GFC Minutes, 6 December 2005

Present: Dennis Lynch (HU), Tess Ahlborn (CEE), William Yarroch (ED), Paul Nelson (SBE), Brian Davis (ECE), Howard Wang (MSE), Judith Perlinger (EPD2), Casey Huckins (SBL), Soner Onder (CS), Mark Gockenbach (SMA)

GFC requests that a staff member from the Graduate School take notes and type minutes. There will be no meeting January 1.

Paul Nelson reported on the proposal for Plan D. It was introduced to the Senate and will be voted on in January. Most of the defense of the proposal was done by Senate Curricular Policy committee and Dean Huntoon. It should be moved forward smoothly.

The main points brought up at the Senate meeting:
1. the primary master’s degree MTU offers is a master of science; is it really science?
2. Business schools don’t regard the master’s as a research degree
3. the Plan D would not be an ‘out’ for students not completing work satisfactorily; the program of study would be spelled out in advance.
5. there were no real objections to the proposal

Committee reports:

Cognate/External committee members on grad committees (Gockenbach)

Addressing these questions:
1. What is an external member?
2. What is a “program” as outlined in the Bulletin?
3. Can a person from, e.g., CS&E (EPD2) from the same department as the committee chair be “external”?
4. Does the external EPD2 member need to be from outside the program (i.e., CS, SMA, ECE, & CE)
5. Should we follow Canadian system, that is, the external member is from outside MTU?

Comment: interdisciplinary programs are naturally diverse; shouldn’t external members be allowed to be from within the “program”? This would be within the spirit of the need for an external member.
Comment: should the external member be from a department from which the student has not taken courses?
Comment: external member is also to ensure that protocol is being followed.
Comment: external member is two-fold: quality control AND special expertise. Both should be preserved. If taken too far, the movement toward external members being “unrelated” to the “program” could lead to reduction in interdisciplinary group membership.

6. MEngg-Civil, MEngg-Environmental do not require external members? This is inconsistent. Why would this be not required? Tess and Judith will address this issue to figure out why the different language was put into place.

Mark will call a subcommittee meeting in January to report to the GFC.

Provisional/Conditional admits – tabled; no committee members in attendance

Remuneration & Benefits – there is a need to
1. raise stipends
2. enhance the general climate
3. examine benefits package

Stipends can be raised in several ways: across the board, upon receiving candidacy status (post course work), etc.
Concerns: the pool of money for stipends does not appear to change, which means fewer students can be supported.
Should we assume the pool will not grow? As the economic condition of the University improves, certainly some of the revenue should flow toward the Grad School.
This is also an issue for funding students from a research grant perspective, i.e., finite research budgets can only support the number of students they can afford. Increased minimum stipends limits the number of students that can be supported on a research budget.

Additional comments and agenda items for the future
1. MTU as a GRE site – we need an update on what it would take for MTU to be a GRE test site.
2. Assistantships used to be budgeted with fees; GTA’s appear to no longer be allocated with fees. Did it change? When did this change? We need clarification.
3. Do we need standing committees in the GFC?
4. Can we fill offices before the academic year starts?