a new master’s degree program. The proposed Master of Science (MS) in Data Science will be the first non-departmental master’s degree at Michigan Tech. The MS in Data Science has three main objectives: i) to attract students from various disciplines who wish to learn the basics of data analysis, data science, and computing tools; ii) to teach students basic skills in communication and build their awareness of business contexts; and iii) to provide students the opportunity to gain domain specific skills that give them the ability to analyze large data sets, including Big Data. What the department feels is the real strength of this program is that it is multidisciplinary and the students will get the fundamental skills and be able to go much deeper into a particular domain which is unique in data science. There is a large demand for this type of skill set. The department is responding to industry need.

   • (C): This will be the first non-departmental MS program at Tech. The Provost and Deans tasked Dean Huntoon with setting up a standardized framework for the administration, review, and oversight for all non-departmental programs. The administrative structure in the proposal has come from the new framework.
   • (Q): Have the faculty lines and GA lines been approved and if the GA lines have been approved where is that money coming from?
   • (A): Dean Huntoon’s understanding is that recommendations should be made about the lines which will carry through the approval process. Ultimately, the budget team will be approving the funds.
   • (C): There are potential donors involved in this proposal as well.
   • (C): The proposal should clearly state who is teaching each class and if it is additional teaching or are they going to get relieved of teaching other courses.
   • (A): Most of the proposed courses were already in the works. They have gone through the binder process.
   • (C): The above response should be stated in the proposal.
   • (C): Mark Rouleau, a faculty member in Social Sciences, teaches an introductory course to computational social sciences. He may be somebody to reach out to and to potentially add his course to the curriculum.

   • **TO DO:** Please take the proposal (handouts section of the GFC website) back to your departments and bring feedback to the next GFC meeting. Please be prepared to vote.


   • **TO DO:** Please take the proposal (handouts section of the GFC website) back to your departments and bring feedback to the next GFC meeting. Please be prepared to vote.

c. Non-departmental/Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs (Dean Huntoon): The idea is that a graduate program director who is appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School manages the program on a day-to-day basis. The graduate program faculty is nominated by the graduate program steering committee, approved by relevant Chair/Dean, approved by Graduate School for adjunct faculty status. This gives them authority to serve as the primary advisor to the student. The Dean’s intent is to start meeting with the program leaders once a semester. In the handout section of the GFC website you will find the characteristics and governances of non-departmental/interdisciplinary programs.

   • (C): It would be useful to know how many people apply and are accepted to these types of programs.
• **TO DO:** Please take the proposal (handouts section of the GFC website) back to your departments and bring feedback to the next GFC meeting. Please be prepared to vote.

d. **IT Representatives to Address Issues/Concerns (D. de Beaubien/J. Olson):** There have been concerns/questions about graduate student computing after the lab centralization including gradlab computing, information learning commons, cost of color printing, equipment purchase through IT, meeting the software needs of graduate students, and administrative access to computers. IT addressed those concerns via PowerPoint presentation. The presentation is posted on the GFC website. Any questions/concerns/comments should be forwarded to A. Storer for him to collate and pass on to IT. When the responses are collected from IT they will be posted on the GFC website.

6) **Motion to adjourn at 5:03 pm.**