Graduate Faculty Council Minutes
January 23, 2018

Members Present: Judith Perlinger (Atmo Sci), Ebenezer Tumban (Bio Sci), Feng Zhao (Biomed Eng), Mari Buche (Bus), Veronica Webster (Civ Env Eng), Susan Amato-Henderson (Cog Learn Sci), Michael Roggemann (Elect & Comp Sci), Steve Elmer (Kinesiology), Qiuying Sha (Math), Craig Friedrich (MEEM), Eugene Levin (Sch of Tech), Melissa Baird (Soc Sci)

Guests Present: Pushpa Murthy (Grad Sch), Nancy Byers-Sprague (Grad Sch), Faith Morrison (Grad Sch), Mary Stevens (Grad Sch), Jacque Smith (Grad Sch), Hossein Tavakoli (GSG), Erin Matas (Library)

Approve previous minutes.
The minutes passed on a voice vote with no discussion.

Business before the Senate. None.

Old Business
1. Proposal for a new Master of Science degree in Applied Statistics, Department of Mathematical Sciences.

Students would have the option to take two courses online and then come to campus for the duration of the program. Jacque Smith and Mark Gockenbach, Chair of the Math department has been talking about offering the online courses to targeted countries other than Canada.

Erin Matas reminded everyone the library staff will help support a new program, to contact them for a review of what the library currently subscribes to, and to find out what the current collection is. Having knowledge of new programs will be helpful for the library staff in making decisions on how to reply to requests. In terms of long range planning, the library staff needs to know about new programs being offered so they can be prepared and collaborate more to determine if what they have is adequate.

Susie Amato-Henderson brought up that historically there was a process for departments to yearly submit a list of items they would like and the library would order what they could. However, that process was eliminated due to budget constraints. Erin said she will bring back that process.

The Master of Science degree in Applied Statistics passed on a voice vote with no abstention.
2. Proposal for a new Master of Science degree in Statistics, Department of Mathematical Sciences.

This program was being offered during the past ten years as a concentration and now the department is proposing to offer a stand-alone degree program.

The Master of Science degree in Statistics passed on a voice vote with no abstention.

3. Proposal for a new PhD in Statistics, Department of Mathematical Sciences.

This program was being offered during the past ten years as a concentration and now the department is proposing to offer a stand-alone degree program.

The PhD in Statistics degree passed on a voice vote with no abstention.

New Business

2. Graduate admissions: Timeline of responding to applicants and follow through. (P. Murthy, J. Smith)

Pushpa talked about the next three months being the peak application processing time for the Graduate School with reviewing applications, making acceptance decisions, and mailing acceptance letters.

The University’s strategic plan is to grow the graduate enrollment and in order to come close to the 2045 goal, the Graduate School is focusing on the next five years by growing at 3 or 4% per year. We are looking at enrollment numbers closely because low enrollment has negatively affected funding.

One of the steps the Graduate School has taken to enhance enrollment is to get applications to departments quickly. Over the past year, Graduate School staff have worked hard to get applications to departments for review within 24 hours.

The Graduate School wants department/programs to consider the following:

- Look at the time it takes departments and committees to review, respond, and to make a decision. Some departments respond quickly, and some departments take a long time. The Graduate School will be monitoring the process more closely and will prompt departments to move application decisions along.

- Separate the acceptance decision and funding decision because many departments wait to make a decision until they know if funding is available. The Graduate School recommends departments send the acceptance letter first and then follow up with the funding decision so students receive communication quickly from us.
• Time to review and make decisions for Master’s and PhD applicants differ because we do not need to consider research alignment for coursework Master’s applicants. Therefore, time to make decisions for coursework Master’s applications could be much less.
• Jacque reviewed week 21 data from this year and last year. Applications are down and most departments will not be seeing a lot of applications. Graduate student applications are down 12.5%, overall international has decreased 15.9%, international Master’s is down 21.6%, the College of Engineering is down 20.9%, and Science and Arts is up 7.6.

Departments should communicate with accepted students to make sure they feel connected to the University. The Graduate School needs departments to help with program-specific communications about the program, faculty, research, and their facilities. The Graduate School helps applicants through the process, by sending:

- Prospectuses – encourages students to start the application process;
- Applicants – reminders - goals to submit/complete;
- Ongoing communication through gradadams@mtu.edu;
- Checklist – MMT;
- Decision notification – 24 hour lag (MMT, Email, Acceptance Letter);
- I-20 communications for international students;
- CommUNITY letter from the President;
- Welcome letter from the Dean;
- Registration for orientation and classes.

We are also creating an email about the new tour website: https://www.mtu.edu/tour/. The gap is in program-specific information. Jacque is happy to talk more with departments about the communication plan.

3. Graduate Research Colloquium. (H. Tavakoli)

GSG is hosting the Graduate Research Colloquium where graduate students can practice their presentation before presenting at a conference. This is a good opportunity for them to prepare for job interviews. The competition is scheduled for February 27 and 28. Please promote this competition in your departments and help motivate the students to attend, and let your faculty know GSG is also looking for judges. Hossein will provide Mary details to pass along.

Motion to adjourn at 5:00 pm.