

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

Minutes of General Membership Meeting
Wednesday, October 10, 2007
Goodell 508

Eighteen (18) individuals attended the meeting. In attendance were Maurianne Adams, Jane Baran, James L. Craig, David Dudek, Nigar Khan, Arthur Kinney, Kevin Klement, Bing Liang, Ernie May, Anne C. Moore, John Mullin, Carol Picard, Arslan Razmi, Stephen Rich, Linda Shea, Howard Stidham, Patricia Stowell, and H. Martin Wobst.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Linda Shea called the meeting to order at 12:03 PM.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes were approved with minor spelling and word omission modifications.

III. Comments by the Graduate Dean

Dean John Mullin reviewed and discussed several items that he introduced at the last meeting.

a. Hiring Post-Doctorate versus Graduate Research Assistants

The Dean distributed a one page report titled "Research (RA) Appointments compared with Grant Direct Costs." He said the report does indicate there is something wrong: there has been a 10.8% decrease in the number of RA's in the past three years. There has also been a 38% increase in Grant Direct Costs in the past three years while RA costs have only increased by 5.8% over the same period. He said the Provost understands our frustration with this situation. She acknowledges that we are here to teach not to hire post-doc's. The Dean also said this is one topic that both faculty and the Graduate Employees Organization (GEO) have the same perspective. Follow-up actions should include meeting with Paul Kostecki, Vice Chancellor for Research, and comparing our overall costs with peer institutions. We also need to include indirect costs in any analysis as well as including benefits, such as medical benefits because we have one of the best graduate student medical plans in the U.S.

b. Graduate Student Tracking System

The Dean distributed two pages of reports which both analyzed Doctoral Degree completion. The first report provided an analysis of the status of Ph.D. students by year of entry into the graduate school. It was noted that the overall 53% Ph.D. graduation rate for UMASS Amherst is the same as the national average.

The second report provided details of doctorate degrees awarded by school/college. The Dean said this report provided some insight into how to proceed and make meaningful decisions concerning statute of limitations. Ernie May inquired about why the average statistic was used in these analyses and not the median. He also wanted to know the standard deviation of the UMASS Amherst average and the national average .

III. Comments by the Graduate Dean (continued)**c. GEO contract negotiation**

There seem to be only a few “sticky issues” left. However, the Dean indicated that he expected a contract settlement soon.

d. National Research Council (NRC) Survey

No one nationwide seems to like the manner in which the NRC analysis is going.

c. Electronic Submission of Master’s Theses

We are continuing to move 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. Graduate School Catalogue

We have completed the updated Graduate School catalogue. It is available online. As a result, we only printed 1,000 copies. We used to print 25,000 copies – a significant savings.

e. Stabilize the Graduate School Budget

The Graduate School budget will be balanced this year. We have had a \$200,000 structural deficit for the last 3 years.

f. Graduate Student Recruitment and Retention Initiative

Mike Malone, Dean of the Engineering School, is using \$5,000 of this fellowship money. It was noted that 23% of UMASS Amherst graduate student population is under-represented minorities. The humanities have a higher percentage while management and the STEM disciplines are below that average. In fact, it does seem that the NSF NEAGEP program is properly targeted because without that program, under-represented minorities in the STEM discipline would only make up about 2% of the student population.

There was a question about the definition of under-represented minorities. It was mentioned that there is a standard NSF definition which includes African-American, Hispanic, and Native American. Maurianne Adams noted that in the School of Education there were four African American students but many Caribbean Africans. It was thought that the Caribbean African students were not part of the targeted group of under-represented minorities.

g. Graduate School Certificate Programs

Associate Dean Nigar Khan said that development work is being done on a program for “Violence in Drama Studies – Film and International Violence” which is expected to be submitted for program approval in the Spring, 2008.

h. 100th Anniversary of the Graduate School

Wednesday, April 9, 2008 is the date for the 100th Anniversary gala. We would like distinguished alumni and alumnae to speak during the day and then we would honor them at the banquet with a Graduate School Centennial Award. We are hoping to get one (1) distinguished alumni/alumnae for each college. We are asking the Deans to help in identifying individuals who should be recognized at this banquet.

III. Comments by the Graduate Dean (continued)**i. Graduate Faculty Status Review Process**

Pat Stowell said that the current criteria for graduate faculty that each academic department has on-file at the Graduate School was sent out both to the Graduate Program Directors for each program and the academic department heads. Updates to the criteria were requested to be submitted by Thanksgiving.

j. Grateful Dead Weekend

The Grateful Dead Weekend is coming up. We have received a good deal of unexpected publicity for this event. The event is sponsored by the History Department which may actually make some money on this. We are definitely interested in exploring any long term possibilities like this. If this works out well, we would like to do more.

IV. Old Business**A. Committee Membership**

- Ann Cary was discussed as a potential member of the ASCC or the Bologna Impact Committee.
- Daniel Wang agreed to serve as the chair of the Travel Committee
- Linda Shea recognized and commended Anne C. Moore and Kevin Klement for their work in getting the new Travel Grant process up and running so quickly in the last month. The Graduate Council affirmed this commendation.

V. New Business

None was discussed

VI. Committee Reports

- A. ASCC – No report was made.
- B. ALANA – No report was made.
- C. Fellowship – No report was made.

D. Ethics

The Dean reminded the committee that the National Science Foundation (NSF) requires education in research ethics. He mentioned that if the Ethics Committee needed help in getting any information, Nigar Khan could be of some assistance.

E. Special Admission – No report was made.

F. Student Affairs – No report was made

G. Mentoring – No report was made.

VI. Committee Reports (continued)

H. Travel – Anne C. Moore provided the report. She mentioned that the new electronic Travel Grant application submission process was up and running. She also mentioned that there are no longer any formal “submittal rounds” with deadlines similar to previous years because of the quick turnaround now required. There are continuous submissions and approvals. The GPD’s have 10 days to submit their approval and the Travel Committee has 10 days to approve or reject the grant. The money is transferred once a month to the departments for transfer to the student who received the grant.

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

A. Dean Mullin mentioned that he is on a committee working on revitalizing Springfield. He noted that this is a high priority of Governor Deval Patrick and UMASS Amherst should help. It was mentioned that the School of Education has programs in Springfield and the School of Nursing has a nutrition program in Springfield.

B. Ernie May, Secretary of the Faculty Senate, followed-up on this topic and mentioned that there are 5 new trustees on the Board and Phil Johnston will likely become chair. He said that he will be meeting with Phil here in the next few weeks to discuss issues and priorities of UMASS Amherst. Ernie said he had four topics for which he would like to get some answers: the Springfield Initiatives, Capital Requirements, UMA 250, and our relationship to UMASS governance. Ernie then began discussing each in order.

There is a Springfield Development Task Force which is a joint effort between the Office of the Provost and the Faculty Senate. He mentioned there is a Pioneer Valley clean energy initiative as well as a minority nursing program nursing which are both Springfield initiatives.

Concerning capital requirements, we need to communicate to Phil and the Board a vision of capital needs and how those facilities would be used. Brian Harvey and Joyce Hatch are knowledgeable and key UMASS administrators in this area. This topic is critically important because what gets built determines the future of the campus.

The UMA 250 initiative is going forward. Currently, we are looking for 109 faculty members, though not all are expected to be filled this year. However, this effort is closely tied to facilities. You cannot hire individuals without the facilities for them. There has been a lack of strategic planning in the last Chancellor’s administration to help coordinate and match these resources.

VII. Comments from Administrative Officers and Others (continued)

Concerning the UMASS Amherst relationship to governance, Ernie said that the Governor is not looking at restructuring the UMASS system. Instead, collaboration has replaced restructuring. The restructuring was part of an initiative to position the entire UMASS system as one of the top 10-15 universities. However, if we take all four UMASS campuses together, we get up to a ranking of only 125 in a system to system comparison.

There is the perception that UMASS Amherst involvement and contribution to its surrounding Massachusetts' communities is insufficient and that we are being outdone by other UMASS schools. It was mentioned that involvement with the very close communities of Amherst and Hadley do not count and that cities like Springfield and Holyoke are higher priority. However, Ann Picard mentioned that the School of Nursing has a commitment to Holyoke and there is an economic development initiative as part of a Life Sciences Initiative.

Martin Wobst noted that while UMASS Amherst may need to put some additional focus on regional development, we also have an important research, national and international, focus as well which cannot be overlooked. Ernie mentioned, though, that if we do not solve this perception problem of lack of regional outreach and involvement, the next Chancellor will provide the focus on regional economic development for us.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
David E. Dudek