

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

Minutes of General Membership Meeting
Wednesday, April 2, 2008
Goodell 508

Twenty three (23) individuals attended the meeting. David Vaillancourt, Associate Director for Housing Assignments and Administration, and Jean DeMartinis from the School of Nursing were invited guests. Members also attending were Maurianne Adams, Jane Baran, James L. Craig, David Dudek, Nigar Khan, Kevin Klement, David Kotz, Bing Liang, Ernie May, Bill McClure, John Mullin, Jeff Napolitano, Natalie Neubert, Linus Nyiwul, Arslan Razmi, Linda Shea, Howard D. Stidham, Pat Stowell, Nate Therien, H. Martin Wobst, and Judy Wong.

I. Welcome and Introductions

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

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes were approved unanimously without revisions.

III. Comments by the Graduate Dean

Dean Mullin reviewed three items

a. Student Issue Resolution Procedures

The Dean addressed an initiative begun by the Faculty Senate Rules Committee to address student problem resolution concerns. He said that faculty should understand the procedures for rules about proper behavior and action taken to address issues. He said there are not many issues, this year six that have come to the Dean's office. Still, six is too many. When these cases are managed at the local academic department level, it seems they are not properly handled. There is one example of the dismissal of a T/A without following the proper process.

Maurianne Adams, who also serves as Chairperson of the Rules Committee of the Faculty Senate, said the motivation behind this initiative was that she became aware of hostilities in faculty/student relationships as a result of issues being left to fester without resolution. She said that students may not know what to do and where to go to resolve problems and the staff person they go to may also not know. She asked who are the first responders for Graduate student issues. She also indicated this is an undergraduate problem as well.

Maurianne continued by noting that some respond to these concerns by saying there should be an informative website. But, she said, this is person to person problem and she would like to see all faculty participate in some training on this subject. The Dean said he applauds this initiative. He said both the faculty and students need to be addressed. It was also noted that Nancy Buffone would be responsible for this effort.

III. Comments by the Graduate Dean (continued)

b. Graduate Certificate Programs

Nigar Khan discussed this topic. Associate Dean Khan noted that Maurianne Adams is serving as co-chair of The Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Certificates and thanked her for her work. Associate Dean Khan also thanked Ernie May for his previous supportive suggestion that certificate program proposals currently pending with the Graduate Council ASCC be approved before the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Certificates completes its work because she mentioned that there are many issues to address and resolve. It was also noted the good news that there is another IGERT (Integrated Graduate Education and Research Traineeship) on campus now bringing the total programs to 3 or 4.

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This effort is moving forward. We have a person working on this now. We have no process currently. However, we do have a proposal from a university in China for a program in Environmental Science with 25 students. This program was previously at the University of San Francisco.

IV. Old Business

A. Graduate Student Housing

David Vaillancourt, the Associate Director for Housing Assignments and Administration, began by distributing a document dated January 22, 2008, a proposal to relocate Graduate Student Housing, sent to the Graduate Student Senate (GSS) President Jeff Napolitano and Vice-President Rushika Patel. He noted that the issue at Prince seemed to be a lack of single accommodations. He worked with Jeff and Rushika to develop an alternative. They took a tour of Sylvan, met with architects, and developed plans for a \$4-5million renovation of Sylvan.

However, at the GSS vote, 11 voted for the proposal, 16 against, and there were 10 abstentions. It was agreed that without a majority agreement, the group of graduate students would not be moved out of Prince. Therefore, the current plan is to stay at Prince and not make any changes to that facility. The question now becomes how do we move forward.

David discussed some basic facts about campus housing. There are 12,000 beds on campus and there is high demand from undergraduates because we must house Freshmen and Sophomores on campus. Also, a significant number of junior and senior undergraduates also want to live on campus.

Maurianne Adams questioned why the students voted to stay at Prince. There was a comment that the vote did not seem to reflect an informed decision. It was mentioned that in April 2007, the Graduate Council heard a very negative report from a survey conducted by Rushika of those graduate students at Prince. Jeff Napolitano confirmed the prior GSS survey. However, he said there were factors in the proposal that some students did not find acceptable. For instance, the singles in the proposal for Sylvan were smaller than the Doubles in Prince and several students are living in Prince doubles as singles because their roommate has gone and has not

IV. Old Business (continued)

A. Graduate Student Housing (continued)

been replaced. So Jeff asked how do we resolve the issues. David said that he would like a more inclusive process for working through alternatives so graduate students would better buy into the changes.

The Dean asked Jeff Napolitano what the GSS's currently perspective on this topic was and what was the "will of the Graduate Student Senate." Jeff noted that people were disappointed in the proposal. However, he said the process over the past year working with David Vaillancourt and the Housing and Residential Life Department was very good. He said that for the first time GSS was allowed to work with a department on campus to formulate alternatives in an effort to change policy. He said the importance of the cooperative relationship and the amount of good faith developed with the university administration could not be underestimated, and he thanked David Vaillancourt for his efforts. GSS will continue to work with David and others at the Housing Office. He said the primary concerns to address were cost, the desire for single student accommodations, and larger and better kitchen facilities.

There was a suggestion that Cashman could provide an alternative. However, it was noted that the facility needs to support 12-month occupancy and not 9-month occupancy which undergraduates need. A discussion of alternatives to build additional housing and how to finance it followed. The Dean asserted that we needed someone to take the lead on this within the university to ensure that we move the debate forward. There was a suggestion that we use university resources and expertise, such as turning this issue into an MBA practicum. The Dean and Chair Linda Shea agreed to follow up on this and other possibilities.

B. Graduate Fellowship Program

Kevin Klement began the discussion noting that there have been complaints, as usual, about the awards made this year. He said there is no favoritism towards or bias against any specific departments. He said a major problem is budgetary. The current budget is \$250-\$300,000. The current process includes 40-50 graduate programs and we only award about 20 Fellowships for about \$15,000 each. Therefore, more than 1/2 of the programs will be excluded. Last year, we awarded 19 Fellowships to incoming graduate students and only 3 accepted. The positive aspect of this rate of acceptance is that we have money left to provide fellowships to current graduate students. He noted, though, that having more funding would certainly help. The Dean mentioned he has requested a 10% increase in funding which he is confident will be approved.

To address some of the complaints raised by some graduate programs, the possibility was mentioned of changing the program to make it a competition between graduate academic departments and not between graduate applicants. There was a discussion of this point and another possible alternative of having a second round of incoming student fellowship grants using funds reallocated from declined fellowships. It was noted though that we are required by the AAUP to give applicants until April 15 to accept or decline their awards and by that time it is too late to reallocate funds to other incoming students. Therefore, it was concluded that having a second round of fellowships was not a possibility.

Old Business (continued)**B. Graduate Fellowship Program (continued)**

The Dean said that the number of nominations by each department is based on old criteria. However, Kevin said it was tied to the current size of the program. The Dean then asked what would happen if we took the entire \$300,000 and put it in a “bank.” We could spread the money among more departments in a partnership with them. It was noted, though, that many departments are already supplementing the graduate fellowship funds. It was also felt that we could not approve fellowship grant on a “one at a time” basis.

The Dean noted that there was a lot of anger in the letters of complaints he received about the fellowship program. He indicated he would like to have true University Fellowships which meant that we should get the program endowed. It was mentioned, though, that the \$300,000 current year funding is equivalent to a \$15 million endowment.

This discussion concluded with the Dean asking Chair Shea if she could meet and discuss some ideas on this topic over the summer. Chair Shea agreed she could find some time to meet.

C. Graduate Faculty Status Review

Pat Stowell distributed a revised proposal and reviewed it. She noted there are three categories of Graduate Faculty and the proposal concerns process not criteria. Kevin Klement specifically suggested that the dissertation and publication equivalent be restated. David Kotz and Maurianne Adams noted that this proposal seemed to require annual reviews and that this was unrealistic. It was noted that this was a good procedure for an initial review but not for an ongoing review requirement.

Ernie May asked what was the impetus for wanting to centralize this faculty status review function within the Graduate School staff. The Dean responded that the issue was that the Graduate School was currently responsible for maintaining graduate faculty standards. Therefore, we should either establish and enforce an ongoing policy or we should eliminate this Graduate School responsibility. He said that we did not want rules that we do not follow.

A question was posed whether any tenured faculty have ever been removed from Graduate Faculty Status. Ernie May followed up saying that this proposed procedure could be establishing a time consuming and possibly political process. It was noted that there are informal processes within the academic departments to address any faculty issues that may impact graduate faculty status. Maurianne Adams added that this process does make sense for review of adjunct faculty but not for tenured faculty.

Linda Shea mentioned that this process, rather than being centralized, could be controlled by the Personnel Committees within the individual schools and colleges within the university. Others added that the tenure evaluation process does serve a similar review purpose and that the academic departments can handle this graduate faculty review process.

IV. Old Business (continued)

C. Graduate Faculty Status Review (continued)

However, it was noted that all faculty members of the University are awarded graduate faculty teaching status and they are not automatically reviewed.

After this discussion the Dean asked Pat Stowell to attempt one more revision for review and discussion. Nate Therien requested that the Four College situation be kept in mind when revising the proposal. The Dean concluded the discussion by noting that the Graduate School is currently the “Keeper of Rigor” and this process is an important part of that mission.

V. New Business

A. Course and Program Approvals from the Academic Standards and Curriculum Committee

Two items, previously reviewed and approved by the Academic Standards and Curriculum Committee (ASCC), were brought before the Council for final approval: The Conservation Biology and Planning Concentration in the Wildlife and Fisheries Conservation Graduate Program and the Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner concentration within the Doctoral of Nursing Practice program. Both programs were approved by the Graduate Council.

Upon an inquiry, it was also noted that a requested change to ECE 665 that was considered by the ASCC was approved by the ASCC as a minor change and forwarded to Pat Stowell for further processing. This type of minor course change does not require full Graduate Council approval.

VI. Committee Reports

- A. ASCC – See “New Business - Item A” above.
- B. ALANA – No report
- C. Fellowship – See “Old Business – Item B” above.

D. Ethics

The Ethics Committee has met twice. Currently the committee is having difficulty obtaining the original study by Phil Nasca. We do not wish to lose all that effort and work, but, if we cannot locate it, we may.

- E. Special Admission – No report
- F. Student Affairs – No report
- G. Mentoring – No report

VI. Committee Reports (continued)

H. Travel – Kevin Klement made the report

Demand is intense. The number of travel grant requests is increasing. Also, there seems to be concern or confusion over the how the funds are transferred. Graduate Program Directors (GPD's) would like to understand how this occurs. Lastly, there is concern that some Graduate School staff members are not being responsive or understanding of inquiries concerning the transfer of funds. The Dean noted that staff has been notified to be more customer friendly.

I. Statute of Limitations (ad-hoc) – No report

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

K. Bologna Accord Impact Assessment (ad-hoc) - No report

VII. Comments from Administrative Officers and Others

None

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
David E. Dudek