Graduate Faculty Council

Minutes - April 5, 2005

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The Graduate Faculty Council (GFC) met on April 5, 2005 in the ROTC Blue Room. This is the last meeting of the GFC for 2004-05

Depts/Programs represented: Casey Huckins (Biology), Brent Lekvin (SBE), Pushpa Murthy (Chem), Neil Hutzler (CEE), Soner Onder (CS), Kedmon Hungwe (Educ.), Kurt Pregitzer (SFRES), John Gierke (GMES), Dennis Lynch (HU), Renfang Jiang (Math), Ghatu Subhash (MEEM), Brian Fick (Physics), Martin Smith & Marilyn Vogler (GS).

Depts/Programs/Offices not represented: Biomedical Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Electrical & Computer Engineering, Material Science Engineering, Graduate Student Council

Guests: None

1. President Kurt Pregitzer opened the meeting at 4:05.
2. Agenda Items:
   a. March meeting minutes were not yet distributed, so they were not reviewed.
   b. Committee Updates:
      i. Recruitment and Graduation (RAG): Chem. Rep. Murthy described the issue of unsatisfactory progress of Ph.D. students and their program status. The RAG has met to discuss the issue, although they have not come up with a proposal to resolve the issue. The GFC discussed at length the importance of the issue in terms of fairness to the students and legal implications for international students. It was deemed that establishing policies regarding the dismissal of graduate students, especially international students, is too important in terms of legal as well as fairness issues, and so the 2004-05 GFC is suggesting that this issue be investigated and discussed further by the 2005-06 GFC.
      ii. Remuneration & Benefits (R&B): CEE Rep. Hutzler reported that the R&B committee reviewed graduate stipend data from several sources for benchmark institutions and it is clear that MTU stipend levels are below the average. The GFC recognizes that increasing base stipend levels for University supported graduate assistants may reduce the number of available assistantships. Faculty submitting proposals routinely budget more competitive stipends to help attract the best students. The GFC also noted that graduate stipends have not been raised in a few years and that even a modest increase is warranted. Interim Dean Smith said that the Graduate School is planning to evaluate the possibility of increasing stipend levels for 2005-06.
      iii. Recognition & Rewards (R&R): Humanities Rep Lynch has contacted the Graduate School regarding the University Graduate Awards, nominations for which typically are announced in April. The R&R will update the announcement and forward to departments.
   c. Asst. Dean Vogler introduced a proposal to establish graduate minors. Her proposal was amended to require prior approval by a student's advisor, and then approved unanimously.
   d. It was proposed by the Graduate School to reduce paperwork to change the appointment of graduate faculty status of emeritus faculty from every year to a longer duration. The GFC discussed making the appointment similar to adjunct faculty and to make the appointment for life. A vote of 7 in favor, 2 against resulted in the passage of the "for life" appointment of emeritus faculty who were graduate faculty at the time of retirement to the graduate faculty.

The GFC adjourned at 5:00 PM.

 Reported by J.S. Gierke, 4/10/05