

## Minutes Graduate Faculty Council

Tues. September 6, 2005 4-5pm ROTC 101 - approved as corrected 1 Nov 05

Present: Soner Onder (CS), Brian Fick (Phys), Dan Adler (GSC), Casey Huckins (Biol), Martyn Smith (GSO), Howard Wang (MSE), Seth Donahue (BME), Renfang Jiang (Math), Dana Johnson (SBE), Dennis Lynch (HU), Gordon Parker (MEEM), Marilyn Vogler (GSO), Kurt Pregitzer (SFRES), Tess Ahlborn (CEE)

1. Kurt opened the meeting with the first order of business being to elect a new president, vice-president, and secretary. He shared the official language describing the process and proceeded to follow it. No one was nominated for president, so that decisions was deferred until the next meeting. Marilyn Vogler agreed to open the next meeting. Dana Johnson nominated herself to be vice-president and Dennis Lynch nominated himself to be secretary. Both were confirmed.
2. Dana Johnson explained that several masters programs across campus want to propose a fourth option (Plan D) to go along with Plans A, B and C. D would also be a coursework option, but unlike C it would specifically exclude the oral exam component. Marilyn asked if the idea is that programs would decide which plan, C or D, to make available to students. She reminded us that last year the graduate school and GFC were concerned that students in programs not have a choice between C or D, that is, to make sure it is not the case that some students in a program are graduating with an oral exam and some are not. Kurt reminded us that the general, shared concern of the GFC last year was for the departments/programs to retain control over whether or not an oral exam is part of the masters degree requirements because some programs felt strongly one way, and some felt strongly the other. Kurt then suggested the GFC did not need to address the proposal because they did so last year. All agreed that it would move ahead to the Senate.
3. Gordon Parker raised a question regarding GACS policies. How should departments mentor new faculty about the process of applying for this money? The question arose because two new faculty from the same department applied, one was accepted and one was (temporarily) turned down. Marty explained what had happened, that the policy has been to support new, untenured faculty first, and that the budget is currently in deficit (at least \$300 thousand dollars) and growing. Marty also explained some other financial options we might consider, especially if we are to get out of the red. Kurt suggested the GFC might want to take this up and encourage faculty and department to learn more about this situation.
4. Marilyn raised four issues she and the graduate school would like the GFC to take up and advise them on. One, help with guidelines for defining what counts as an "external/cognate" committee member. Two, help with gathering information about best practices for mentoring new faculty to become good mentors of graduate students. Three, help addressing the question of whether to adopt a

category of “provisional admission” for graduate student applicants. Currently the graduate school does not admit students provisionally, though some programs have been telling students they are provisionally admitted, which can create problems along the way. Marilyn reminded us that technically programs only pass along the names of applicants they “advise” the graduate school to admit; the graduate school is the body that performs the official admitting. Four, Marilyn pointed out that there is a gap in our data regarding student persistence. We do not track those people who do not graduate. The graduate school has been charged with increasing retention, but to do so, they need to know why students are not finishing. Dana added that this may be related to policies regarding whether or not students can count courses for which they received a grade of BC toward graduation requirements. The present rule is that only courses with a B or better count. Kurt reminded us that this is a question of standards and that the graduate school should be the place where the concern for standards is paramount.

5. Finally, Marty reminded us that Jackie Huntoon will be taking over as the new Dean of the Graduate School October 10, 2005.