

University of Massachusetts at Amherst
Graduate Council of the Faculty Senate
D. Anthony Butterfield, Chair
2005-2006

Minutes of General Membership Meeting
Wednesday, February 15, 2006
Goodell 508

Twenty three (23) individuals attended the meeting, which included two guests from the Provost's Office, Marilyn Blaustein and Bryan Harvey. Also in attendance were Maurianne Adams, Jane Baran, Tobias Baskin, Julia Beyer, Tony Butterfield, James L. Craig, David Dudek, Thomas Heydt-Benjamin, Ramakrishna Janawamy, Nigar Khan, Arthur Kinney, Bill McClure, Anne Moore, John Mullin, Philip Nasca, Jose Ornelas, Linda Shea, Pat Stowell, Peter Tamas, Nate Therien, and H. Martin Wobst.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Butterfield called the meeting to order at 12:05.

II. Approval of Minutes

Two items from the minutes from the last meeting on December 15, 2005 were discussed. The first was item VI-E, report of the Mentoring Sub-committee. The correction, which was agreed to, noted that the Dean had created a survey for the GPD's for which results were not yet available. The second item addressed confusion about the Ethics Sub-committee report, Item VI-D. The correction, which was agreed to, noted that the ethics conference is being initiated and coordinated by the Anthropology department and funded through the Graduate School. The Minutes were then unanimously approved.

III. Comments by the Graduate Dean

Dean Mullin updated the council concerning six (6) Graduate School priority topics he has previously brought to the Council's attention (Items a-f). He also brought seven (7) new items to the attention of the Council (Items g-l).

a. 'Thesis-on-a-disk' - Continues to work well. There have now been thirty-five (35) dissertations submitted with this new technology. About 50% of dissertations submitted are now paperless. The system is working quite well with a minimum number of problems.

b. Paperless Application Initiative – continues to move forward. About 85% of applications were paperless this year. Also, this is the first time in four (4) years that the number of applications has increased. The number of applications is up 9%, or by 600, over last year.

c. Graduate Student Monitoring/Tracking System – This project has been more complex than anticipated. A person has been hired to work with IT to finish developing. This will eventually come before the Graduate Council for its review.

d. Diversity Fellowship

The Graduate School is working to address the current lack of funding for Diversity Fellowships. The Graduate School has discussed with the National Science Foundation (NSF) our additional participation in the NSF-funded Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate Program (AGEP). This program, which

primarily focuses on supporting minority populations, is now accepting new applications. UMASS is working on the application proposal with the intent to submit it by the end of this current school year. Another meeting to meet with the NSF is scheduled.

III. Comments by the Graduate Dean (continued)

e. International Graduate School Cooperation Efforts - Dean Mullin and Graduate School representatives traveled to China and met with officials of three universities. We have signed Memoranda of Understanding with two of these universities, Beijing International University and Shanghai University.

Two universities in Pakistan are seeking to upgrade their graduate schools and want our help. Due to violence in Pakistan, Dean Mullin postponed a trip to Pakistan to later this year.

f. Certificate Program Development - The Dean noted that meetings are continuing in the development process of three Certificate Programs - Islamic Studies, Medieval Studies and Qualitative Research. It was noted that different perspectives about the focus and scope of the programs result in slow progress.

Also, individuals at UMASS-Online have been a tremendous help in developing the International Film Studies Certificate Program.

g. New Position - The Graduate School has received authorization for a new full-time position in computer systems. This full time position was formerly a 20 hour part-time position. The search to fill this position is currently taking place.

h. Mentoring Initiatives - The Dean thanked the Mentoring Committee for all their efforts and good work this year and in past years. He also wanted to communicate, though, that the Center for Teaching is now the focus for mentoring initiatives and activities for the Graduate School.

i. Ethics Initiatives - The Dean's office is currently working with Mike Wright in Nanotechnology/Polymers to create a model graduate student course in ethics focused on professional and ethical behavior. This effort is funded by both the Dean's office and the Nanotechnology/Polymer Department. Current thinking is that this course should be structured as a one credit course with different modules so it can be more easily incorporated into current programs of study for graduate programs.

j. Post-Doctorate Potential Issue - The number of graduate students as research assistants is down 7% while the number of Graduate Post-doctorate positions has increased. The issues concerning the cost and productivity factors which may be driving this were briefly discussed.

The Dean wanted to raise a caution about this analysis and noted that, although this may not be a trend yet, we should not let it become a trend. It was suggested that the Graduate Council and the Research Council should establish a joint task force to analyze and monitor this situation. Philip Nasca and Tobias Baskin volunteered to serve on this task force.

k. Tracking Accepted Graduate Student Rejections - Marilyn Blaustein is working on the new data collection form so we can begin more systematically determining the reason why students who are accepted to the Graduate School decide not to accept and attend UMASS. The form is almost finalized, and we are

considering sending this data collection form out with this year's acceptance letters.

1. Commencement Changes – Graduate School Commencement will take place in the Mullin Center at 1 PM on Saturday afternoon rather than 10:30AM. The ceremony is expected to take two hours or less.

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IV. Old Business

A. Graduate Fellowship Proposed Changes

Chair Butterfield postponed discussion on this topic due to meeting time constraints and the fact that further efforts are needed to get feedback from Graduate Program Directors concerning these proposed changes.

V. New Business

A. Differential Weighting of Graduate Courses for Faculty

The Associate Provost Bryan Harvey and Marilyn Blaustein attended the meeting to address this agenda item. Associate Provost Harvey provided an overview of the topic and then distributed and reviewed two reports which are used to evaluate instructional resource allocation and efficiency.

Differential weighting of graduate courses for faculty is an important topic because it focuses on the question of how much additional effort per student is needed to teach a graduate course when compared to an undergraduate course. This weighting, therefore, helps calculate the differential level of resources needed for graduate and undergraduate instruction and the resulting allocation of resources to these two university endeavors.

Associate Provost Harvey mentioned two types of analyses can be made concerning resources required for undergraduate and graduate instruction. The first is to use total Student Credit Hours (SCH). The second is to use FTE (Full-time-equivalent) Instructed Students (FTEIS). FTEIS is calculated for undergraduate instruction by dividing SCH by 15. FTEIS is calculated for graduate instruction by dividing TSCH by 9. This calculation results in a greater resource requirement for graduate instruction by a factor of 1.7 more than undergraduate instruction.

Associate Provost Harvey noted that current resource allocations are made first based on instructional needs while also paying attention to research needs. The two reports he distributed were two spreadsheets. The first was the Base and Non-Base Faculty Capacity Worksheet and the second was FY2006 Instructional Allocation Worksheet. These reports provided analyses of teaching resources and productivity for combined undergraduate and graduate demand for every academic department. He indicated these reports are used to identify most egregious misallocations of instructional resources and to analyze instructional productivity based on the current Delaware Study. The Delaware Study provides average SCH to Faculty ratios for different academic departments for schools similar to UMASS. The Delaware study and these two worksheets, however, use SCH which are not weighted differently for graduate or undergraduate courses. It was also noted that the Delaware study does not provide separate data for Masters or Ph.D. programs within its graduate school data.

Associate Provost Harvey did discuss the fact that the new Chancellor has a bias toward undergraduate education based on the perception that it has been the most neglected in recent years. There is an effort to

“shore up holes” in instructional consistency in undergraduate education using the current resource allocation process. He also noted there are three initiatives at UMASS currently focused on this issue of allocating instructional resources. One initiative is in the Academic Priorities Council (APC), one is in the Undergraduate Council, and the third is the Amherst 250 Plan.

A. Differential Weighting of Graduate Courses for Faculty (continued)

Dean Mullin asked if we have separate data for graduate education, rather than graduate and undergraduate combined. Marilyn said that we did. Dean Mullin asked if we could get a version of these two reports just for graduate education? He indicated that he wanted to provide these types of reports to the Deans of the different schools at UMASS with whom he meets. No commitment was made to provide those reports for only graduate school data.

Other items within this topic of discussion included the fact that other qualitative issues needed to be incorporated into resource allocation analyses, including size of class and course evaluations. It was also noted that dissertation credits comprise ½ to ? of the Ph.D. credit hours, and this fact needs to be taken into consideration for any analysis.

Chair Butterfield and the Dean sought to wrap up the discussion for this meeting by indicating that there should be a meeting with Bryan within the next month to establish a committee to address the fundamental question of “How should we allocate graduate faculty?” It was noted that this is a very complex topic which includes the issue of differential weighting as well as other issues such as the need to capture other activities.

B. Program/Course Approvals from ASCC

1. The Professional Doctorate in Nursing was recommended for approval by the ASCC. The Graduate Council approved it unanimously.
2. The MBA/MPPA Joint Degree was recommended for approval by the ASCC. The Graduate Council approved it unanimously.
3. ECE 570 course - The ASCC noted that they had asked for revisions to this proposal which have just recently been received. Therefore, the ASCC recommended this course for approval. The Graduate Council approved it unanimously.
4. Faculty Senate Document 05-035, which establishes a policy to resolve conflicts between evening exams and courses that meet once each week, was discussed briefly and then approved unanimously by the Graduate Council. A major point of the discussion is that these conflicts, in part, arise for students because evening exam schedules are not established for some courses at the beginning of the semester. It was suggested that a requirement for courses to establish their evening exam schedules at the beginning of the semester and to include that schedule in the course syllabus be added to the policy statement. Although no formal vote was taken on this proposed revision, it was noted this change could be added and would be suggested.
5. CompLit 552 - This is a new course proposal received by Chair Butterfield and distributed at this meeting to ASCC for their review.

V. New Business (Continued)**C. Other New Business**

1. Graduate School Grant Service (GSGS)

The Dean distributed 4 documents from the GSGS. These documents included 1) a 22-page printout of a Powerpoint Slide Presentation to the Anthropology Department – September 16, 2005, 2) a 5-page GSGS Mid-year Report for 2005 submitted in January 2006, 3) a 1-page review of a Proposal Writing Forum – Fall 2005 Session Format, and 4) a 4-page summary of Student Comments from Student Evaluations of the Fall 2005 Proposal Writing Forums.

He mentioned he wanted to discuss the GSGS at the next Graduate Council meeting.

2. Re-Admission Fee

The Dean briefly mentioned that he wanted to discuss the topic of re-admission fee at the next Graduate Council meeting.

VI. Sub-Committee Reports

A. ASCC – No Report

B. ALANA – No Report

C. Fellowship – No Report

D. Ethics – No report

E. Mentoring – James Craig provided the report.

1. A Request for Proposal (RFP) was sent out January 31 and is linked to the Graduate School home page web-site (http://www.umass.edu/gradschool/mentor_grant.htm). The RFP is directed to UMASS on-campus Graduate Programs and is for Grants for Graduate Student Mentoring. The applications should be submitted by April 16.
2. The members of the Mentoring sub-committee have established a series of luncheons with GPD's to discuss mentoring graduate students. Two mentoring sub-committee members attend each luncheon. Six dates have been established for Mondays in February and March. Eighteen (18) GPD's have signed-up, and two (2) luncheons have been held with four GPD's attending the first one.
3. As of the sub-committee meeting in January, the results of the Graduate Dean's questionnaire for the Mentoring Symposium had not yet been received by this sub-committee.

VI. Sub-Committee Reports (Continued)

F. Travel – Anne Moore distributed a one page (double-sided) report providing details by Department of the number of Travel Grants Approved and Remaining for the Spring semester in this current academic year.

G. Student Affairs - Julia Beyer provided the Report.

The sub-committee is currently in the process of selecting individuals to complete a new interior design for the Graduate Lounge.

H. Special Admission – no report

I. Statute of Limitations Committee – No Report

VII. Comments by Administrative Officers, et al.

None

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
David E. Dudek