Minutes of the Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Tuesday, March 24, 2015

Members (15): Andrew Storer (SFRES); Leonard Bohmann (MasEng); Mari Buche (BusAdmin&DataSci); Qinghui Chen (Kin); Craig Friedrich (MEEM); Kari Henquinet (PCorps); Ebenezer Tubman (BioSci); Julie King (Chem Eng); Louisa Kramer (Geo); Audrey Mayer (ScoSci); Shane Mueller (CogSci); Keat Ghee Ong (BioEng); Patty Sotirin (RTC); Jiguang Sun (Math); Zhenlin Wang (CompSci)

Guests (7): Brian Barkdoll (Senate); Deb Charlesworth (Grad Sch); Jacqueline Huntoon (Grad Sch); Amie Ledgerwood (Grad Sch); Nancy Byers Sprague (Grad Sch); Sasha Teymorian (GSG); Annelise Doll (Lib)

1) Meeting called to order at 4:04 p.m.

2) Review and approval of 3/3/15 meeting minutes.

3) Committee Reports:
   a. Graduate Faculty Review Guidelines. No report.

4) Old Business:
   a. Proposal to Change Binding Options (D. Charlesworth): Removes the requirement for bound theses or dissertations; theses and dissertations would be approved by the Graduate School once all requirements have been met and sent to the Digital Commons (J. Robert Van Pelt and John and Ruanne Opie Library) where they will be archived. Students wanting a bound copy would be provided with options (i.e., Hecla Binding, ProQuest, and others as available) for ordering a bound copy. Departments could still require bound copies, but it would be up to them to enforce their own policy. Discussion followed regarding cost, margins, current archive situation, current processes for producing bound copies and the demands on staff in the Library and Graduate School.
      • Proposal passed with two opposing votes.
      • Brian Barkdoll will take to the University Senate as an informational item.
      • Post-Meeting Note: Senate approved as informational item 4/1/15
   b. Proposal to Reduce Required Signatures for Dissertations, Theses, and Reports (D. Charlesworth): From Pre-Defense form to final completion, this proposal will reduce the number of and type of signatures required on certain forms. Would like to move to having some of the processes completed online which will be easiest for all if requirements are standardized. Discussion ensued regarding required signatures on the final oral examination, particularly if a student fails or passes with conditions. It is important that someone outside the committee has knowledge of these outcomes. Discussion followed regarding who in the department would sign/ the pre-defense and the report on final examination. There was also discussion regarding changing the form to require a departmental approval if fail or conditional pass was the outcome. Some indicated that departments should receive notification of pre-defense forms being submitted; Graduate School staff noted that there would not be a problem in doing this. A good point was made that was off the primary topic: departments and advisors
and students need to be alerted when students when students are eligible for research-only mode. This will be revisited in the future.

- Passed with the change to having departments sign off showing they are aware of a fail or conditional pass.
- This will be brought to the Senate as an information item.
- Graduate School staff will work with programmers to try to automate the process of alerting students and advisors of eligibility for research mode.

**Post-Meeting Note:** Senate approved as informational item 4/1/15

### c. Review of Formatting and Document Requirements (D. Charlesworth)
Graduate School has received feedback from students, faculty, and staff that they would like a simpler format for documents. The Graduate School would like feedback before revising the document fall semester 2015; suggestions regarding a working group or committee were suggested. The handout is a summary showing what the current requirements are (the important information is summarized in the 2 page handout preceding the Revision of Guide to Preparing a Dissertation, Thesis, or Report; the question is, “should this be changed?”) It was decided that graduate faculty would bring this back to their constituents for discussion and comments; however, departmental review should wait until the Senate decides on the Proposal for Binding Options as this will affect the binding options information. Sasha Teymorian will also present this at the next Graduate Student Government meeting (scheduled for 3/30/15). Discussion followed regarding the margins and length of the document if the Graduate School no longer requires bound theses and dissertations. Moving forward with bringing this to department’s with discussion to follow at a later date.

- Unanimously passed to discuss with respective constituents following the binding outcome as an informational item on Senate the floor (4/1/15).

**Post-Meeting Note:** Senate approved the informational item to no longer require bound copies of theses and dissertations 4/1/15; formatting can now be brought to department’s for discussion.

The guide has been edited to conform with changes at the University (i.e., submission deadlines, degree completion timeline, and MyMichiganTech portal). The Graduate School is currently sending notices to faculty asking for approval rather than sending students back and forth between department’s and the Graduate School. If binding requirements change to no longer being required, it will be possible to move these types of approvals to the new forms (requiring signatures only once). The document would direct people to the web site rather than updating and printing documents on a continual basis. Having one place where procedural information exists will be much easier for students as they have said they like going to one place for all their information. This Guide improves communication. Editing would be done over the summer to include updates following the Senate’s outcome.

- Unanimously passed to bring Guide to Senate as an informational item 4/1/15.

**Post-Meeting Note:** Senate approved the Guide as an informational 4/1/15.

### 5) New Business:

- Clarification Regarding Use of Research Credits in Coursework Degrees (N. Byers-Sprague): Clarify that students cannot, in general, use research credits as
coursework. The wording clarifies that the practice of applying research credits toward a coursework degree is not automatic and will require both recommendation by a program and approval by the Graduate School. Previous wording made it sound like only a department would need to approve the change of research to coursework, which is not true. The Graduate School asks for deliverables as well as departmental approval before considering any request to apply research credits toward a coursework degree.

- Unanimously passed to change wording.

6) Meeting adjourned at 4:59 p.m.