University Board of Graduate Studies Minutes
10/1/2015
Raynor Conference Center A

Present: Allison Abbot, Amy Blair, Margaret Bull, Sumana Chattopadhyay, Sharon Chubbuck, Kim Halula, Michael Johnson, Felissa Lee, Stephen Merrill

Present (non-voting): Kevin Gibson, Mary Wacker (note taker), Carl Wainscott

Excused: T. Gerry Bradley, Robert Griffin, Alison Julien, Kathleen McKeown, Stephen Saunders

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 pm with a welcome from Dr. Johnson.

Minutes of the 9/3/2015 meeting were approved via email with modifications.

Reports:

Graduate Interim Dean – Kevin Gibson

The fundamentals of the graduate programs are sound. Enrollment is down some, and notably in two areas: engineering and education. Engineering is under new leadership that is likely to invigorate the program. Education remains affected by Act 10, which has decoupled credentials from incentives. Education is currently making a more aggressive recruitment effort and there are indications that these efforts will bring good results.

New programs under consideration are a doctor of occupational therapy, a master’s in athletic training, and a master of arts in corporate communication. The proposals will be well reviewed before they come to the UGBS, and we will discuss them when they get here.

There is an increase in INPR interest. Concordia University is supporting members of their staff to earn a PhD, and we are reaching out to those potential students. We were also contacted by an MSOE faculty member and will be following up on that lead.

For those new to this group, interdisciplinary PhD programs (INPR) are for self-funded, self-directed students who choose to bridge between two programs of study that we already offer. This is a 3-stage process. They begin at the Graduate School with a discussion of time and investment required. Candidates then submit a one-page concept paper which is brought to the UGBS for discussion regarding the workability of the proposal. If the concept paper is approved, the student may take up to 12 credits in non-degree status. During that time the student builds a committee and returns to the UGBS with an Outline for approval. Upon approval we delegate to a dissertation committee as we would in any department, and the committee is then responsible for the student’s satisfactory progress. We have several INPR students in the pipeline, with two close to graduation.

Katie Ruetz is our new Director of Graduate Admissions, and she has brought tremendous energy to the job and is doing a lot of outreach. We are in the process of reviewing new
initiatives and discount models. The biggest applicant pool for the Graduate School is Marquette students, so we are now waiving their $50 application fee to remove one obstacle for them. Application fee waivers are also being selectively given to students who attend college fairs and events, and we are able to track these potential students on the basis of where they made contact to assess the value of our recruitment efforts. Departments hosting events that bring prospective students to campus can contact the Graduate Dean to receive approval for fee waivers.

**Graduate Assistant Dean – Carl Wainscott**

No report

**UBGS Chair – Michael Johnson**

Dr. Johnson and Interim Dean Gibson met with incoming Dean Doug Woods during his recent visit to campus to discuss the agenda for upcoming UBGS meetings. We will enjoy working with Dean Woods. He is looking for ways to incentivize growth and to grow new programs through strategic thinking. He also met with Dr. Hossenlopp about the balance between research and graduate programs, and the opportunity to get the UBGS and COR together.

We have a meeting Monday with the Huron consultants in Zilber 470. This is a discussion about their upcoming report, and an opportunity to give feedback.

**Business:**

**Discussion on Value of Doctoral Residency Requirement**

The residency requirement policy from the Graduate Bulletin was read and discussed. The group was asked if this policy is still relevant to our programs. It was pointed out that the residency credit requirement cannot be met with dissertation credits alone.

A problem with the policy arises when research is going on outside the department – in a hospital or a company for example. The student may be immersed in the research, and might be self-funded, but is out of compliance with the residency requirement. Education has asked for waivers of this requirement in the past for students immersed in field research.

It was noted that the policy doesn’t comport well with the current age of hybridization, and is not achieving our goal of providing a community and immersion for the student. If we offered online courses, a student could be compliant and never be on campus.

The group discussed the value of immersion, and how it can be measured. It was agreed that it has value, but this policy may not achieve that goal. Part-time students may not experience the value of immersion through this requirement. Students are likely to build community through peer groups.

It was noted that a former student who earned a masters at Marquette and went abroad for his PhD found that the lack of immersion in the program abroad caused him to struggle. His experience is an example of the value of inclusion.
The need for a requirement varies by program. In biology, students must be in the lab, so are here. This may not be a one-size-fits-all policy. It was suggested that each department might establish their own needs for providing a cohort. The need might also be greater for students coming into Marquette for their PhD than for those continuing as Marquette students.

Dr. Gibson noted that an academic community builds morale and is desirable, but that the instrument we are using requires policing and auditing, and may be worked around. Noting that a law that is not enforced is not a law, Dr. Gibson recommended that if we don’t need this policy we should recommend its removal. Since at Marquette every student has an advisor, and we do not subscribe to a factory mentality here, Dr. Johnson saw little need for this policy as it currently exists.

The INPR students, who may feel more disconnected, might be the biggest risk category in this regard, but the current policy is not helping them.

The group raised questions about the possibility of a statement and action plan developed between the student and advisor, how such a program could be facilitated, and how to work to improve the finding from the university climate reflecting a lack of belonging to the campus. It should be the responsibility of the department, advisor and student to articulate how they establish a learning community. The group suggested looking at small PhD programs to see how they are achieving this goal. Nursing noted that they currently host doctoral forums twice a month, with students and faculty presenting on different topics. An end of the year celebration and poster session is held. Dr. Gibson noted that such programs, which offer a carrot rather than a stick, tend to work more effectively than punitive measures.

The group agreed that there is a place for articulating the need for a learning community as a value, but suggested a proposal to get rid of the residency requirement. It was suggested that a note be sent out to DGS’s to ask their opinions. If no concerns are raised, then movement to eliminate the policy and think of a new way to articulate this goal is recommended.

May 2016 Hooding Ceremony Plans

In December 2014 a hooding ceremony was held for PhD graduates in lieu of a mid-year graduation, which has been discontinued. All attending agreed that it was an excellent event and provided deserved recognition to these graduates and their families. President Lovell liked the event and suggested that such an event should replace on-stage hooding at the annual commencement ceremony. In the spring of 2015 this idea was circulated for feedback among deans and the GSO. At the DGS fall meeting last month the plan to replace stage hooding at commencement prompted a lively discussion and a letter was sent out by a director raising serious concerns. The Graduate School was given the sense that this is a decision made for the current academic year. Dr. Gibson asked the group for feedback on this change and suggestions as to how the success of this new ritual might be measured.
The group asked for a description of the December hooding event. The ceremony was on a Saturday. Guests were doctoral candidates, their families, faculty, advisors, and students were not limited to a specific number of guests. The provost and the president were in attendance. There was a processional, speeches, a nice reception afterward and an opportunity to take photos and interact with the president. At the May commencement PhD students were invited to receive their scroll and be hooded on stage and exit the stage. The December ceremony was more intimate. Mixed feedback from students last spring indicated that the most important factor was that special recognition be given to doctoral graduates.

The argument against the separate ceremony comes from a desire to publicly acknowledge our PhD students to display excellence to all in the university community. A well-written statement of opposition makes valid points. Some Board members present reported that there was overwhelming opposition in their departments to a separate ceremony, citing arguments that the hooding doesn’t take much time and is the right thing to do. There was an undercurrent reported that faculty do not want to attend two ceremonies, and that they were not asked in advance to share their feedback.

The Board looked for solutions that might represent middle ground. Dr. Gibson noted that all commencement programs are currently under review, citing problems with demand for individual ceremonies. Some suggested that there might be other areas in the commencement program that could be reduced – areas that do not include the awarding of degrees to and honoring our students, which the group believes should be the centerpiece of the event. It was acknowledged that there is likely to be a difference of opinion on what individual students prefer – while some seek the large ceremony at the Bradley Center, others very much enjoyed the dedicated time with their families and the president at the smaller event. It was also suggested that PhD students could be seated on stage with the faculty at the large ceremony, giving them a more visible presence.

Agreeing that everyone wants what is best for students, Dr. Johnson offered to follow up with the GSO to get a better understanding of student wishes. He noted that whatever is done needs to be communicated as the best and most respectful choice, even though there may not be universal agreement with the decision reached.

Initial Brainstorming – DGS/Faculty Survey Ideas

Dr. Johnson asked the group to suggest the big issues that UBGS should tackle this year. In advance of Dr. Woods’ arrival in January, the Board suggested laying out some issues that are known to exist in an open-ended fashion. Such questions could include:

- Envision the program you would love to offer. What would it look like?
- What barriers stand in the way of growing your program?
- What would enable growth of your program?

Is a survey a good means of gathering feedback? Some responded that surveys may deliver useless information or fail to get a comprehensive response. While surveys could be used, it was
suggested that face-to-face meetings would be a fresh approach, and would send the message that the university is under new management. The Board suggested that focus groups with faculty, with Dr. Woods in attendance, might garner more specific responses and provide opportunity for follow-up discussion. Dr. Woods wants to understand the climate and culture before he gets started with change.

The Board acknowledged that it can be difficult to know what is going on in our programs without bringing in all voices – including those who are not the “heroes and champions” frequently included in such discussions. Dr. Gibson reminded the group that money often seems like an easy answer to problems but is necessary, noting that there is often a kernel of wisdom in the husk of familiarity.

The Board recommended that offering refreshments provides an added incentive and is likely to enhance participation in focus groups. They also suggested that a UBGS representative should attend each meeting in order to bring feedback to the Board. If there is no budget for focus group gatherings, an alternative might be to invite Dr. Woods to faculty meetings.

After Monday’s meeting with Huron consultants there may be more ideas about topics for discussion among focus groups. The Board’s goal is to implement such meetings in January or February of 2016, shortly after Dr. Woods arrives on campus.

**New Business:**

Dr. Gibson noted that the MCTS has agreed to offer Marquette graduate students bus passes for $45 per semester, just as they do for undergraduates. This change represents a huge benefit for our students.

There being no other new business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary C. Wacker

**Upcoming meetings for the 2015-2016 Academic Year:**

(All are on Thursdays, 2-4 pm)

11/5/2015
12/10/2015
1/14/2016
2/4/2016
3/3/2016
4/7/2016
5/5/2016