

Minutes of **University Graduate Council**
January 16, 2008

Present: Jay Radke (AG), Rachael Ortego (A & A), Priscilla Wisner (BUS), Mark Nelson (EHHD), Robert Maher (ENGR), Carl Fox (DGE), Robert Rydell (L&S-Letters), Yves Idzerda (L&S-Science), Rita Cheek (NURS), Ed Dea (STUDENT), David Weaver (FC).

Also attending were MaryKay West (DGE), Jen Jencso (DGE), and Donna Negaard (DGE).

Meeting commenced at 10:03 a.m. in 114 Sherrick.

Open Campus Forum

- a) No one came forward.

Introductions

As there were two substitutes attending for regular members, everyone introduced themselves.

DGE Staff Reports

- Graduate Info Night – Carl Fox
 - a) To be held in March
 - b) For MSU juniors and seniors with GPAs of 3.5 and 3.0 or higher, respectively.
 - c) DGE will present information on what graduate school is all about and recruit our own MSU students
 - d) Planning to involve each college—each will have their own rep to talk about what their departments offer
 - e) Possibly include MSU graduate alumni who are still in the area.
- T Shirt Design Competition
 - a) Carl's idea to elevate visibility of graduate education on campus
 - b) Plan is for it to be an annual event; the Dean of Architecture will assist in choosing the winning design
 - c) There will be a financial reward to the winning student so that DGE will own the copyright
 - d) DGE will sell the printed t shirts, with all extra funds going into a graduate student support fund (to help grads attend professional meetings to present their papers).
- Graduate Seminars

- a) DGE is changing seminars topics (to be more professional development), times and venues
 - b) Possible topics include: (1) working in industry (2) academia (3) for non profits; (4) what grads should know about business practice (5) understanding intellectual property (patents, copyrights, trademarks) (6) research ethics (7) engineering for non-engineers (8) teaching for GTAs
 - c) DGE is surveying MSU students re: best time and delivery type
 - d) BTC will video tape each seminar (time permitting); Carl's "Grant Writing" seminar is on the DGE website.
- Administrative Staff Update
 - a) DGE will present updated policies and procedures to MSU administrative associates and answer their questions.
- Open House
 - a) DGE will hold an Open House for faculty, staff, and students
 - b) To meet DGE staff and to unveil the selected grad T shirt design.
- MUS Graduate Education Initiative
 - a) Handout attached
 - b) Board of Regents has discussed the proposal and it is on their website
 - c) The proposal is to (1) fund new grad student fellowships through increased stipend levels for RAs and TAs and (2) to consider changing NON-resident RAs and TAs to resident status for tuition purposes
 - d) Proposal is to connect to economic development to move the state of Montana forward
 - e) New programs in the future will require more assistantships.
- Research Expo – Jen Jencso
 - a) April 15 – a day to celebrate all research on MSU campus
 - b) For the first time, graduate research will be added to undergraduate research
 - c) Will increase graduate exposure on campus
 - d) Grads will submit ½ page abstracts of their research by March 7; abstracts will be published as further incentive to participate (CV citations)
 - e) The Governor, Commissioner of Higher Education, legislators, and community will be invited.
- GTA Training
 - a) Jen is setting up focus groups in the spring for campus faculty members to discuss what GTAs need in their training.

Professional Paper Credits for PhD – Jen Jencso

- a) If a student does not have a MS degree, can take 18 – 28 dissertation credits
- b) A department has asked if they can put professional paper (575) on their PhD Program of Study (to count in the research section); at present, this is not allowed
- c) On transcripts, 575 shows as “professional paper” and 590/690 shows as “research”
- d) In sciences, published professional papers are equal to or more important than dissertations
- e) Questions were raised as to whether this would dilute research credits or if 575s would add value to the student’s work
- f) There are research activities that are not connected to a student’s thesis or dissertation (such as a professor’s research for a grant)
- g) There is a clear need to clarify what the specific requirements are that a student is signing up for
- h) DGE does not approve 575s
- i) There are “common” course numbers (570, 575, 576, 590, etc) which need to have their descriptions reviewed for appropriateness
- j) The possibility of separating out “research” credits from “writing” credits was brought up
- k) Jen will ask the department that originally inquired what their requirements are for their PhD and how a 575 would fit into the requirements; and, she will ask if a 570 would work instead of a 575.

Graduate Assistant Tuition Waiver Plan – Carl Fox

- a) MSU has a problem with the relationship of tuition waivers and Grad Assistants
- b) Departments are given an allocation and they determine the number of GTAs they can afford (based on past history)
- c) For unknown reasons, some departments have lost GTA money while other departments continue to have funds
- d) The tuition waiver allocation process is historic; the MSU Budget Office follows what appears to be a Legislative requirement not to award any more GTA tuition waivers than would exceed 2% of fall enrollment
- e) The Budget Office gives DGE a dollar number which is divided into FTEs to create tuition waivers
- f) tuition waivers are to be only for TAs, but this is not always the case
- g) To become a resident of Montana, grad students (who are TAs) cannot take more than 6 credits per semester—students will go where they can take 9 credits
- h) RAs receive funding from grants and contracts—non-resident tuition is high
- i) Carl has talked to all Deans—idea is to bring tuition waivers back to be awarded in conjunction with grad assistantships (TAs or RAs)
- j) Move toward changing non-resident TAs to resident TAs for tuition purposes

- k) Tuition waiver plan has to be finalized by the end of the month so departments will know how many tuition waivers can be allocated
- l) DGE is gathering minimum stipend per hour for GTAs information from peer universities
- m) An evaluation of the whole RA/TA allocation system by all departments is needed, to help departments understand the process and to help with department recruitment
- n) MSU is not competitive with most peer universities—they have full grad tuition waivers and offer health insurance or discounted health insurance
- o) At MSU, the undergrad emphasis is to recruit NON-resident students
- p) The State of Montana gives money for each resident student (nothing for non-resident); the proposal before the Board of Regents to change non-resident TAs to resident TAs (to make MSU TAs more nationally competitive) will increase the state money to the MSU budget
- q) There is a proposal to reduce the MSU “full time” graduate equivalent from 12 credits to 9 credits.

Challenge Courses – Donna Negaard

To be discussed at a future meeting.

Comprehensive Exams – Jen Jencso

- a) How much should DGE oversee comp exams?
- b) Departments administer them differently and at different times which can cause confusion among students and for DGE
- c) Jen feels that a comprehensive exam should not be administered until 2/3 of coursework is complete, in accordance with current policy
- d) Confusion arises as to whether the exam is really a pre-qualifier or a comprehensive if it is administered too early
- e) Departments also have different formats for performing comp exams; the student’s committee might alter the process to meet specific circumstances
- f) There is a need to clarify exactly what a comprehensive exam entails—provide a basic structure that defines pass or fail
- g) Jen will contact each department to ask them to write out their comp exam process for both MS and PhD (to be included in the MSU catalog).

Council Committee Reports – moved to February meeting

Elections for Spring – Carl Fox

- a) In the fall, members agreed to delay elections until Spring 2008
- b) Schedule shows that almost all members have “expired”
- c) Carl wants terms to be one, two and three years—so that 1/3 of members will be on Council

- d) Ives, Rob Maher, and Rita—terms are up in May 2009; Bob Rydell is up in May 2008
- e) Mary Kay will send a current listing of all members to members so they can fill in their perceived end of term dates.

Approval of Minutes of December 13, 2007

- a) Corrections: Challenge Courses c) please delete "Business department...."; Tuition Waivers e) change to FTE

Motion: Priscilla motioned and Bob Rydell seconded to **approve minutes as amended**.
Approved by unanimous vote.

Meeting adjourned at noon.

NEXT UGC MEETING Wednesday, February 20, 10:00 – noon
114 Sherrick Hall

MaryKay West, Secretary
Division of Graduate Education