Graduate Faculty Council
Minutes of the February 5, 2002 meeting
3:35 PM ROTC Blue Room

Attendance:
Oner Arici, ME-EM
Marilyn Urion, Grad School
Sharah Green, Chemistry
Paul Nelson, SBE
Mark Gockenbach, Math
Jim Woods, Geology
Chung-Jui Tsai, SFWP
Kent Wray, Provost

John Jaszczak, Physics
Bruce Rafert, Grad School
Jim Mihelecic, CEE
Julie King, Chem Eng
Jill Oliver, Grad School
Jean Mayo, CS
Vicky Bergvall, RTC
Casey Huckins, Biology
Michelle Trimm, Grad Student Council

Dropping Oral Exam for MS degree Plan C:
Mark Gockenbach proposal to drop the oral exam requirement at the university level for the MS Plan C (coursework) option. Departments could still require it if so desired. Issues brought up for further discussion: could depts ask for a report? Would it change required credit hours? This would help off campus (distance) students. Should the MS then be called something else? Due to limited time, the motion set aside for further discussion next time.

Handout for future: an early draft for discussion- possible adoption of uniform letters for acceptance and support. (This has also been emailed to departments now.)

Old Business: Non-departmental PhD program. There are 3 names proposed. Several programs are currently being considered. One proposal has been submitted (biomedical) for new consideration.

Distribution of GTA Support (Rafert)
Handout of transparencies was given out. A more complete handout "Graduate Enrollment and Budgetary Projection" was passed out at the end.
All non-GRA Grad Student support is now centralized at grad school: fellows, GTA, GA, etc. Allocation in 2003 by grad school will be based on need and performance factors to reach strategic plan goals. GFC to become advocate on integrating grad programs with strategic plan.
Goal for 2002: 380 MS; 370 PHD (up from 288 in 2001), Total: 750. 9% growth per year for 10 years is desired.

Try to have more PhD students with 12 month support (~30 next year).
Stipend reimbursements in 2002 will be at 2002 rate (not at 1998 rate). More support for fees.

Departments/Units will specify their own GTA/GA/Fellow mix; possibly also stipend level

Beginning fall 2003: need and performance factors.
Need discussion and development of institution-wide metrics to measure GTA, GA teaching, enrollment and graduation objectives.
Contribution to teaching, enrollment and graduation goals. Units will weight these categories individually. GFC and depts/deans will work on this- depts/deans have started these considerations and will make proposals.

Reports by Working Groups
Stipends & Benefits (Durfee)
Competitiveness & decency require reasonable stipends & benefits. Depts named their competitors (not necessarily benchmarks). MTU is in 2nd quintile among other research universities. Compared to our main competitors we are much lower in stipends and benefits.
(Trimm) Transparencies & handouts on health benefits at competitor institutions. (other schools estimated value at $900 to $3000- we offer $200.)
Also results for stipends- half competitors are union. Comparing minimum stipends is useful and MTU is lowest. Look close because there lots of details (such as is tuition paid out of this included?) Committee will continue close analysis of the complex data.
(Durfee)
Proposals:
1. Increase stipends ASAP by $100/mo for all funded grad students.
2. Work to get better subsidized health insurance benefits.
3. Discuss philosophical issues for grad funding (all pay same?)
4. System of continuous evaluation and improvement

Process for giving advice on stipends is being developed.

Rewards (King)
Best GTA award ~$1k/yr.
Graduate Research Award (meeting expenses; $1.5k/semester)
Faculty award for including undergrads in research (promote more UG's to go to grad school) 4x$1.5k/yr
MS and PHD web page of all MTU grads and advisors, names, photos, title, abstract…
Research Posters in hallways (inform undegrads about grad school).
(Nelson)
Handout on "Why Doctoral Programs are Important at MTU"
Goal: Reestablish appropriate philosophy of grad enhancement for undergrad education. Counter large fraction of faculty who feel PhD programs here should be eliminated. More discussion later.

Recruiting and Graduation (Hutzler)
Review highlighted tasks (11 of them) with responsible parties and target completion dates.
Oral presentation on our Vision Fund Proposal to Strategic Planning Group will be forthcoming. New View Book should be back from the presses by this Friday.
Future goals & challenges:
1. Image among our peers. Need grad numbers up and continuing good scholarship.
2. Student retention needs faculty time- need more graduate facutly.
3. Competitive stipends.

Kent Wray Comments:
Puts importance in the GFC as we work to meet our SP goals.
BUT: Very big jobs last year take tremendous time/effor:
• Improve communication between central admin and faculty & staff.
• Budget & enrollment
• Strategic planning.
Retention is one place with large room for improvement. Increase in external funding is not tracking increase in grad student population. Split of Research & Grad school was necessary (pleased with results so far). Budget balance is necessary since growth in grad goals is resource limited.
MTU needs buy in in two areas:
1. Retention at undergrad level
2. Graduate & Research Image- national and state level
Proposes presenting " Why Doctoral Programs are Important at MTU" at next Board retreat!