Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Thursday, April 21, 2016, 4-5 pm

Minutes

Members (16): Andrew Storer (SFRES), Craig Friedrich (MEEM), Zhenlin Wang (CompSci), Mari Buche (DataSci), Tom Merz (Bus Admin), Kelly Steelman (CogSci), Jiguang Sun (Math), Eugene Levin (SOT), Ebenezer Tumban (Bio), Scott Marratto (RTC), Karla Kitalong (RTC) Veronica Webster (CivEnvEng), Feng Zhao (BioMed), Leonard Bohmann (Meng), Noel Urban (Envir), Tim Eisele (ChemEng), Qinghui Chen (Kin), Thomas Oommen (Geo), Michael Roggemann (Elec)

Guests (7): Debra Charlesworth (Grad Sch), Nancy Byers Sprague (Grad Sch), Nicole Rubino (Grad Sch), Sarah Lucchesi (Lib), Alex Guth (Grad Sch), Will Lytle (GSG)

1) Meeting called to order at 4:08 pm.

2) Review and approval of 04/05/16 meeting minutes.

3) Old Business:

   a. Assessment of graduate programs (A. Guth)

   The Master of Forestry Program has volunteered to start the assessment process. The Humanities and Chemistry departments have also confirmed. Andrew Storer has created a rubric of their process to assist other programs.

   A report must be sent to the Higher Learning Commission in spring of 2018. They want every department to have learning goals articulated. At the end of fall 2016 all departments must have articulated student learning objectives and have started the assessment process.

   Changes made to the document:

   1) Wording has been changed to goals rather than learning outcomes so that it is more consistent with the university leaning goals.

   2) Minor changes to dates

   3) The rubric at the end now has four categories.

   The handout includes the Graduate Schools suggested learning goals. You may review the document and create your own learning goals and assessment process.

There was a discussion about using google forms or self-populating forms.

Q) How will these forms be distributed to graduate students to bring to their defense (C. Nikula)

A) This will need to be discussed further to determine the most efficient format for all departments.

A) Is unacceptable too negative of a term? They weren’t considered unacceptable to be accepted into the graduate school.
Q) The “unacceptable” in the last category is saying that they should not be in the graduate school. Marginal means they need improvement. We don’t want to employ euphemistic encouragement to students.
A) Is weeding out students the goal of assessment?
Q) No, but this could be a by-product of the assessment of individual students. If we assess that they are not going to make it in the program then we should tell them this.

A) With the undergraduate learning goals the students never actually see the assessment. It is a reflection of the program.

Q) The students may be given both forms instead of just giving a student a pass/fail. This will assist in the professional development of the student.

The number of students is small so to collect meaningful data you are assessing every student. Whether you decide to pass or fail a particular student is not important for the assessment. We want you to be able to say 50% of our students passed at satisfactory or excellent etc.

A question was brought up as to who will be paying for the external review of programs. The provost will continue to fund 90% of the travel expenditures and 10% will be covered by the unit.

b. GTA Proficiencies and Training (P. Murthy)

The Form has been modified slightly. You may change Table 1 and Table 2 to suit your department. Table 3 and 4 stays the same. Hyperlinks will be added to the proficiencies form.

Q) What does it mean when it says the instructor of record must have a degree higher than students being taught?
A) Current requirements define this as those graduate students who sign the grade sheets must be categorized as GTI’s if they don’t sign the grade sheet they are GTA’s. What we need to do for higher learning commission is to document that the GTI/GTA’s are closely supervised and have received appropriate training. So even if they don’t have a master’s degree but we document how we have supervised and trained them then it will be fine with the Higher Learning Commission. The GTA proficiencies will come in useful as documentation of the proficiencies the students have met and how they have met the proficiencies.

Q) On table three, Method to Satisfy Proficiencies. Do we need to have two have 2 forms of speaking tests? There is a speaking portion in the TOEFL so why would language assessment in testing center be necessary? What if a student has a high speaking score in TOEFL but cannot pass the language assessed in testing center?
A) TOEFL scores are used as a basis for admission requirements and on this basis we will give teaching assignments but often there is not a correlation between their scores
and their actual speaking ability. This is why we need the language to be assessed in the teaching center.
The board of trustees is saying that you cannot put a student in front of a class until they have passed language assessment. We need to know how each department is going to ensure this.

Q) Can the language proficiency be decided by the department and not by the English language assessment at the Testing Center?
A) What is likely being assessed by the Testing Center is conversational English – the ability to communicate with students and the ability to comprehend student questions.

Q) Mechanical spends 15 minutes on the phone for each incoming international student who is being brought on as a TA to make sure their communication skills are strong enough to be a TA. Is this acceptable?
A) This is a good point. This topic will be discussed with the Provost before arriving at a resolution.

This will need to be in place by fall per the Board or Trustees for new incoming GTA’s

4) Motion to adjourn at 5:00 pm.
April 21, 2016
(Last update: 04/12/16)

Handouts of the Graduate Faculty Council

Michigan Tech
Graduate Teaching Assistant Training

GTA work responsibilities are diverse depending on the roles they play

Graders or Lab Preparatory help: closely supervised; minimal interaction with students

Lab teaching assistant: closely supervised - substantial interaction with students

Recitation instructor: closely supervised – substantial interaction with students

Instructor of record: guided by a course coordinator – substantial interaction with students; carry major responsibilities

Survey of GTA Training in Departments

Departments with GTAs were surveyed: Most departments (13/17) have formal training (few hours to 2 weeks before classes). Mathematics, Humanities, Chemistry, Physics, and MEEM have many GTAs and extensive formal mentoring programs in place. The remaining 4 departments have faculty mentoring of individual TAs.

Course of Action Being Considered

I. Develop a list of proficiencies (in disciplinary knowledge, pedagogy, English proficiency and acculturation) for each role (grader, lab instructor, recitation instructor, instructor of record), that GTAs, both domestic and international, must achieve. A faculty/staff committee would help with this process.

II. Identify (or develop) resources on campus that satisfy the proficiencies. The University (CTL and IPS) has in place many formal and informal courses and other mechanisms to satisfy these requirements.

III. Ask departments to clarify how GTAs will satisfy training requirements in a timely manner. Departments may decide to take advantage of the extensive formal and informal training/mentoring/courses they have in place to satisfy most, if not all, of the requirements. Alternatively, departments can use the University offerings to satisfy the GTA requirements in pedagogy, English proficiency and acculturation training.

IV. Track and document (at the University or department level?) completion of appropriate training before serving as GTAs.

University Resources Available

1) Disciplinary knowledge: Academic departments: discipline-specific orientation programs; formal mentoring programs; required courses; informal faculty mentoring.
2) **Pedagogy: Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL):** Courses (ED0510 and ED5100); University Teaching and Learning Seminars (UTLs, 4-hour modules on specific instructional topics such as Instructional Basics, Grading, Learner-centered classroom, etc.); workshops.

    ED0510: 1-credit, 7-week long. Covers course preparation, educational testing and evaluation, instructional strategies, motivating students, institutional resources.

    ED5100: 1-credit, 7-week long. Covers instructional planning, delivery, and assessment in a higher education context (course syllabi, teaching portfolios, and teaching philosophy statements).

3) **Language assessment and training: CTL:** TOEFL > 79 for admitted students. Speaking assessment is conducted by CTL and the results (strong, acceptable, marginal, weak) communicated to departments. Follow-up activities by departments is not prescribed.

    International Graduate Student Communication and Cultural Center (IGSC3): individual mentoring/coaching; teaching practice, acculturation training, communication practice and pronunciation assistance.

    IESL conversation partners - program open to students, faculty and staff to practice communications one-on-one in an informal setting.

4) **Acculturation Training: International Programs and Services (IPS) and Humanities Department**

    Rights and Responsibilities: Mandatory for all international students; taken during grad student orientation.

    Life at Michigan Tech: a series of 3 seminars offered at the beginning of Fall and Spring semesters (Academic and social norms and shocking American culture; Getting ready for Winter; Winter Welcome Party).

    New course being developed with funding from the State of Michigan; working name: Cultural adjustment and student expectations at Michigan Tech.
GTA Proficiencies

Background
The course of action shown below is in response to questions by the Board of Trustees regarding proficiencies required by GTAs at Michigan Tech and how the satisfactory acquisition of proficiencies are being tracked.

Course of Action Being Considered
I. Develop a list of proficiencies (in disciplinary knowledge, pedagogy, English proficiency and acculturation) for each role (grader, lab instructor, recitation instructor, instructor of record) that GTAs, both domestic and international, must achieve.

II. Identify (or develop) resources on campus that satisfy the proficiencies. The University (CTL and IPS) has in place many formal and informal courses and other mechanisms to satisfy these requirements.

III. Ask departments or schools to clarify how GTAs will satisfy training requirements in a timely manner. Departments or schools may decide to take advantage of the extensive formal and informal training/mentoring/courses they have in place to satisfy most, if not all, of the requirements. Alternatively, departments or schools can use the University offerings to satisfy the GTA requirements in pedagogy, English proficiency and acculturation training.

IV. Track and document (at the University or department/school level?) completion of appropriate training before serving as GTAs.

Table 1. Draft of required disciplinary knowledge graduate students in instructional roles. Departments or schools need to complete “Disciplinary Knowledge” and “Methods to Satisfy Proficiencies” in Table 1, and may alter column 1 to better reflect the instructional roles in their unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Disciplinary knowledge</th>
<th>Method to Satisfy Proficiencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grader/Lab Prep</td>
<td>• Knowledge of …</td>
<td>• Performance in undergrad and grad courses at a high level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Safety relevant to position</td>
<td>• Successful completion of class taught (or equivalent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab Teaching Assistant</td>
<td>• Knowledge of …</td>
<td>• Above requirements, plus:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowledge of safety, emergency</td>
<td>• Successful completion of disciplinary material at least one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>classroom procedures and equipment safety</td>
<td>step beyond class taught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Safety certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recitation Instructor</td>
<td>• Above plus …</td>
<td>• Above requirements, plus:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Completion of Bachelor’s degree in discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• GTAs/GTIs have received appropriate training and are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>closely supervised. GTA: faculty signs grade sheet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor of Record</td>
<td>• Above plus …</td>
<td>• Above requirements, plus:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• GTAs/GTIs* have received appropriate training and are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>closely supervised. GTI: grad student signs grade sheet.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Draft of required pedagogical proficiencies for graduate students in instructional roles. Departments or schools may modify all columns of Table 2 to better reflect the instructional roles and the required proficiencies of graduate students in their unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Pedagogy Proficiencies</th>
<th>Method to Satisfy Proficiencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Grader/Lab Prep**         | • Articulate appropriate relationships between grading, student motivation and self-assessment  
                             | • Identify effective methods of maintaining grading consistency. (Rubrics, etc.)             | • CTL – **UTL 2**                                  |
| Minimal direct student      | • Efficiently provide useful feedback to students on tests and written assignments        | OR                                               |
| contact                     | • Use techniques to deter cheating and/or plagiarism on assessments                       | • Equivalent training within academic unit       |
|                             | • Show Understanding of FERPA as it relates to student work                               |                                                  |
| **Lab Teaching Assistant**  | • Apply classroom management strategies and best practices.                               | • CTL – **UTL 1 and UTL 2**                      |
| Instructional context/policies well defined. Closely supervised. | • Apply a basic understanding of student motivation when interacting with students in and out of class. | OR                                               |
|                             | • Locate and comply with university and federal regulations regarding instruction and safety | • Equivalent training within academic unit       |
| **Recitation Instructor**   | • Effectively prepare/present content considering media, pace, and audience.             | • CTL – **ED0510 (includes UTL 1 and UTL 2 plus additional content)**                     |
| Marginal flexibility in defining instructional context/policies. Closely supervised. | • Implement appropriate active learning techniques to accomplish specific goals in a classroom. | OR                                               |
|                             | • Aggregate student feedback to address student concerns in real time during class.       | • Equivalent training within academic unit       |
| **Instructor of Record**    | • Create and publish an interactive Canvas course (class content, pre-lecture quizzes, feedback surveys, discussion boards, etc.) | • CTL – **ED0510 and ED5100**                    |
| Instructional context/policies defined only by curriculum/program | • Communicate learning and assignment expectations: Syllabus, assignment descriptions, grading criteria rubrics and examples | OR                                               |
|                             | • Develop assignment-assessment-feedback cycles to support course learning outcomes      | • Equivalent training within academic unit       |
|                             | • Use best practices for group activities and peer review                                 |                                                  |
|                             | • Use online resources to support student learning while observing copyright law and fair use principles |                                                  |

Table 3. Draft of required English language proficiencies for graduate students in instructional roles
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>English language proficiencies</th>
<th>Method to Satisfy Proficiencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Grader/Lab Prep                     | • Able to communicate in English                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | • TOEFL score meets or exceeds admission requirements  
• Language Assessed in Testing Center  
• IGSC3 recommended to gain confidence in English communication                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Lab Teaching Assistant              | • Student’s English is generally understandable but contains some pronunciation and/or structural differences.  
• Student demonstrates acceptable listening comprehension by providing appropriate responses to assessment questions.                                                                                                                                                                                | • TOEFL score meets or exceeds admission requirements  
• Language Assessed in Testing Center at “Acceptable” level  
• IGSC3 recommended to improve communication skills and gain confidence presenting in the lab and interacting with students  
• If language assessment is not “Acceptable”, repeat Language Assessment after completing IGSC3                                                                                                                                               |
| Recitation Instructor               | • Student’s accented English is easy to understand.  
• Student demonstrates strong listening comprehension by providing thorough, informative responses to assessment questions                                                                                                                                                                         | • TOEFL score meets or exceeds admission requirements  
• Language Assessed in Testing Center at “Strong” level  
• IGSC3 recommended to support communication skills of instructional role  
• If language assessment is not “Strong”, repeat Language Assessment after completing IGSC3                                                                                                                                                 |
| Instructor of Record                | • Student’s accented English is easy to understand.  
• Student demonstrates strong listening comprehension by providing thorough, informative responses to assessment questions                                                                                                                                                                                    | • TOEFL score meets or exceeds admission requirements  
• Language Assessment in Testing Center at “Strong” level  
• IGSC3 recommended to support communication skills of instructional role  
• If language assessment is not “Strong”, repeat Language Assessment after completing IGSC3                                                                                                                                                 |
## Table 4. Draft of required acculturation proficiencies for all graduate students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Acculturation proficiencies</th>
<th>Method to Satisfy Proficiencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **All graduate students** | • Setting expectations in graduate school  
• Expectations of graduate students  
• Academic integrity at Michigan Tech  
• Basic responsible conduct for research training (plagiarism, mentor/mentee expectations, responsible data collection)  
• Title IX training  
• Advanced responsible conduct for research training (Ethical standards for research, publication practices, conflicts of interest, societal expectations) | • Campus Clarity (online Title IX course)  
• Graduate School orientation OR online CITI course for basic RCR training  
• Advanced RCR training – **on campus training** or **online training** (coursework or online students only) |
| **International graduate students** | • Rights and responsibilities (immigration requirements and US expectations)  
• Academic and social norms in the US  
• Winter in the Keweenaw  
• Discussion based Title IX training that incorporates differences between other cultures and the US (in development) | • Life @ Michigan Tech seminar (**Example**)  
• Workshops being developed: Cultural adjustment and student expectations at Michigan Tech |
Graduate Faculty Council—Draft Agenda

April 21, 2016

NOTE: all handouts are connected to a single pdf file.

1. Old Business:
   a. Assessment of Graduate Programs (A. Guth)
   b. GTA Training and Proficiencies (P. Murthy)