

# Graduate Faculty Council

## Minutes: November 2, 2004

The Graduate Faculty Council (GFC) met on November 11, 2004 in the ROTC Blue Room.

Depts/Programs represented: Casey Huckins (Bio), Brent Lekvin (SBE), Joe Holles (CM), Pushpa Murthy (Chem), Neil Hutzler (CEE), Soner Onder (CS), Kedmon Hungwe (Educ.), John Gierke (GMES), Sandra Boschetto-Sandoval (HU), H. Wang (MSE), Ghatu Subhash (MEEM), Barry Solomon (SS), Marilyn Vogler (GS), Justin Priestman (GSC).

Depts/Programs/Offices not represented: Biomedical Engineering, Electrical and Computer Engineering, Forestry, Math, Physics, Research Office

Guests: None

1. Vice President Pushpa Murthy opened the meeting at 4:05 PM in the absence of President Kurt Pregitzer, who has a class conflict with the traditional meeting time.

2. John Gierke volunteered to record and distribute the minutes for the November meeting.

3. Agenda Items:

A. 2<sup>nd</sup>-Round of Committee Assignments

- Recruitment and Graduation (RAG) Members: Casey Huckins, Brent Lekvin, Pushpa Murthy, Joe Holles, & John Gierke
- Recognition & Rewards (R&R) Members: Sandra Boschetto-Sandoval, Soner Onder, Jianping Dog, Barry Solomon, Howard Wang
- Remuneration & Benefits (R&B) Members: Kedmon Hungwe, Ghatu Subhash, Neil Hutzler
- GFC reps (Biomed, Elect Eng, Physics) still without a committee assignment will be assigned to one of the committees (at least 2 to R&B and 1 to any committee) by the GFC officers

B. Committee Reports

i. Recruitment and Graduation (RAG): No report

ii. Remuneration & Benefits (R & B): No report

iii. Rewards & Recognition (R & R):

1. R&R Committee Chair Sandra Boschetto-Sandoval commented on needs:

a. More members and broader representation for more effective and fair review of award nominations. 2 members were added at the meeting.

b. Nominations are sparse, so a better system of announcing/advertising awards is needed. For example, maybe include a "check box" on M-form for the thesis

defense to annotate those theses that are of “award quality” and circumvent the e-mail request for nominations.

- c. 2 nominations for the MAGS Thesis award were received and reviewed. Mellisa Le’s (GMES) Thesis was selected and forwarded to the MAGS review.
  - d. Nominations were being received for the DeVlieg award. Nov. 5 was the deadline.
- C. “Senate” Action on Plan C M.S. proposals: Marilyn Vogler reported on the Senate action. She was the only GFC representative at the Senate meeting where the issue was discussed and voted. The Senate voted overwhelmingly to defeat the proposals. Senators were concerned with the appearance of reducing standards. Senators felt that the faculty were not in favor of removing the requirement of an oral exam and external committee member for the Plan C option primarily to maintain quality. She felt that the lack of a strong advocate for the proposals at the meeting weakened the case for passage. In open discussion among the GFC, a variety of considerations were discussed, including whether the Senate even had authority over the issue as well as reasons why the policy changes made sense but were not articulated to the Senate. If the policy changes are, indeed, vetoed because of the Senate vote, then the GFC will need to provide more convincing arguments and it was suggested that the departments/programs with the most vested interests in the changes lead the effort to more effectively argue for their implementation.
- D. Senior Rule Concerns: Marilyn Vogler introduced a new issue of concern that undergraduates can take courses under “Senior Rule” at a tuition rate that is lower (if they are Michigan Residents) than the graduate student tuition rate. This provides students an opportunity, since there is no cap on Senior Rule credits, for a student to complete any amount of graduate coursework without being enrolled in a graduate program. Many representatives felt this was not a significant issue in their programs, as most students are funded on assistantships that pay for the tuition, so for their programs students have a financial incentive to delay taking courses for their graduate degree until accepted and enrolled in the graduate program. The incentive for these students to take classes under Senior Rule are to: 1) hit the ground running upon graduate enrollment, 2) potentially finish their graduate program sooner, and 3) maintain fulltime status as an undergrad when fewer than 12 credits are needed to graduate. The concerns over exploiting this potential path to paying less tuition using Senior Rule could be more prevalent in programs where the students pay their own tuition (i.e., self supported students). This issue was discussed generally without coming to a conclusion.
- E. Issues Carried Over from 2003-4 that need further consideration:
- i. Gierke was tasked with reviewing the minutes from 2003-04 and compile a list of remaining issues:
    - 1. New awards for grad students and grad faculty (R&R), for example a grad student service award, outstanding dissertation/thesis/paper/etc. award
    - 2. Grad faculty forum

3. Review of stipend levels and benefits
4. GFC Charter
5. Unsatisfactory progress and the processes for dismissal and/or discontinuing funding
6. Graduate Student Bill-of-Rights (GFC)

F. Some New Issues for 2004-5 that were mentioned:

- i. New Cross-Disciplinary Graduate Programs (RAG or new ad hoc committee?)
- ii. Graduation Timeline Requirement (w.r.t. commencement)
- iii. Improving communication between GSO/Graduate Dean and Grad Faculty and Graduate Coordinators

The Next Meeting is 4:05 pm, Tuesday, December 7, in ROTC 101 (GSC Blue Room)

The GFC adjourned at 5:00 PM.

Reported by J.S. Gierke