

Minutes of University Graduate Council  
October 19, 2006

**Present:** Michele Hardy (Agriculture), John Brittingham (Arts and Architecture), Mark Nelson (E HHD), Robert Maher (Engineering), Carl Fox and Jenny Miller (Graduate Education), Ken Bowers (L&S—Science), Rita Cheek (Nursing—Missoula).

Meeting commenced at 9:10 a.m. in 114 Sherrick.

**UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS:** (Numbers refer to item numbers on the Agenda)

I. Welcome, Introduction, and Updates

Carl Fox, as acting Chair, thanked all for coming

- Robert Maher—Carl congratulated Rob for being re-elected as UGC representative for the College of Engineering
- Election—one election remains open until October 20, for the Science section of the College of Letters and Science
- 2 New Programs—Carl announced that 2 New Programs went to the Board of Regents in September:
  - PhD in Ecology and Environmental Science
  - MN in Nursing for clinical nurse leaderThese will probably be accepted at the November meeting of the Board of Regents
- New Proposal—a New proposal for a MA in Art History has been presented to the DGE (in the future, UGC will review and provide recommendations to departments for New Program proposals)
- Molecular Biosciences—an initiative for Molecular Biosciences has been instituted; seven graduate programs will be involved  
The Provost's office will provide a \$100,000 base for PhD fellowships (\$22,000 per year plus full tuition—for new top notch incoming doctoral students)  
EPSCOR and INBRE will also contribute funds.

II. Review of Minutes from September 21, 2006

There were no changes; Minutes were approved as written.

III. Plan for Fall Semester

- 3 Committees—3 Task Force committees will be set up:
  - a. Governance—members will probably accomplish the majority of their tasks this semester
  - b. Policies and Procedures—there is a large volume of policies to be reviewed
  - c. Curriculum—will set up a more formal procedure for review of new courses, degree programs, etc.
- Graduate Coordinators—a meeting of graduate coordinators and the UGC will be set up
- Student representative—a second graduate student representative will be invited to attend UGC meetings in the future; DGE will contact the next MSU college on the rotation for the name of a student.

IV. Organization of the Graduate Division

Will be discussed at the November meeting.

## V. UGC Meeting Format

Carl handed out a sample agenda from N. Arizona University which had

- Much of the time spent on curriculum items
- Many items listed under “consent items”
- A report from a graduate program (at every meeting)

This agenda is a possible way UGC might want to structure future meetings.

## VI. UGC Meeting Time for Spring Semester

There is a need to set the UGC meeting on the same day and time each month—to become a regular feature on everyone’s calendar

- Members mentioned that they lacked their spring teaching schedules at this time
- If a member is unable to attend an occasional meeting, a substitute is permitted (please contact the Chair and DGE with the substitute’s name).

## VII. Roles, Responsibilities, and Organization of UGC

### A. Chair and Chair Elect Nominations and Election

- Duties of Chair would include working with DGE (including assistance with student problems—for faculty input) and liaison with faculty
- Carl will try to obtain additional funding for the Chair
- Rob nominated Ken as Chair; Ken declined
- Rob moved that Mark Nelson be Chair; Michele seconded; vote was unanimous
- As Chair, Mark will be able to vote (therefore, he will continue to represent EHHD).

### B. UGC Task Forces—Membership and Responsibilities

1. Governance—the PENN STATE section in the new UGC binders will provide information for the Committee
2. Policies and Procedures—the DGE WEBSITE section in the UGC binder will provide MSU graduate education policies; Jenny stated that they had not been reviewed in a long time and there was a need to make changes that are clearer and more welcoming to grad students
3. Curriculum—the MSU UNDERGRADUATE handout may serve as an example of the process the Committee will create for reviewing new grad course requests (at present, the review is done by Carl Fox of DGE); the sample N. Arizona University Course Syllabus is a possible standard to be used by MSU faculty

Carl and Jenny will work with each committee to supply them with additional information.

## VIII. Issues for Discussion

### A. PhD Credit Minimum

- At present, MSU policy states 30 credits, of which 18 is research/dissertation, for a PhD degree
- Jenny stated there is a need to clarify the policy—to emphasize that the 30 credits are POST MASTERS (a few MSU departments are interpreting it as 30 credits POST BACHELOR’S)
- The handout of other universities showed 60 to 90 credits being required for PhDs—MSU needs to be more in line with these minimums
- There is a problem of already overbooked MSU faculty who could not provide additional classes
- Provost Dooley suggested in a meeting with Carl the possibility of taking courses outside their main discipline, for the increased number of credits

- Another suggestion was to increase the number of research/dissertation credits
- Rita asked how many MSU departments were involved; Jenny replied that it affects all of our PhD granting departments but usually is not a problem except when students go straight from a bachelor's to a PhD, bypassing the master's
- Ken stated that a few students came from excellent undergraduate programs and therefore bypass the MS degree and go straight to the PhD
- By the November UGC meeting, Jenny will provide the Curriculum committee with examples of the "only 30 credits for a PhD" and will provide a proposed revised policy for the 30 credit rule to the UGC.

B. Graduate Student Application Process

- For Fall 2006, there were over 200 MS applications with "no decision made" status (including incompletes, denials—which had not been sent from the departments to DGE)
- Prospective students need to be notified of their status much sooner than at present; students are "shopping" and will go where responses are quicker
- DGE has begun working on creating:
  1. a "check status of application" insert for the DGE application web page
  2. a system whereby information from electronic graduate applications uploads directly into Banner
- The possibility of moving up DGE's deadlines for accepting applications is being discussed
- Incentives to attract top notch new grad students could include fellowships, more tuition waivers and teaching assistantships, financial assistance for non residents (at present, non residents can take only 6 credits per semester during the year they are establishing residency; international students can never establish residency).
- Carl proposed a reversal of the current application process: a student would first be admitted to MSU grad school (DGE would check that the student meets minimum requirements) and then the application would be sent to the department for a final decision
- If the department decided NO, then perhaps the application could be sent to a second department for consideration
- Rob pointed out that the letter to the student would have to be VERY clear—he/she has met only the minimum requirements for MSU grad school and the application still needed to be forwarded to the department for the final decision
- Ken stated that in the Math department, RECRUITING of the student begins as soon as they receive an application
- Jenny stated that staff turn-over in some departments causes slow responses to the students.

C. Development Strategy – postponed.

D. New Programs – see I above.

Meeting adjourned at 11:03 a.m.

MaryKay West  
Division of Graduate Education