Minutes of the Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Tuesday 2/5/08 4:00 pm

0) Meeting called to order at 4:05 pm

Members(19): David Chesney (Chemistry), Chris Middlebrook (EEE), Richard Honrath (ATM), Wm. Yarroch (ASE), Craig Friedrich (MEEM), Phil Merkey (EPDS), Brian Davis (Technology), Judith Perlinger (EPD2), Emily McCarthy (GSC), Jimmy Diehl (GMES), Patrick Martin (SS), Shekar Joshi (Forestry), Brian Fick (SPH), Elizabeth Flynn (RTC), Michael Mullins (ECM), Yuliya Strizhakova (Business), Jianping Dong (SMAG), Tess Ahlborn (CEE), Jackie Huntoon (Graduate School – ex officio)

Guests(7): Debra Charlesworth (Graduate School – recording secretary), Eugene Levin (Technology), Peg Gale (SFRES), Ann Maclean (SFRES), Scott Amos (Technology), Marilyn Vogler (IPS), Brad Baltensperger (CLS)

1) Minutes of 12/4/07 and 1/15/08 were reviewed. A few typographical changes were noted and the minutes were accepted with the understanding that these changes would be addressed.

2) New Business
   a) Marilyn Vogler – gave a presentation regarding the rules and regulations surrounding employment of international students. Graduate students are typically on an F1 visa, while the J1 visa is for exchange students. Students must follow the rules of both the Graduate School and Homeland Security to work legally. No authorization is needed for a student on an F1 visa to accept on campus employment. On campus employment is defined by who cuts the check – not where the student physically performs the work. On-campus employment is limited to 20 hours/week during the academic year (Fall, Spring) and can be 40 hours/week during breaks (Spring break, Thanksgiving, etc.) or summer. Students on an F1 visa may also work off campus for up to 364 days (full time) before completion of their degree (Curricular Practical Training, CPT) or up to 12 months after completion of their degree (Optional Practical Training, OPT). At this time, the student must either have an H1 visa, or return to their country of citizenship. Marilyn distributed a spreadsheet based on the student’s projected graduation date and the impact of this on their ability to obtain an H1 visa. The rules are complex and the permission to obtain off-campus OPT employment can take time (up to three months). Students are advised to contact Marilyn as soon as possible to aid in processing these documents.

   b) Debra Charlesworth – re: Graduate School Fall Orientation
       Distributed a handout about the proposed changes to orientation which include a required component on academic integrity and responsible conduct for research. Feedback is requested on the timing of the events and whether or not both afternoons of orientation should be required.
c) Ann McClean – re: proposal for an interdisciplinary MS degree in Applied Geospatial Information Science
Ann described the increased need for engineers with expertise in geographic information systems and terrestrial remote sensing, especially those who have expertise in other areas. Plan A or B will only be offered, since it is felt that a research project is required to gain sufficient proficiency in these topics. A certificate is planned for the future that will address the needs of students who would like to have advanced coursework in the area. There is no other comparable program in the upper Midwest, and the difference between the proposed program and others that exist is that the proposed program has a stronger quantitative background. The program will capitalize on existing resources and courses in the School of Technology (Surveying), the School of Forest and Environmental Resources, and the departments of Mathematics and Geological and Mining Engineering. This is a revised proposal based on feedback from a prior GFC meeting.

d) Eugene Levin – re: proposal to develop a center and graduate programs in the field of Geospatial Technologies
See handouts for proposal and presentation slides. Eugene gave a short presentation about the importance of Geospatial Technologies and noted that this initiative is complementary to Ann Maclean’s proposal. The program as proposed is unique, but would need additional resources since all programs in Technology are currently at the undergraduate level. They have established partnerships with faculty at other universities to assist with course delivery. Scott Amos stated that the proposal is ambitious, and that feedback is requested at this time to refine the proposal. Tess Ahlborn noted that an MEng is proposed, and inquired if approval from the College of Engineering had been given. The approval has not yet been granted.

e) Brad Baltensperger announced that a PhD proposal in Human Factors would be forthcoming.

Meeting adjourned at 5:15pm.