

University of Massachusetts at Amherst
Graduate Council of the Faculty Senate
Linda Shea, Chair
2007-2008

Minutes of General Membership Meeting
Wednesday, September 12, 2007
Goodell 508

Nineteen (19) individuals attended the meeting. In attendance were Michael Alderman, Jane Baran, James L. Craig, David Dudek, Nigar Khan, Arthur Kinney, Kevin Klement, Sylvia Langford, Bing Liang, Anne C. Moore, Bill McClure, John Mullin, Rushika Patel, Stephen Rich, Linda Shea, Howard Stidham, Patricia Stowell, Daniel Wang, and H. Martin Wobst.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Linda Shea called the meeting to order at 12:02 PM. Chair Shea welcomed all individuals to the new year and extended a special welcome to new members. It was suggested that all members introduce themselves, and we then went around the room doing so.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes were approved with a minor modification to “Item e” under “Dean’s Comments”.

III. Comments by the Graduate Dean

Dean Mullin welcomed everyone back and thank all members for being at the meeting. He said he wanted to lay out an agenda for the Graduate School for the coming academic year.

a. National Research Council (NRC) Survey

We are coming to the successful end of the NRC survey process. About 60 graduate programs have been submitted to the NRC for evaluation. The evaluation will determine each program’s national ranking for the next 10 years.

b. Graduate Student Tracking System

Patrick Sullivan is heading this effort to get this system operational. We currently have no ability to monitor student status and progress. We want to be able to monitor progress and intervene in order to improve graduation rates. Currently only 53% of Ph.D. students complete their degree program.

c. Electronic Submission of Master’s Theses

We are moving forward quickly in implementing the system for electronic submission of Master’s Theses. About 20% submitted on an optional basis last spring while 99% of Ph.D. dissertations were submitted electronically.

d. Record Scanning System

The Graduate School is continuing our efforts to eliminate paper use and storage.

III. Comments by the Graduate Dean (continued)**e. Stabilize the Graduate School Budget**

We have had a \$200,000 structural deficit for the last 3 years. We have a total budget of around \$2 million and want to eliminate any deficit.

f. Graduate Student Grant Services

We wish to evaluate the effectiveness of the Graduate School Grant Services (GSGS) in order to support the budget request for funding. Our graduate students have a good record of gaining grant funding for their work.

g. Graduate Student Recruitment and Retention Initiative

Michael Alderman provided this review. It was noted that 6 departments submitted proposals before the deadline. He distributed a 4-page update which included a summary page, a copy of a memo from Dean Mullin to Graduate Program Directors (GPD's), and a copy of the 2-page Request for proposal sent to the GPD's.

Although the amount available for the program is \$100,000, based on the number of submissions, it is estimated that \$50,000 will be expended.

h. Graduate Student Senate on Graduate Student Housing

The Dean commended the efforts of the Graduate Student Senate and gave them full credit for all the significant progress made to improve graduate student housing. He particularly commended the work of Rushika Patel and asked her to provide an update. Rushika said that Cashman Hall in Sylvan is in the process of being converted into Graduate Student housing and will be taking the place of Prince Graduate Student Housing. She said she was very pleased with the progress and will keep the Council updated as the work on the Cashman Hall remodeling is completed.

i. Certificate Programs

Three programs have been recently submitted to the Faculty Senate: Film studies, African Diaspora, and Public History. We are also currently looking into making a Global Islam a Five College Certificate Program. A task force is being established to focus on the development of Certificate programs. Arthur Kinney asked about criteria for approval of these certificate programs.

The Dean said he wanted discuss this topic at length and perhaps even have one entire meeting of the Graduate Council devoted to this topic. He has already met with the Deans and discussed this. He also said that UMASS has very rigid academic department stovepipes and that there is no tradition of integration between disciplines. Certificate Programs are important because they are a way to identify emerging areas of scholarship.

The Dean mentioned the efforts last spring to develop a Masters in Integrative Studies with Commonwealth College. This idea needs further development this year.

III. Comments by the Graduate Dean (continued)

j. Explore STEM/NEAGAP Integration

We want to integrate these two programs so there is one seamless program for these two educational grant programs.

k. Graduate Faculty Status Review Process

The Dean and Pat Stowell provided this update. Pat said the first step is to identify who is actually here. Faculty lists will be made and a memo will be sent out to ask each academic department to document the criteria for Graduate Faculty and how each Graduate Faculty meet that criteria.

The Dean said that after they had accomplished this the Graduate Council should discuss this topic. But he asked rhetorically why this mattered and if the Council wanted to take the time to address the complexities involved. H. Martin Wobst said that there are different categories of Graduate Faculty status which provides a layer of complexity. The Dean also said that Graduate Faculty status is sometimes granted as a reward and could act as an incentive for faculty.

l. Ethics and Plagiarism Program

The National Science Foundation (NSF) requires education in research ethics. Our efforts to develop ethics courses have been setback because we wanted to build on the work of Phil Nasca and Michael Wright in Nanotechnology. However, Phil Nasca has left the University. It was mentioned that Ethics Committee could meet and assume responsibility for addressing this need. It was mentioned that there is a physics professor who is teaching a research ethics course as well as a public policy professor and that the Ethics Committee could meet with them.

m. Graduate Student Code of Conduct

David LaFond is working with Jeff Napolitano of the GSS on reviewing the Graduate Student Code of Conduct. This diagnostic effort is being made because last spring we had a troublesome incident and determined that no infraction of the Code of Conduct has been made.

n. Bologna Accord Impact Assessment

We will see the full effect of the Bologna European agreement in 2 years. At that time the University degree in the European Union (EU) will be a three year, not a four year, degree. The main difference is in General Education requirements which the EU says are studied in their secondary education system. We need to develop a system to address the manner in which to evaluate European versus American candidates to the Graduate School. There is also the issue of Americans going to Europe to get their BA degree.

o. 100th Anniversary of the Graduate School

We wish to have a massive banquet in the spring with all the “bells and whistles.” We thought of combing this with the Fulbright dinner which was such a success this past spring. We are asking the Deans to help in identifying individuals who should be recognized at this banquet.

III. Comments by the Graduate Dean (continued)

p. Hiring Post-Doctorate versus Graduate Research Assistants

This issue of hiring post doctorates is becoming a major concern now. Although there has been no decrease in funding for graduate students yet, the number of RA's decreased 10% last year while the number of Post-doctorates increased by 10%. What happens if this continues? To properly address this matter, it is possible that we need a joint meeting of the Graduate Council and the Research Council, which is also very concerned about this.

IV. Old Business

No old business was discussed.

V. New Business

A. Graduate Council Schedule of Meeting Dates for the Fall

We reviewed the dates of October 10, November 14, and December 12 for future Graduate Council Meeting dates. The Dean indicated that his schedule was open for these dates.

B. Graduate Council Committee Membership

We reviewed Committee membership needs. Bing Liang agreed to serve on the Fellowship Committee. Daniel Wang agreed to serve on the ALANA committee and on the Travel Committee. Stephen Rich agreed to serve on the Academic Services and Curriculum Committee. Michael Alderman agreed to serve on the ALANA committee while Arthur Kinney agreed to serve on the Special Admissions Committee.

Linda Shea agreed to serve as the representative of the Graduate Council on the Research Council. After seeing no volunteers, Dean Mullin suggested that Nigar Khan serve as the Graduate Council Representative on the UMASS Amherst 250 Task Force and that Patrick Sullivan serve as the Graduate Council Representative on the Faculty Senate's Task Force on Online Education. H. Martin Wobst, noting the role of the Graduate Council to provide advice and counsel to Graduate School administration, questioned whether non-faculty administrative personnel should be representing the Graduate Council on these other organizations. Dean Mullin suggested that these administrative personnel serve temporarily while the Graduate School help to find graduate faculty members interested in serving. The members of the Council seemed to agree with this suggestion.

VI. Committee Reports

- A. ASCC – No report was made.
- B. ALANA – No report was made.
- C. Fellowship –No report was made.
- D. Ethics – No report was made.
- E. Special Admission – No report was made.
- F. Student Affairs – See “Dean’s Comments - Item h” above.
- G. Mentoring – No report was made.

H. Travel – Anne C. Moore provided the report. She distributed a draft proposal for a new Travel Grant procedure. She said this change was made necessary by the University Controller’s Office strictly enforcing an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) policy that expense receipts submitted over 60 after incurring the expense were not reimbursable. In the opinion of the Travel Committee, this policy directly affects the Travel Grant process because the twice a year grant process would result in many student expenses not being eligible for reimbursing because they would be over 60 days old at the time the grant money is issued. Anne Moore made a motion that the draft procedure she distributed be approved. The motion was seconded. After a brief discussion, a friendly amendment was made to this motion that the proposed Travel Grant procedure be adopted as an interim process. This motion passed.

- I. Statute of Limitations (ad-hoc) – No report was made.
- 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 1:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
David E. Dudek