

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

Minutes of General Membership Meeting
Wednesday, March 11, 2009
Goodell 528

Twenty Two (22) 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 Jane Baran, Leslie Horner Button, James L. Craig, David Dudek, Iza Hussin, Arthur Kinney, David Kotz, Kathryn Lachman, Ernie May, Augusta Mfuko, John Mullin, Nahir I. Otano Gracia, Daphne Patai, Lorna Peterson, Linda Shea, Howard Stidham, Patricia Stowell, Nate Therien, and Judy Van de Geer.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Linda Shea called the meeting to order at 12:05 PM.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes were approved with one change.

III. Comments by the Graduate Dean

Dean John Mullin reviewed and discussed several items.

a. Professional Masters of Science Degree

The Sloan Foundation has asked UMASS system to investigate the possibility of establishing a Professional Master's of Science Degree. They have identified hundreds of thousands of positions going unfilled. We have a meeting with them scheduled for later in March.

b. GEO Negotiations

GEO & UMASS labor negotiations are progressing with the hope of closure very soon. In fact, a final agreement could be reached this week.

c. UMASS Amherst Budget

We are hoping for a UMASS Budget within a week or two. We are waiting for this.

d. Graduate Certificates

The Dean made a presentation for the Chancellor and the President of the other Four Colleges on Graduate Certificates. He received questions from the Chancellor about how we are able to get money from the other four other colleges to us if their students participate in our Graduate Certificate Programs.

e. Personnel Searches

There is a good supply of applicants for the Provost search. Also, the search for UMASS Online Director has implications for the Graduate School.

f. Impact of Budget Cuts on Graduate Students

The Dean distributed copies of The Voice with an article about the impact of the budget cuts on the graduate students. The Dean asked the President of the Graduate Student Senate, Nahir I. Otano Gracia, to discuss. She described the 107 mile, 5 day walk of three students to Dartmouth, MA the site of the UMASS Board of Trustee meeting. The VP of the Student Senate spoke at the meeting and said the increase in proposed charges do not benefit graduate students. He spoke about how graduate students are not properly represented on the UMASS Board of Trustees. The Board agreed with that assertion.

Nahir asked the Graduate Council to send a letter of support for adding a graduate student member to the UMASS Board of Trustees. The Dean asked Nahir to submit a formal proposal for the Graduate Council to consider. A brief discussion followed in which there seemed agreement that the Board of Trustees, as well as the Massachusetts State Legislature, have little understanding of the concerns of graduate students. The next Board of Trustees Meeting is in June.

IV. Old Business

A. Graduate Council Report on the Impact of the Chancellor's Proposal for Reorganization

Linda Shea began the discussion by reviewing the major points of the report. She said she had different perspectives and tried to incorporate all viewpoints in the Graduate Council Report.

The summarization of the report included:

- no input from School of Nursing and School of Public Health therefore did not comment on this aspect of the Chancellor's proposal.
- NRE/NSM merger seemed to be OK but there was some concern in NRE about the loss of the applied research and outreach part of their work
- The reaction to the Resource Economics and SOM merger was mostly positive.
- Most objections were to SBS merger

The Dean noted that he spoke recently at a meeting about the land grant tradition in a 21st century context. He found some support for his position. However, he seemed to think that outreach will eventually succumb to pure science. As evidence he noted that the UMASS Cooperative Extension was discontinued during the last budget retrenchment in the 1990's.

The discussion continued with David Kotz stating that he did not think that it was difficult to develop cooperative relationships across the campus now without incurring the financial, time, and emotional costs of the merger. It was also noted that Continuing and Professional Education courses with less than 8 students will now be cancelled, resulting in a loss of about 50 graduate teaching assistants.

Ernie May noted that the consolidated preliminary report of the Faculty Senate, which incorporated the Graduate Council Report as well as 5 other Councils, was already submitted to the Chancellor. He also noted that the Chancellor should announce his strategic plan soon, but, although this is not the present situation, it does seem that the strategic plan should precede the decision about the school reorganization.

IV. Old Business (continued)

A. Graduate Council Report on the Impact of the Chancellor's Proposal for Reorg. (cont'd)

Ernie also noted that the structure of the funding to UMASS has changed in recent years. Formerly, the state funding was about equal to the curriculum fee funding. Presently, curriculum fee funding is between 50-60%. This helps explain our emphasis on undergraduate students.

V. New Business

A. Report of the Academic Standards and Curriculum Committee (ASCC)

Arthur Kinney brought the Social Justice Education (SJE) Graduate Certificate in Teaching for Diversity before the council for its approval. The motion to approve this Graduate Certificate was approved unanimously.

B. Deadline for Graduating Students

Pat Stowell distributed proposal to change the deadlines for graduate students to submit their graduation paperwork. The reason for these requested changes is the impending change to the UMASS academic calendar in 2010. The deadline for spring graduation was changed to April 15 and for winter graduation to January 2. There was a discussion in which concern was expressed about the January date being around the holidays and the April 15 date also being the deadline for graduate applications. It was also discussed if the new policy could include recommended submission dates that would be earlier in addition to the deadlines. Patrick Sullivan said that the School of Education had an existing policy that already did that. Noting the difficulty of getting a committee together around the holidays, there was an inquiry if it would be possible for faculty to sign the form electronically. The Dean said it was a good idea and Patrick Sullivan did say it was one of the projects we are currently investigating. There continued to be concerns about this proposal so the Dean asked Pat Stowell and Pat Sullivan to complete an analysis to determine the current timing of submitting final approvals for dissertations and then come back at a future meeting.

C. Cotutelle

Elizabeth Brabec, Professor and Department Head for the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning, distributed 3 pages of informational documents. She indicated this was not a formal proposal but an informational session to develop possible policy changes to respond to a request for a cotutelle agreement with Xiamen University in China. 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. It is similar to a Joint Degree Program such as Planning and Law. It represents an opportunity for a student to get two different perspectives within a single discipline.

Professor Brabec continued that there is a structural problem with the Joint Degree policy that limits its ability to accommodate the development of cotutelle programs. According to that policy, the Massachusetts State Department of Higher Education would need to approve each institution participating in the program to grant degrees in Massachusetts. That process requires that both institutions be approved to do business in the state of Massachusetts.

V. New Business (continued)**C. Cotutelle (continued)**

It was noted that is a very complex and time consuming process with many requirements and it seems there is a need to develop a new policy to more efficiently and effectively develop and administer cotutelle programs.

In the discussion that followed it was asked if this program could be considered similar to the student year abroad program. Specifics aspects of this program were discussed. It was noted that the China students are here to take courses for one summer and our faculty go to China to teach courses there in the program. The discussion continued about what advantages this program would offer U.S. students. It was noted that this program is a good way to get funding to offer summer courses here for UMASS non-cotutelle graduate students. Also U.S. students would be able to make important professional contacts in China.

Ernie May returned the discussion back to the broader issue of altering the Joint Degree policy. He said there is a need to address the advantages and disadvantages of the current policy and of future policy needs of cotutelle program development. He said we should start this process now. Chair Linda Shea asked Arthur about how we could move this forward. It was discussed that the ASCC will investigate the matter.

VI. Committee Reports

- A. ASCC – see New Business, Item A above.
- B. ALANA – Inactive
- C. Fellowship – No report was made
- D. Ethics – Inactive.
- E. Special Admission – Inactive
- F. Student Affairs – Inactive
- G. Mentoring – No report was made
- H. Travel – No report made
- 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

None

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
David E. Dudek