

University of Massachusetts at Amherst  
Graduate Council of the Faculty Senate  
Linda Shea, Chair  
2008-2009

Minutes of General Membership Meeting  
Wednesday, May 13, 2009  
Goodell 528

Twenty Two (23) individuals attended the meeting. Michael Alderman and Patrick Sullivan from the Graduate School attended. Elizabeth Brabec, Professor and Department Head for the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning, was an invited guest. Also, in attendance were Graduate Council members Leslie Horner Button, James Cathey, James L. Craig, David Dudek, Robin Gray, Nigar Khan, Christine King, Arthur Kinney, Ernie May, Bill McClure, Augusta Mfuko, John Mullin, Jose Ornelas, Nahir I. Otano Gracia, Linda Shea, Howard Stidham, Patricia Stowell, Nate Therien, Judy Van de Geer, and Zhun Xu.

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Linda Shea called the meeting to order at 12:05 PM. She especially welcomed the new Graduate Student Senate President Zhun Xu.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes were approved with two changes.

**III. Comments by the Graduate Dean**

Dean John Mullin reviewed and discussed several items.

**a. Professional Masters of Science Degree**

UMASS has now applied for a Sloan Foundation grant following up on the meetings we have had with them in the past 2-3 months (See March 2009 Graduate Council minutes, Item III.a.)

**b. NRC Survey**

The NRC is now expected to come out with results in Fall 2009.

**c. Mentoring Committee Reorganization**

The Dean had two meetings with the mentoring committee to refocus its mission on retaining students. We are expecting to have a program for the fall. We will start with small targeted activities in 5 or 6 departments. We have found that 75% of graduate students are satisfied with advising and mentoring while 25% are not satisfied. We do not yet know how to adjust for different cultures in different departments. We will look to gain some insight from Sandy Petersen of our NEAGEP office in the Graduate School. That program has an amazing record of retention.

**d. Native American Festival**

This event was really successful. We are looking to have another event next year. The scholarship was very impressive. Also graduate students did survey of how much money was spent in local economy in order to justify such an event by analyzing input with outputs and outcomes.

**III. Comments by the Graduate Dean (continued)****e. Irish Peace Accord Event**

The event was also well attended. Two scholars from Ireland participated in discussion as part of the activities using Skype internet technology. Using this technology seemed very innovative.

**f. Provost Candidates**

All three candidates discussed graduate education and all said the Graduate School is too small for a university with aspirations to be a member of AAC. It should be 25-30% of total school student population. All three also said we must overcome our resistance to online and hybrid courses. All three candidates also said they thought that all Deans should have discretionary funds in their budget.

**IV. Old Business**

No Old Business was discussed

**V. New Business****A. Course and Program Approval Requests of the Academic Standards and Curriculum Committee (ASCC)**

Arthur Kinney brought Civil and Environmental Engineering 670 before the Council for its approval. It was unanimously approved. Then the name change for the Women's Studies Department was brought before the council and approved unanimously.

**B. Discussion of Xiamen University Cotutelle Proposal**

Elizabeth Brabec distributed copies of the most recent Dual Degree Proposal (5 pages) with Xiamen University. She mentioned that the dual degree is closely aligned with a Master of Environmental Management from Xiamen University and a Master of Regional Planning with a concentration in Environmental Management from UMASS Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning. She explained that a cotutelle is a graduate program in which each of two institutions grants its own degree to a student who completes the program. It is two separate degrees in the same discipline, not a joint degree. She mentioned that she was looking for guidance since she was going to have discussions with Xiamen University over the summer months.

A discussion followed in which the number of courses required, the number of courses taken in each location, and a comparison of this course curriculum to those of other universities were analyzed. The appropriateness of the dual degree policy of only a 20% reduction in courses required for the dual degree relative to the number of courses required for both degrees separately was raised as an issue. There were no conclusions concerning the appropriate structure of the curriculum although it was noted that students from China came to UMASS to attend courses in only one summer because of the economics of those students coming here.

**V. New Business (continued)****B. Discussion of Xiamen University Cotutelle Proposal (continued)**

The Dean asked what the next step was. Ernie May suggested that there be a meeting with State Higher Board of Higher Education. It was also noted that Marcy Williams is someone who should be included in the discussions.

**VI. Committee Reports**

A. ASCC – see New Business, Item A above.

B. ALANA – Jose Ornelas reviewed his report.

C. Fellowship – No report was made

D. Ethics – National Academy of Science is focusing on need for ethical research instruction. Ethics committee which has done little to address this need must now get active. The Dean mentioned that Julian Tyson may be the person to help us on this. He seems to have five different ethics courses. We must figure out how to address this issue.

E. Special Admission – Inactive

F. Student Affairs – Inactive

G. Mentoring – See Dean's Comments (III.c) above. Also, the Dean mentioned that he had a goal of 67% student graduation rate and the Mentoring Committee would have that as a goal.

H. Travel – Christine King reported that the student member of the Travel Committee is keeping the process moving along well.

I. Statute of Limitations (ad-hoc) – final report made 2/18/09 meeting

J. Graduate School Course Development (ad-hoc) – No report was made

K. Bologna Accord Impact Assessment (ad-hoc) – No report was made.

**VII. Comments from Administrative Officers and Others**

A. Nahir Otano Gracia, President of the Graduate Student Senate, thanked the Dean for providing funding for the Graduate School family soccer event.

B. Nate Therien noted the Five Colleges Inc. will soon be hiring a new Executive Director.

C. Ernie May noted that there are currently two building committees analyzing needs. Two are focused on research facility needs and one on classroom needs. Big decisions will be made in a short amount of time in the near future about new spending. State building commission personnel seemed supportive of our possible initiatives.

**VIII. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
David E. Dudek