

Minutes of **University Graduate Council**
February 01, 2011

Present: Chair William Ruff (EDUC), Vice Chair Warren Jones (ENGR), Bonita Peterson (BUS), Carl Fox (DGE), Jane Scharff (NURS), Chris Livingston (A&A), Robert Bennett (L&S-Letters), Steve Cherry (Faculty Senate).

Also in attendance was Donna Negaard (DGE).

Meeting commenced at 1:08 p.m. in 114 Sherrick Hall.

Approval of Minutes

- Minutes for November 16, 2010 – moved, seconded and **unanimously approved**.

Open Campus Forum

None

UGC Committee Reports

None

Tuition Waivers

- A special tuition rate for non-resident and international GTAs and GRAs has been approved through the Board of Regents.
- In AY 2010 we awarded approximately \$1.9 million in tuition waivers.
- There is currently concern that the number of tuition waivers The Graduate School awards in the future will be reduced as a result of this new policy.
 - This could be detrimental to certain departments.
 - The Graduate School may need assistance in justifying why we need to keep our tuition waivers at the current level.

New Criteria for Special Tuition Rate

- The criteria were determined at a recent Research Council meeting, and have been submitted to the Dean's council.
 - GTAs/RAs must be enrolled in at least 6 credits
 - They must be appointed for 20 hours/week (full-time).
 - Combined TA/RA appointments would be acceptable.
 - Defined duties of TAs/RAs will remain the same.
- Students may still need to seek residency for various reasons.
- The University of Montana has established similar criteria.

Graduate Assistant Union

- a. Graduate students have petitioned to become a collective bargaining unit with MFT-MEA.
 - a. We as an institution are neutral, and have responded that we don't define our teaching and research assistants as employees.
 - i. They don't pay FICA or Medicare.
 - ii. They receive a stipend not a paycheck
 - iii. They receive very few benefits.
 - b. Current case law finds that assistants are not employees.

Online Programs

- a. Currently, there is an RFP to expand MSU's online programs.
 - a. Funds are not for individual courses, but rather degree programs.

Research Council Update

- a. A major topic has been how to support and enhance graduate education.
 - a. One idea the council is considering is to provide a pool of funds to support graduate students. The pool would be a product of GRAs being written into grant proposals, and a percentage of their support would be returned to the department.
- b. The council would also like to present a proposal to the president to provide The Grad. School with funds to improve our infrastructure, specifically to become a truly paperless office.
- c. The next major topic is interdisciplinary programs.
- d. Minutes for these meetings are available online.

WAGS

- a. Any UGC members that would like to attend this year's WAGS meeting in San Diego from March 14th to the 17th should contact Carl or Donna before the end of February.

Assessment, Program Review, and Accreditation

- a. Our last accreditation report was about a year ago. One area of shortcoming was assessment.
- b. Next fall MSU will have to create three to five themes and assess whether or not we are engaged in those themes.

Online Application

- a. Undergraduate Admissions currently has a contract with Royall, and we would like to use the same vendor.
- b. Royall provides the capability to submit and circulate recommendation letters online.
- c. We will likely add a convenience fee of \$10 to our application fee. This would bring the fee total up to \$60.

- a. Out of the \$50 application fee we currently charge, \$6 goes back to the vender, The Graduate School keeps \$14, and \$30 goes into the general fund.
- b. By increasing the fee by \$10 we could provide departments with some additional funds for recruiting and other travel. Our goal is to increase the total number of applicants for all graduate departments.
 - i. These funds may be better administered as a pool of money for graduate students. Departments could bring proposals to UGC in order to request use of those funds.
- d. We would also like applications to be centralized, and eliminate departments' pre-applications.
 - a. This is a data issue because when students submit pre-applications we aren't able to track how many students apply versus how many are actually accepted.

Annual Report

- a. If there is data that departments need that we aren't currently collecting, please let us know.

Double-Counting Credits

- a. The Graduate School requires 30 credits of post-baccalaureate work to earn a masters' degree. UGC will not form a policy for the dual use of credits as both graduate and undergraduate.

Advancing Graduate Education

- a. NSF requires PhD students to prove that they have been advanced to candidacy.
 - a. Specifically NSF states that "A student must have advanced to candidacy for a Ph.D. degree before the submission deadline to be eligible to submit a proposal. A statement that the student has advanced to candidacy for a Ph.D., signed and dated by the department chairperson, graduate dean, or similar administrative official is required (see "Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions"). The proposal must be submitted through regular organizational channels by the dissertation advisor(s) on behalf of a graduate student who is at the point of initiating or is already conducting dissertation research." (<http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2008/nsf08564/nsf08564.htm>)
 - b. The Graduate School will consider the issue and provide specific criteria for PhD students to be advanced to candidacy.
 - i. Perhaps the comprehensive exam form we currently use could be a mechanism for recognizing the point at which a student should be considered a degree candidate.

Meeting adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

Catherine Dale, UGC Secretary
Division of Graduate Education