The meeting was called to order by President Charles Nilon at 3:30 pm in 2205 A&B MU Student Center.

Senators and administrative representatives attending: Lloyd Barrow, James Endersby, Sanda Erdelez, Pat Friedrichsen, Jere Gilles, Lynda Kraxberger, Charles Nilon, Carol Snively, Marty Townsend, Lisa Zanetti, Patrick Wheeler, John Wigger, Marissa Fugate (Graduate Student Association), Mannie Liscum, Ashley Siebenaler, and Ruth Erwin (Graduate School).

Senators and administrative representatives absent: Jane Bostick, Sanjeev Khanna, Peter Vallentyne, and George Justice.

A motion and second were made to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2012. The motion was approved.

Graduate School Report

Dr. Liscum provided the Graduate School report since Dr. Justice was ill. Dr. Justice provided Dr. Liscum with a report of some of the information that he wanted the GFS to know. The report included his recent attendance at the MOGDA--the Missouri Graduate Deans’ Association— which met in Springfield, MO, at Missouri State, in the beginning of the month. Dr. Justice had indicated that it was good to touch base with the state-wide graduate deans—ranging from Washington University to very small master's only campuses without a dedicated “graduate dean”—to try to come together to promote graduate education and work on statewide initiatives. Dr. Justice was representing MU and was interested to hear that all statewide institutions, including Washington U., were “down” in application and enrollment numbers. He indicated, however, this does match national trends, which saw a decrease in graduate enrollment last year. MU reported on enrollment numbers in the fall. Terrence Grus, Director of Admissions, put together application numbers for students wishing to enroll in MU programs in the Fall of 2012. As of today (February 28), we have 4441 applicants for programs beginning in Fall, 2012. This compares with 4248 a year ago for programs beginning in Fall, 2011, an increase in 193 over the past year (4.5%). He stated that it’s hard to judge whether this will result in an enrollment increase, but it seems reasonable to expect that MU will see some additional size in the entering class this fall. This is testament to the hard work of DGSs and recruitment officers—and to the fact that our campus is a great place to pursue a graduate education.

Dr. Justice indicated that this all came out in the retreat between the Graduate Faculty Senate and the Provost’s staff. In his perspective he felt that the retreat was very successful at illuminating issues and bringing together key constituencies on campus.

Dr. Justice also reported that the first pilot for the "LAB--Learning Across Borders" graduate program was held in February, with Dr. Mike Urban leading an extremely interesting discussion on approaches to global climate change. The students who were able to participate were engaged and engaging, and the conversation was rich and interesting. There are two other pilot LAB programs set up for this spring.

He reported that he was just back from the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools, where he had been invited to talk about the Graduate Student Progress System. The presentation was a success, and it made him realize (yet again) what a resource we have in the GSPS and how ensuring that programs and student’s use it to maximum effectiveness is something we need to push through. The Senate mandated its use, but adoption has been uneven across campus. It
fulfills a need for a secure and simple way to conduct an annual progress review for students and, as well, act as a repository for graduate students’ achievements. He wondered if the GFS felt it would be worth having Dr. Robin Walker do a short presentation of the GSPS for this year’s senators, many of whom may not be familiar with the possibilities the system provides.

Dr. Liscum followed up with an update on the fellowship competition. He indicated that there were 118 nominations for Graduate School fellowships this spring with 38 masters nominations and 80 doctoral nominations. Of the 118 nominations 37 were for underrepresented students. He announced that the underrepresented fellowship awards had been made. Drs. Justice and Liscum and Norma Jackson reviewed the nominations and made the determination for those fellowships. Dr. Liscum indicated the other fellowships were reviewed by five panels of faculty members across the campus. Dr. Liscum provided the panels with the following criteria to use for review: academic history, personal statements, letters of recommendation, scholarly activities, and departmental fit. The panels were to rate the students on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest rating. He hopes to have all the rankings tabulated this week and make the awards a week earlier than scheduled. Dr. Liscum indicated that this year the Graduate School would be able to offer 10 master’s fellowships and 22-23 doctoral fellowships. These are in addition to the underrepresented fellowships that were awarded. He also indicated that he would be having a DGS networking meeting to discuss the fellowship process and get feedback on what should and should not be included with future fellowship nomination.

Graduate Student Association Report

Ms. Fugate indicated that the GSA had hired a webmaster and had revamped the design of their webpage. She indicated that GSA would be holding a mocktail event on April 14 and Dr. Nigel Rothfels Director, Office of Undergraduate Research at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee will be attending the event. Dr. Rothfels will be the keynote speaker at the MU Cross-Disciplinary Project conference earlier that day. The theme for the MU Cross-Disciplinary Project conference will be the “Animals in Society.”

Committee Reports

Awards Committee – The Committee is doing evaluations for GRA/GTA awards.

Academic Affairs – Dr. Snively indicated that she distribute the doctoral faculty criteria to the Committee for vote.

Old Business

Graduate Education White Paper

The Senate discussed how to disseminate the document and what their relationship to the document should be. They indicated that there was a variety of ways to respond as the relationship of the document to the Senate. They felt the document was a start on discussion on graduate education on campus and the entire faculty and DGS’s should be included in the discussion. They encouraged the Graduate School to have DGS’s look at the document if they had not had the opportunity. They would like Dr. Justice to identify four to five major issues and have the GFS discuss them over the next couple years. It was noted that the document was hard to read and comprehend online. Dr. Townsend indicated that her students have discovered that they do not process as well reading items online. They did feel that in order to read the document online it needed to be shorter. They felt the Graduate School should sent
the item out in pdf format hoping that will allow others to read and give more comments back on the document. The Senate decided not be co-author of the document but were interested in having the Senate identify items that need more discussion and have GFS subcommittees to work on items over the next couple years. They appreciated Dr. Justice vision and creativity and detail of the document. They noted again that they would like Dr. Justice to identify key issues and have the Senate discuss over the next 12 to 18 months. One question that was brought up by the group was who the white paper is for. The audience would be MU or others outside the University. Discussion will continue next month.

Follow Up From Meeting with Provost Office Staff

The group felt the meeting with beneficial. They felt that Dr. Justice identified things the Graduate School should be involved in. What does the GFS think the Graduate School should be involved in for graduate education – things the Graduate School can deliver with little money and get results?

New Business

Bio-Design Certificate

Since Dr. Justice was absent and Dr. Nilon did not know the specifics about the Bio-Design Certificate discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

GFS Elections

Dr. Friedrichsen asked the Senators whose terms will expire this year to help with soliciting nominees for the open positions. Nominations will be needed for the following: two from College of Agriculture, Foods and Natural Resources, one from College of Education, one from Journalism, Law and Truman School of Public Affairs, one from Nursing, Health Professions, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine and one from the College of Business to fill the remainder of Dr. Wheeler’s term. Dr. Friedrichsen indicated that she would draft something that the Senators could send to their colleagues to see if they could find willing candidates to serve on the GFS.

Other Business

Dr. Nilon indicated that next month agenda items will include a degree consolidation from School of Natural Resources, a discussion about the role of the graduate school in providing shared services to grad programs, and have a talk about IGERT and National Needs Assessment two graduate education grants recently received by departments at MU.

The group offered congratulations to Patrick Wheeler on his new position at University of South Florida.

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 pm.

Submitted by

Ruth Erwin
Graduate School