

University of Massachusetts at Amherst
Graduate Council of the Faculty Senate
Linda Shea, Chair
2006-2007

Minutes of General Membership Meeting
Wednesday, February 20, 2008
Goodell 508

Seventeen (17) individuals attended the meeting. Attending were Jane Baran, James L. Craig, David Dudek, Nigar Khan, Kevin Klement, David Kotz, Sylvia Langford, Ernie May, John Mullin, Jeff Napolitano, Linus Nyiwul, Stephen Rich, Linda Shea, Howard D. Stidham, Nate Therien, David Wang, and Martin Wobst.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Linda Shea called the meeting to order at 12:03 PM. New Graduate Council member David Kotz was especially welcomed. Each member of the Graduate Council briefly introduced himself or herself to the new member.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the December 12 meeting were approved unanimously with a spelling correction made to “Cotutelle.”

III. Comments by the Graduate Dean

Dean Mullin reviewed several items.

a. Cotutelle

Refreshing the Council knowledge of this topic from the December meeting, the Dean reiterated that this an important idea which has spread throughout Europe and is just now beginning to spread in the United States. Virginia Tech has 50 Cotutelle agreements. The Dean said he thought this would require Graduate Council and Faculty Senate review And approval.

b. Ethics training

The Dean mentioned that he was not sure of the status of this effort. We must activate the Ethics Committee to address this topic so we can get in compliance with NSF rules.

c. GEO contract negotiation

We are back in negotiation after the last offer was voted down. The issues are boiling down to pay, length of contract, diversity funding, and childcare. The Dean mentioned that he was still optimistic of a settlement this academic year.

d. 100th Anniversary Gala

This event will be held during the entire day on Wednesday, April 9. Russell Hulse, Nobel Laureate, will be the key note speaker. Seven of the nine colleges and schools have designated their award recipients. Fine Arts and Education are in the process.

IV. Old Business

A. Graduate Council Meeting Dates

The remaining meeting dates for the spring semester Graduate Council meetings were agreed to be the Wednesdays of March 5, April 2, and May 7.

B. Graduate Council By-law review

Chair Linda Shea briefly discussed that the Council has the opportunity to review and revise its bylaws again this year. She mentioned that we made the membership revision to the by-laws last year and suggested that we leave the by-laws unchanged for this year. This suggestion was agreed to by the Council members.

V. New Business

A. Course and Program Approvals

James Craig brought three items before the Graduate Council. These items were approved by the Academic Standards and Curriculum Committee and now sought Council approval. The first was the Planet Earth Course, EDU 652/GEO-SCI 501. The second was ECE 636 – Reconfigurable Computing. The third was EDU 658-Knowledge and Skill Application Lab. All three courses were approved unanimously by the council with little discussion.

B. Graduate Certificates

Ernie May distributed a 4-page Faculty Senate document entitled “Special Report of the Rules Committee concerning the Establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on Certificates,” dated 2/14/2008. He noted that the current certificate policies assume students are matriculated so the committee review will probably result in recommendations to make changes to current policy. A brief discussion of the current policies followed, including the issue about the 6 credit limit on transferring certificate credits to matriculated degrees, the issue of the “back-door” acceptance from certificate programs to degree programs, and the issue of online certificates. Ernie mentioned that changes to academic regulations were going to be necessary as well as changes needed to other unfriendly regulations.

Ernie mentioned that the committee plans on being done in June this year. The Dean applauded this approach. He said it would be excellent if this does get done by June.

Ernie also did mention, though, that besides the issue of academic regulations, there still was a question of resources. New programs can dilute resources dedicated to core offerings.

There are 15 members on this Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Certificates. Arthur Kinney had previously agreed to serve as the representative from the Graduate Council Academic Standards and Curriculum Committee and Jane Baran now agreed to serve as the Graduate Council Chair designee.

VI. Committee Reports

A. ASCC – See “New Business - Item A” above.

B. ALANA – No report

C. Fellowship – Kevin Klement provided the report.

The committee is now receiving the fellowship applications. The next two weeks will be very busy as the applications must be reviewed. He mentioned that they could use a student member on the committee. Jeff Napolitano said that he would check to see if there was any interest in serving.

D. Ethics – No report was made but there was a brief discussion about the work of this Committee. It was mentioned that the committee should contact Julian Tyson of the Chemistry department, and Michael Wright of the Polymer Science department who both have done work on some ethical courses.

E. Special Admission – No report

F. Student Affairs – No report

G. Mentoring – No report

H. Travel – Kevin Klement made the report

He mentioned that the new online processing was still a bit rough going but the student helper has smoothed things out. Martin Wobst asked whether the GPD referral letter is a necessary and important part of Travel Grant application. Kevin said the letter is supposed to provide evidence that the GPD approves the submittal but the processing is not usually held up if it is missing.

I. Statute of Limitations (ad-hoc)

The Dean mentioned that this is of interest to the Provost, and he hopes to have something to report by the end of the year.

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

K. Bologna Accord Impact Assessment (ad-hoc)

The Dean mentioned that we were getting more serious about making progress on the committee. Pat Stowell has been having meetings to work this issue.

VII. Comments from Administrative Officers and Others

1. Jeff Napolitano discussed graduate student housing recent activity. He said the top two issues were the need for singles and to reduce the cost. He mentioned that David Vaillancourt started working with the GSS late last academic year. There were plans drawn up to renovate Sylvan. The proposal was finished in November and presented to the GSS. The proposal was voted down by a significant margin during a meeting with 50 graduate students at a recent GSS meeting.

The issue is that “singles” at Prince are two times the size of the ones in Sylvan. Although the result of the vote was not positive, he said this was a good process.

VII. Comments from Administrative Officers and Others (Continued)

The Dean said that we must get onto a space planning priority list. It was said that we should meet with David Vaillancourt and Jim Cahill who oversee this residential and space planning activity for the campus. (The Graduate Council met with David Vaillancourt, Associate Director of Residential Life for Assignments and Administration, and John Findley, Director of Housing Operations, in May, 2007.) Linda Shea agreed to contact them to determine if they could attend one of the next spring Graduate Council meetings.

There then was a brief discussion of how the housing planning is different than the regular capital plan because housing is considered self-financing. Ernie May said that all housing must pay for itself, and he questioned if the GSS was looking for a subsidy in order to get lower more affordable rates. It was then mentioned that Governor Patrick's change to the assessed fringe benefit rate from 29% to 40% was probably going to raise the cost of housing.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:03 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
David E. Dudek