Minutes of the Graduate Faculty Senate Meeting  
March 20, 2007

The meeting was called to order by President Thomas Dougherty at 3:30 p.m. in 407F Cornell Hall.

Senators and administrative representatives attending: Thomas Dougherty, Margaret Grogan, Stephen Lombardo, Eileen Porter, Paul Speckman, Nancy West, Art Peng (Graduate Student Association), Pam Benoit, Ron Drobney, George Justice, and Ruth Erwin (Graduate School), and Judith Stallman and Michael Nolan (Rural Sociology).

Senators and administrative representatives absent: Stephanie Craft, Mark Fine, Tony Lupo, Peter Markie, James McGlew, Jay Scribner, Alan Strathman, Steve Van Doren, and Lee Wilkins.

A motion and second were made to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2007 Graduate Faculty Senate meeting.

Graduate School Report

Dr. Drobney gave a synopsis on the NRC review. He indicated that the project is a review of the status of doctoral education in the US conducted at approximately 10-year intervals by the National Research Council. Nationally there are 5,400 degree programs participating from all major research universities in the U.S. and within those 5,400 degree programs there are 108,304 faculty who serve as Core Faculty. Core Faculty are faculty who serve either as advisors and/or members of PhD Admissions or Curriculum committees. On the MU campus there are 45 eligible degree programs and 840 participating core faculty members. He indicated that the following data has been collected to date: Program list; Faculty list; and Program Questionnaire for each program. The faculty questionnaires response rate for our campus is 667 of 840 faculty or 79.4%. Nationally the response rate has been 71% for faculty questionnaires. Remaining activities include:

- Institutional questionnaire - April 1
- Remaining Faculty Questionnaires - April 1
- Student Questionnaires - Students in Physics, English, Economics, Chemical Engineering (will be distribute sometime in April)
- Program Ratings - conducted by a group of faculty selected from those who filled out their Faculty Questionnaire
- Review data submitted for MU
- Analysis of data – by Mathematica and NRC.

Dr. Benoit distributed a handout on the PhD Completion Project the Graduate School is participating in. The project is sponsored by the Council of Graduate School and data will be collected from 21 research partners, 8 project partners and 313 doctoral programs. Cohorts entering graduate schools from 1992-93 through 2003-04 academic years, program-level data for more than 47,000 graduate students and institution-level demographic data for 52,975 graduate students will be reviewed. Dr. Benoit discussed the various tables on entering Ph.D. students and the correlations they have with race/ethnicity and citizenships, completion rates, sex, early Ph.D. attrition versus late Ph.D. attrition. There are five fields of studies that are in review are Engineering, Humanities, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences/Mathematics, and Social Sciences.

Community Development and Great Plains Idea

Dr. Nolan gave an overview on the Great Plains initiative. He indicated that on the MU campus the Community Development option will be an emphasis area under Rural Sociology’s masters program. The department has been in discussion and collaboration with others in the Great Plains program. The Community Development option is a multi-institutional program which will allow professionals to work towards their master's degree. At MU the Community Development Extension faculties are part of the Rural Sociology faculty and will be teaching the courses at MU. Drs. Stallman and Nolan presented the course curriculum a student taking the Community Development Option through Great Plains IDEA will need to complete in order to receive their degree through MU. It showed both MU courses and courses to be taken through the partner institutions. Under the Great
Plains IDEA students will have a common tuition rate. A motion and second were made to approve Community Development as an emphasis under Rural Sociology. The motion was approved with one abstention.

**Graduate Student Association**

Mr. Peng announced that GSA will be hosting the dinner for the Superior Graduate Achievement awardees on April 11. The SGA awardees are chosen by peers in their departments. He also announced that new officers for GSA will be elected at their April 10 meeting.

**Fellowships and Awards Committee**

Dr. Porter announced that the Fellowship and Awards Committee had completed all their work for the year. Dr. Justice indicating that he was finalizing the processing of the final awards.

**Academic Course Development**

Dr. Drobney reviewed the Academic Course Development, Approval, and Life Cycle of courses that was included with the agenda. He indicated that the Coordinating Board of Higher Education and the Curators do not like to approve additional programs without knowing that campuses are eliminating programs. This document, which the System is working on, is a mechanism to reduce the numbers of courses on the books. The document and flow charts identified how courses are approved and how the proposed course lifecycle would work. Dr. Drobney indicated that under the proposal courses that had not been taught within the last two years would go to the Course Depository where they would remain for three years. If the course was not reactivated within the three years, it would be discontinued. Courses that were in the Depository that needed to be reactivated within the three years could be. Discussion focused on the Senate’s concern about the length that courses were not taught before going to the Depository. They felt that some departments offer courses on a three-year cycle rather than a two-year cycle.

**Other Business**

A future agenda item was proposed on plus/minus grading. Dr. Drobney indicated that plus/minus grading had been brought to the GFS three times in the past and each time standard A-F grading had been the wish of the faculty. He indicated that this was not an item that could be discussed during this academic year. He encouraged the Senators need to talk with the faculty and determine their wishes. Also he indicated that a campus-wide forum would be necessary to allow the graduate faculty to voice their concerns on the issue.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Submitted by,

Ruth Erwin
Administrative Associate I

Ron Drobney
Associate Dean