Minutes of the Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Tuesday, October 6, 2009

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

Members (13): Bill Yarroch (ASE), Ruth Archer (SBE), Shiyue Fang (Chem), Louise Nelson Dyble, James Pickens (SFRES), Simon Carn (Geo & Min Eng), Jianping Dong (Math), Craig Friedrich (ME-EM), Judith Perlinger (Non-Dept Envir), Blair Orr (Peace Corp), Kim Fook Lee (Physics), Beth Flynn (HU), Brian Davis (Sch of Tech)

Guests (6): Heather Suokas (Grad Sch– recording secretary), Debra Charlesworth (Grad Sch), Jackie Huntoon (Grad Sch), Nancy Byers Sprague (Grad Sch), Randy Harrison (GSC), Alex Mayer (Geo)

2) Review and approval of 9/15/09 meeting minutes.

3) Old Business
   a. Procedures to Prepare and Submit a Thesis or Dissertation to Michigan Technological University’s Graduate School (D. Charlesworth): A revised document including revisions received from the Graduate Faculty Council and the Graduate Student Council was posted on the GFC website. Members were asked to review the changes and bring their comments. Dr. Orr would like a revision made to the text in paragraph one, sentence three on page twenty-one, section 3.8 (Research involving human and vertebrate animal subjects). This sentence needs to clarify that all research involving human subjects requires approval not just research that causes distress or harm. Several typographical errors were forwarded to Dr. Charlesworth. These changes will be incorporated before this is brought to the Senate. Motion to approve the procedures with above changes passed.
   b. Proposal to Instate a Graduate Dean’s Teaching Award (J. Dong): Jianping Dong is working on a draft proposal.
   c. Parental/Maternal Accommodation for Graduate Students (J. Huntoon): A revised proposal was posted on the GFC website. Members were asked to review the changes and bring their comments. Dean Huntoon revised the draft proposal to clarify that this policy also includes adoption. She also clarified that the maternal period can start before the birth or adoption but is still limited to six weeks. Questions/Comments: a question was raised about the six week limit and how this was agreed upon. Dean Huntoon responded that Graduate Student Council (in a prior year) helped to determine an appropriate length of time based on student needs and the available funding. In the case of a medical emergency during the maternity accommodation period the university offers medical withdrawal and can be used in addition to the maternity accommodation. Another comment raised was the University’s lack or lactation facilities and accommodations. This would be an entirely separate proposal. Should the text specifically state that the student is not responsible for finding a replacement for their absence? Yes, the Dean will add this text to the proposal. How much will this cost the university per year? The Dean researched this three or four years ago and estimated the total cost to be $15,000 per year. With the above mentioned change, motion to approve the policy passed.
   d. Graduate Program Review (J. Huntoon): The committee has met twice. The first meeting was to brainstorm and discuss goals and during the second meeting a rough draft of the policy was outlined.
e. Dismissal/Appeal/Grievance Policy: (J. Huntoon): The committee has met twice where they discussed the University’s current policy as well as the policy that CU Boulder has in place.

5) New Business
   a. Forms Update (D. Charlesworth): The Graduate School has combined, eliminated and streamlined forms in order to reduce the amount of paperwork that graduate students need to turn in. The new forms protect against errors. When online filling out a form, students are to click the “Highlight” field in the top right hand corner of the form. All the fields that require text in order for the form to be printed appear outlined in red. All the fields that are text boxes appear in grey. The form will detect errors in the student’s M numbers (Michigan Tech I.D. numbers) if the number is not long enough or does not include the letter “M.” After the student uses the drop down menu to select their degree program, only the fields pertinent to that program will appear. The form then automatically displays the signature requirements of that particular department (director or chair). If the form is not complete when the student hits the “print” button an error message will appear and will inform them of what they need to do to complete the form. Adobe Acrobat Professional 8, 9 or Acrobat Reader 8, 9 accommodate these forms. These forms require signatures and therefore need to be printed and submitted. These forms cannot be submitted electronically. If any units are interested in modifying these forms for their unit they can contact Dr. Charlesworth in the Graduate School for additional information.
   b. Proposal for Graduate Certificate in Sustainable Water Resources Systems (A. Mayer): The proposal was posted on the GFC website. Members were asked to review and bring their comments. This proposal is already being reviewed by the Senate Curriculum Committee and is near approval. The purpose of this certificate proposal is for students to understand water resource systems including the aspects of environmental policy and geology. This certificate has a fifteen credit requirement. On page three there was a question regarding computing access fees. This proposal states that there are no computing access fees. This is correct because students in certificate programs only (that is, who are not also enrolled as degree-seeking students) are considered “non-degree seeking” and do not have a home department and do not have access to computers on campus. Dean Huntoon is to look into the computer access fees/non-degree seeking issue further. Motion to approve the proposal passed with the expectation of further investigation of the computer access fee.
   c. Proposal for International Profile (W. Rose): The proposal was posted on the GFC website. Members were asked to review and bring their comments. The goal of this certificate is to raise awareness of the international components of working with people and environments of different cultures. This is a non-departmental certificate and would be available to degree-seeking as well as non-degree seeking students. Peace Corps International students will qualify for this certificate but the intention is that this will not be specifically for Peace Corps students. The design is flexible with emphasis on components that are already used. The proposed certificate has a 12 credit requirement. The justification of the 12 credits is “total MS is 30 credits and 20 credits of course work is normal. We cannot justify a higher number and many grad certificates at other institutions exist at 12 credits.” Our University Senate has a proposal in place that states all graduate certificates are to have a 15 credit minimum requirement. (Proposal 20-04: http://www.sas.it.mtu.edu/usenate/propose/04/20-04.htm) After discussion with suggestions about offering credit for the language requirement it was decided that a proposal will be submitted to modify the University’s proposal on credit requirements. Dean Huntoon will lead this. Motion to table the Proposal for International Profile until next GFC meeting was passed.
6) Motion to adjourn at 5:10 pm.