

**Minutes of University Graduate Council
October 23, 2012**

Present: Alan Dyer (AG), Anne Christensen (BUS), Christopher Livingston (ARCH) William Ruff (EHHD), Nic Ward (ENGR), Ron Larsen (Grad School), Jean Shreffler-Grant (NURS), Yves Idzerda (Science), Kathryn Plymesser (Student).

Also attending were Graduate School staff Kaylee Ranck and Donna Negaard, Graduate Ambassador student representatives Ashley Powel (Ag Ed) and Luis Serrano (MB).

Meeting commenced at 2:03 p.m. in 114 Sherrick.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for April 30, 2012 – moved, seconded and unanimously approved

UGC Committee Reports

None

Open Campus Forum

No comments

Comprehensive Exam Policy/language review/ Amanda Brown (handout)

Due to the frequency of questions received by The Graduate School on policy language and interpretation Amanda requested the committee review select portions for clarity. Specific questions have been raised on the comprehensive exam policy for masters and doctorate including grading, reporting, committee attendance and failed reports.

The chair recommended the topic be tabled and committee members take time over the next month to review the policy language and provide feedback at the November meeting.

Graduate Ambassador Program/ Kaylee Ranck

General overview of Graduate Ambassador program was provided by Kaylee. Seven students have been selected to form the committee. It is set up to be a leadership opportunity for them to assist with orientation, professional development and the recruitment weekend. There will also be a liaison for ASMSU. Participating students receive up to \$1000 travel grant to be used toward their research, or leadership/professional opportunities.

Ashley Powell and Luis Serrano both gave an overview of why they became involved in the program and what they hope to accomplish during their terms.

Discussion:

In terms of retention, is there a place where students can go to receive support from the ambassadors?

No, this is centralized by department and the program will be used to disseminate information.

Is this the same for recruitment?

This is discipline specific and would depend on conventions attended. Each ambassador will serve as a contact for their own department.

Is this program a place where we can get the pulse of graduate students?

Yes, there will be minutes from the program's meetings which will be shared with the council.

Funds/Awards available for recruitment/Kaylee Ranck

GRE name search being used by Computer Science. Out of 2000 names they found 9 PhD students. Cost is \$55 per admitted student. Departments have the ability to select and filter list of student information. Funds are available for other department to use this for recruitment for fall 2013.

Meritorious awards are worth much more because they are similar to a fellowship (amount varies each year, in the past the pool has been around \$20,000 for 20 one year awards). Presidential scholarships are funded through the foundation (past year \$13,000; \$500/1st term and \$500 for 2nd semester). Certain departments take advantage of these by preparing letters in advance and this becomes quite competitive for review by Kaylee. The criteria are vague and Kaylee tries to award up to 2 to each department that applies and then puts the remaining on a waiting list for as long as possible in order to spread the awards out. The funds are applied to the student accounts. Once all school fees are paid the student can have the remainder in cash.

Discussion:

Streamlining is needed and the timing of this entire process needs improvement in order to allow enough time for all to participate/nominate, provide a quicker turnaround and create a distribution model to ensure not all awards go to the same department.

The amount is important as some departments need \$5,000 in order to beat competing universities. Timing is also critical as departments would like to notify the student of the award in their admissions letter. Some would like to use the award(s) as a recruitment tool and hence the award notification needs to go out with the offer letter. The information location needs to be simplified for the various awards on the Graduate School's website. However, this is difficult because The Graduate School cannot post anything until they know if they are receiving the funds.

Sloan Scholars Program: The Graduate School works closely with U of M and MT Tech, and they were successful in being awarding \$1 million of new money to the state. This program offers both a Master level (\$32,100, dispersed in quarters) and PhD level (\$38,500). Encourage students to begin at the master level in order to be eligible for both. Only students who are indigenous Americans and pursuing degrees in natural sciences are eligible. Can award up to 4 per year and they must come in on some other funding source as this program only enhances their existing funding.

Deadlines for applications need to be earlier in order to improve the award options. The Graduate School needs help from the departments with this. The goal is to have a preferential deadline between Jan. 15 and Feb. 1. When it comes to identifying students for awards, the typical good candidate could be well along their search process by Christmas break. The next level of candidate might start their application process over the break. This varies discipline by discipline.

What's Happening in the Graduate School/Ron Larson (handout)

PhD tracking system is one request that came out of the Vice President's retreat. The goal is to monitor and track milestones of PhD student progress. The system will monitor their progress, and based on various milestones (program of study, comp exams, application for advanced degree, time here) notify

them of upcoming steps. Notification would be sent to student and/or advisor, program coordinator and department head.

Late fees for graduate students will no longer be assessed until the 15th day of class. Previously students who registered early got a \$40 late fee in early August if they had not registered/paid their bill/confirmed their attendance. This change will alleviate the late registration by many graduate students and will improve the appointment process.

Improved notifications for graduate students are now being implemented. The Graduate School now emails notification to the student and advisor/committee members that their form has been received and processed. This is being done for the program of study and the application for advanced degree.

The Graduate School increased authorization for tuition waivers based on the ruling that students need 7 credits instead of 6 to be eligible for student health. Any student currently holding tuition waivers for 6 credits was automatically covered for a 7th credit. In addition, they encouraged students to take 9 credits each semester to accelerate progress toward degree. This option will be available for Spring 2013 as well.

The Graduate School is currently working with Ellucian to contract for the implementation of DegreeWorks for graduate students. This is a system/software package that can be useful for graduate students and their advisors. Contract could be signed by end of year 2012. First programs to be implemented would be "canned" programs such as MSSE, ARCH and PACC for Fall 2013. The more complicated programs would be rolled out later. Next steps are the collection and approval of program requirements from each department before submitting them to Ellucian for scribing.

Early notification of tuition waiver allotments is underway by The Graduate School. Plan is in place to have them out by Jan. 1, 2013. The Graduate School will develop a tool to track obligations for each department.

General Questions

Do we not have a chair elect?

No, there is no one at this time. It was suggested nominees be sent to Ron Larsen and an election could be held at the November meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Amanda Brown, Secretary
The Graduate School