

The Graduate Faculty Council (GFC) met on Tuesday, October 1, 2002 in the Blue Room of the ROTC Building.

PRESENT: Arici (ME/EM), Beck (PHY), Gierke (GM/ES), Gockenbach (MA), Hoagland (SS), Huckin (SBL), Hungwe (ED), Jobst (HU), Keith (ECM), Mork (ECE), Nelson (SBE), Tsai (SFWP), Van Damm (CEE). Guests: Hutzler (CoE), Rafert (Grad School), Urion (GSO), Durfee (Admin), Trim (GSC).

I. Agenda

Mary Durfee began the meeting at 4 PM by distributing an agenda. No one offered additions or corrections to this agenda.

II. New Business

A. Elections for this academic year

President: Casey Huckin; VP: John Gierke; Secretary: Jack Jobst.

B. New Degrees

Neil Hutzler distributed information about two new degrees, a Master of Engineering—Civil Engineering, and a Master of Engineering—Environmental Engineering. Currently the University offers a general Master of Engineering degree without identifying any specific department. The council will vote on these at the next meeting, in a month.

C. Dean's Report

1. Committees

Graduate Dean Bruce Rafert first described the three main committees into which the council would work on tasks during the year:

- Recruiting and Graduation (R&G)
- Recognition and Rewards (R&R)
- Remuneration and Benefits (R&B)

He advised Council members to consider which of the three would best meet their interests.

2. Enrollment

Bruce announced that the current state of grad enrollment is quite good, the highest it has ever reached, with 725 students enrolled. The number of international students is also exceptional, with an increase of 23, in spite of the current difficulties with obtaining visas.

Bruce explained that visa problems could be minimized if students take appropriate steps:

a. If students are denied visas during the first interview, they should *not* immediately schedule a second, but instead should contact MTU. The immediate contact person is unimportant as long as Jill Oliver gets the word. Jill has some letters she can send out.

b. If those same students send us via email their best recollections of the (failed) interviews, we can develop a strategy for responding. Some times Bruce will write a letter, or he may ask the Dept chair to do something. All of this should occur *before* the student's second interview. After the second failed interview, little can be done.

Bruce has generated letters explaining the nature of our grad programs to forestall potential incorrect impressions by embassy staffers that MTU is a technical college.

Bruce spoke highly of US Rep. Bart Stupak's Immigration liaison person.

3. Accomplishments

Bruce announced the major accomplishments of the GFC last year: improving health insurance coverage for grad students, and raising their stipend. "Although faculty did not receive a raise, we felt the grad

students should still receive this boost in pay," he said. No one objected.

4. Grad Student Tuition

The Council asked about rising graduate tuition, and the havoc this seems to cause PIs with continuing grants and established budgets. Bruce said Neil Hutzler had organized a committee that surveyed twelve of our major university competitors to determine what they ask in tuition. "This is not always easy to determine," he said, "because some schools collapse a number of elements into the tuition figure. This information is in a spreadsheet and will be distributed later this week, probably via email."

Several Council members returned to the problem of rising tuition and Graduate Research Assistants working on previously established budgets.

Bruce said the University will welcome from GFC some input on grad tuition rates. He said this recommendation should be made before the beginning of December. Michelle Trim (Graduate Student Council President) asked if she should solicit grad student opinion on tuition; Bruce said a grad representative is on Neil's committee, presumably providing such input.

A Council member asked why the Board of Control (BOC) did not realize that raising tuition can often lead to a decline rather than an increase in income as students may well attend less expensive grad schools for their degrees.

The Council then discussed the percentage of unfunded grad students who are most hurt by tuition increases.

III. Old Business

No old business came before the Council.

IV. Adjournment

The Council meeting ended at 5 PM. The next meeting will be

Tuesday, November 5, 2002
4 PM
Blue Room, ROTC Building.

Humbly submitted,

Jack Jobst, GFC Secretary