Graduate Faculty Council

Minutes: April 6, 2004

The Graduate Faculty Council (GFC) met on April 6, 2004 in the ROTC Blue Room.

Depts/Programs represented: Casey Huckins (Bio Sci), Seth Donahue (BMed), Paul Nelson (SBE), Jason Keith (CM), Sarah Green (Chem), Soner Onder (CS), Kedmon Hungwe (Educ.), Kurt Pregitzer (FRES), John Gierke (GMES), Dennis Lynch (HU), H. Wang (MSE), Mark Gockenbach (Math), Oner Arici (MEEM), Pat Martin (SS), Bruce Rafert (GSO).

Depts/Programs/Offices not represented: Civil and Environmental Engineering, Electrical and Computer Engineering, Physics, Research Office, Grad Student Council

Guests: None

1. President John S. Gierke opened the meeting at 4:06 PM.

2. Administrative Business.
   A. Approval of the minutes of December 2, 2003 had been moved to April meeting. Since there was neither corrections nor discussions, the minutes were considered approved.
   B. Gierke presented the agenda for the meeting.

3. Agenda Items:
   A. Status of Graduate Dean Review – Paul Nelson
      • Nelson summarized the process. He indicated that the participation rate was low (13%) but consistent with a past review of the previous Dean of the Graduate school. He communicated this to Provost Wray, who suggested to wrap up the evaluation. Another conclusion was that WebCT did not work well for this process. For the future, paper surveys should be considered.
   B. Review of the Proposal to Establish Graduate Certificates – Summary by Dennis Lynch
      • Bruce Rafert, in conjunction with the University Senate (Proposal 20-04, approved by the senate 25 February 2004, and approved by President 3 March 2004), has proposed a “blanket policy” for establishing Graduate Certificates.
      • Proposal was reviewed by Neil Hutzler, Barry Solomon, Dennis Lynch, & John Gierke (prior to the committee review).
      • Major features have been summarized in the agenda and the committee recommended approval of the policy.
      • Proposal was approved unanimously. GFC president has been charged to forward the decision to the Dean of Graduate School.
   C. Review of the Proposal to Establish a Graduate Certificate in Sustainability – Summary by Dennis Lynch
      • Proposal was reviewed by Neil Hutzler, Barry Solomon, Dennis Lynch, & John Gierke (prior to the committee review).
- The proposal conformed to the guidelines of the policy approved above, so the committee recommended approval.
- Proposal was approved by unanimous vote of the GFC. President Gierke to report this recommendation to Dean Rafert.

D. Review of the Proposals for 4 M.S. Spin-off Programs from Forestry – Summary by Sarah Green
- The 4 proposals were reviewed by Sarah Green, Kurt Pregitzer, Dennis Lynch, Jason Keith, and Howard Wang
- Proposed programs are M.S. Forest Ecology & Management, M.S. Forest Molecular Genetics & Biotechnology, M.S. in Applied Ecology, and a new degree focused on coursework, Masters of Forestry (M.F.).
- Summary handouts were distributed. The committee review was presented and their recommendation was unanimous for approval.
- The proposals were then approved unanimously by the GFC. GFC president has been charged to forward the decision to the Dean of Graduate School.

E. Review of the Proposal for a non-departmental Ph.D. in Engineering (Biomedical) – Summary by Seth Donahue
- The proposal was reviewed by Neil Hutzler, Seth Donahue, and Kedmon Hungwe
- Committee report for the recommendation for approval was handed out.
- Gierke asked if the guidelines were consistent with existing non-departmental degree programs. Donahue responded yes. Gierke also added that this program may attract students from non-engineering departments. Donahue indicated that students will be required to meet the necessary course work to satisfy engineering deficiencies.
- Donahue interpreted “The Department anticipates that a modest amount of additional resources will be needed” as additional Graduate Student lines not faculty.
- Rafert noted that even though Mike Neuman is the chair of the department, the nondepartmental biomedical engineering Ph.D. program committee may have a different chair. This is often the situation for other nondepartmental programs.
- Martin asked if there was going to be a departmental Biomedical Engineering PhD program in the future. No definite plans at this time (other nondepartmental PhD programs remain so despite their existence for over 15 years, e.g., Environmental Engineering).
- There were no further discussions. Nelson moved, Arici seconded, to approve the proposal. The proposal was approved unanimously. GFC president has been charged to forward the decision to the Dean of Graduate School.

G. Vote on the 2 Proposals to Modify the Oral Examination Requirements for a Plan C were postponed until the May 4th meeting.

H. Update on University Allocations of Graduate Assistants – Bruce Rafert
- Rafert summarized the current allocations:
• Phase 1: His position is that FY05 allocations should not be smaller than FY04 (235 grad lines), but at this time he was only able to provide 211 two-term lines. Total budget was $3.7M but about half comes back as tuition revenue.
• Phase 2: He expects to hear about a transfer of $500K within days, which will bring FY05 allocations nominally back to where it was last year, 235.
• Phase 3: Another transfer of about $200K is possible in June 2004. If it is realized, Rafert will consider readjustment of stipends.
• Some relevant issues that came up during discussions were:
  - There will be no penalty mixing MS and PhD lines, in such cases departments must fill out appropriate transfer forms for accounting purposes.
  - Rafert assessed the value of TA/GA allocations. It turns out that these lines generate, on average, about 4 times more revenue (based on tuition from GTA SCHs and a similar-magnitude estimate for the GAs assigned to research) for every dollar of expenditure (stipend, tuition, and fees). University-supported assistantships are great assets to the departments in terms of both teaching and research productivity.
  - Fees will no longer be provided by the Graduate School. They are now under the departments’ responsibilities.

4. New Business - None

• Pregitzer suggested that a GFC-activities calendar be developed for the handling of proposal submissions and GFC-review-committee structure to avoid the conventional approach of submitting degree program proposals at the last minute and seeking reviews faster than is practical for the GFC. Gierke will include some suggested deadlines in a GFC charter that he and Dean Rafert will draft this summer for consideration next fall by the GFC.

The GFC adjourned at 5:10 PM.

Next Meeting on Tuesday, 4 May 2004, 4:05-5 pm, GSC Blue Room

Assignments for Next meeting:

1) Update Dept. GFC Reps for 2004/05
2) Update Dept. GFC Alternate Reps for 2004/05
3) Plan on voting for Ps&Qs proposals regarding the Plan C oral exam and external committee member. Send absentee votes to arici@mtu.edu.

Reported by O. Arici

GFC Secretary