UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COUNCIL
MINUTES

January 26, 2023   10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.   President's Conference Room

Council in Attendance:
Catherine Dunlop (Letters)
Marc Giullian (Business)
Scott Powell (Agriculture alternate)
Brian Rossmann (Library)
Brennan Reeves (Office of International Programs)
Jennifer Thomson (Faculty Senate)
Craig Ogilvie (Dean of The Graduate School)
Stephan Warnat (Engineering)
Katey Franklin (Health & Human Development)
Amy Reines (Sciences)
Michael Everts (Architecture)
Wade Hill (Nursing)

Also in Attendance:
Abby Sophir (Graduate School)

Absent
Arts Representative
Sweeney Windchief (Education)
Heidi Koenig (Student Representative)

Meeting started at 10:00 a.m.

December 6, 2022 minutes
- Motion to approve by Dunlop, Reines 2nd, 11 pass, 2 abstain

Announcements

- **Update from the Dean**
  - Spring enrollment is currently ~ 60 fewer than last spring
  - Decrease in masters and certificate students, doctoral students increased by four
  - Grad school is working on recruitment and retention initiatives with many departments.
  - Graduate development is well-served via reciprocal benefits between faculty and graduate students
    - Spring 2023 all grad students were sent a planning document that they initiate and then their advisor gives feedback. This is modeled after annual employee reviews. Intentional planning can reduce time-to-degree and empower grad students to determine when they can defend their thesis/dissertation.

- Q: Will review process be initiated by students?
  - Yes.
- Q: Will it go through the Grad School?
  - No, reports are not sent to the Grad School
- Q: Master's and PhD?
  - Both, every graduate program except for Nursing
- Q: How will it work for two-semester programs
  - Potentially irrelevant for shorter programs
- Recognition event for research excellence (Alison Harmon) with students nominating faculty. No opposition from UGC

- **Faculty Senate update (Thomson)**
  - End of Nov considered 3 policies
    - Research faculty has been approved
    - Other two policies on age-of-courses and comp exam timing are waiting for feedback from departments who voiced concerns.
  - In December, 260 emails went out for merit raises for faculty, 450 raises for NTT
  - Information on export control policy and pre-registration of freshmen in fourth orientation
  - Senate is undertaking resolution on mental health and evaluation of undergrad curriculum to identify classes related to sustainability for STARS review
  - Restricted research policy
    - New policy included more specifics of process for classified research, how grad students can get involved

Old Business

- Accreditation policy language
  - Changing language from regionally accredited institutions to institutionally approved accredited bodies as decided by university provost
  - No objections from UGC
- Appeal policy language
  - Subcommittee has not yet met, will carry over to next meeting
- Learning outcomes requirement — coming up with guidance or language for graduate programs to adapt; even high-level credits need learning outcomes associated
  - Q: How to implement?
    - Provide template for programs to modify, department-initiated rather than auto-populating but make it as simple as possible
    - Dean Ogilvie plans to involve Steve Swinford
    - Thomson will send accreditation standards to Dean Ogilvie
  - Q: What if department has its own accreditation agency?
    - Department accreditation agency outcomes typically more stringent than university's, follow those
  - Q: Proactively asking for resources related to accreditation, leveraging to address capacity and resources linked to student success
    - This may not help secure additional funds

- Is a better approach to have an external review from the Council of Graduate Schools and use that advice to argue for more funds.
  - UGC would like Dean Ogilvie to investigate this possibility

New Business

- Political science 12-credit graduate certificate, nonprofit management (handout)
  - Discussed at graduate council Spring 2022
  - Increasing number of MPA graduates going into roles as nonprofit executive directors. A certificate option can provide a more viable option for leaders of non-profits. Students can continue to the MPA after completing the cert.
  - Updates since Spring: Letters of support from two large local nonprofits; enriching electives; making distinct from UM program
  - Program to begin with 7 students, growing to 12-15 students sustained over time
  - Q: Concerns with resources not identified on proposal
    - Resources still being identified
  - Q: On program planning and evaluation course, one of three new core courses to be developed. Could this education be met by existing program evaluation courses in e.g. HHD?
    - Replicative courses— MSU not structured well for courses overlapping between departments, potential for enriched education having a broad range of students
    - Community health course exists in HHD, undergraduate and graduate. This course is currently listed as an elective. Ask the proposers meet with HHD to see if the course could be moved up to a required course rather than creating a new PolSci course.
  - Q: General concern, what is incentive to build new programs that are under-resourced?
    - Some departments are utilizing summer tuition return model
    - Some administrative support available in Grad School for interdisciplinary programs
  - Action item: Catherine will send proposers questions on proposal and invite him to next UGC meeting

- Feedback on transitioning from qualifying exams to placement exams (handout)
  - Part of larger national discussion
  - Document has been sent to departments with PhD qualifying exams
  - Outcome differences between doctoral programs that have qualifiers (7 programs) and those that do not (11 programs)
  - Seeking balance between departmental autonomy and what is best for students, anticipating some pushback if implemented
  - Q: Time to degree- is it worth increasing time-to-degree to improve completion?
    - May increase time to degree for some students, reduce for others
    - Students are spending tons of time preparing for these high-stakes qualifier exams
    - Students doing well in classes and research and may fail qualifier exam,
  - Suggestion to modify policy— if student comes in with a master's degree from accredited school and is accepted, no exam requirement

- o Q: Connection between accreditation language (discussed earlier) and exam policy?
- o Q: Will programs with no placement exam be required to add one?
  - No.
- o Q: What is the opposition?
  - Quality concerns. Belief that exam is best way to measure readiness and placement. Strong culture around exams in certain programs.
- o Q: Potential to create even more rigor with placement exams?
  - Placement exams may still be at unreasonable level of high stakes
- o Action item: Dean Ogilvie will take suggestions to the Provost. No action item for UGC

Adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Next scheduled meeting – February 9, 2023