

**UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COUNCIL
MINUTES**

February 7, 2022

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

WEBEX

Council in Attendance:

Mike Wittie (Engineering)
Christopher Livingston (Architecture)
Sweeney Windchief (Education)
Michael Brody (Faculty Senate)
Marc Giullian (Business)
Dawn Tarabochia (Health & Human Development)
Catherine Dunlop (Letters & Science)
Dennis Aig (Arts)
Hannah McKelvey (Library) Rachelle McLain
Jane Mangold (Agriculture)
Scott Creel (Letters & Science)
Craig Ogilvie (Dean of The Graduate School)

Also in Attendance:

Robert Mokwa, Provost
Steve Swinford, Associate Provost
Bradford Watson, Faculty Senate
Lauren Cerretti (Graduate School)

Absent:

Wade Hill (Nursing)
Maureen Kessler (Student Representative)

Meeting started at 10:01 am on WebEx

January 24, 2022 minutes

- Motion to approve by Mangold, 2nd by Wittie, motion passes: 8 pass, 0 oppose, 0 abstain

Announcements

- **Update from the Dean**
 - Shared attrition and retention PowerPoint
 - Enrollment increases in all types of student (cert, master's, doctoral, specialist)
 - Time to degree (TTD) for doctoral students ~49% by year 8 (Dean's goal is to get to 60%)
 - Largest loss in doctoral is students who leave without a degree 20%; 15% "master-out"
 - Some depts have a larger master-out population than doctoral completed

- TTD data can help depts by sharing what works for depts with shorter TTD, potentially adapted by depts with longer TTD
 - Graduate School increasing early interventions in partnership with departments (e.g. peer mentor circles (piloting), increasing stipends, messaging students early, food and childcare scholarships)
 - Other Graduate School initiatives: CIMER (train the trainer, mentor workshops), student empowerment, completion grants.
 - Q: Some programs admit more liberally but have fewer grads because more leave in first years. How does this fit within your/university strategy of improving results?
 - Perhaps an ethical question. Hesitant to encourage culture of uncertainty for a student. Would like to see students master-out faster if department doesn't judge student will make it to PhD
 - Q: Do you have a sense of how other universities are doing compared to us?
 - Most universities don't publish graduate completion rates. One study said 50% is a national trend.
 - Seems everyone is struggling with how to improve TTD
 - Q: MSU does not offer healthcare as a free benefit like some other universities do and it really eats into grad assistant stipends. Is MUS [the whole system] in a position to advocate for a healthcare plan for students?
 - Seems unlikely
 - Graduate addition payment ~\$200/month intended not help with insurance costs and does largely meet students' costs if they get insurance from ACA
 - Q: Should we send climate survey to grad students?
 - Dean will investigate with OPA, have sent some surveys out
 - Q: Are faculty workload and time they are able to commit to students part of TTD picture?
 - Graduate School supports CIMER and mentoring development (Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research; <https://cimerproject.org/>)
 - Faculty Senate leaves it up to "role and scope" within department—how faculty are compensated for work performed is defined by departments
- **Faculty Senate update (Brody)**
 - Senate meets Wednesday and Library is giving presentation about electronic journal changes

Old Business

New Business

- **Guest Provost Mokwa, Shared Governance**
 - R1 designation is official (final results published) and U Montana is also R1 now
 - Strategic Plan main priorities: one is increasing graduate education
 - As an institution, want to focus on retention as MSU did for undergraduates
 - Time to degree for graduate students also important.
 - Shared governance
 - Defined university processes for policy making and approval exist

- Faculty Senate is the driver of any policies affecting faculty and there is a defined process
- Any time policies will impact students and faculty broadly, encouraging UGC to review faculty handbook (appendix A) for procedures of shared governance process:
https://www.montana.edu/policy/faculty_handbook/appendix.html
- FS Joint Academic Governance Steering Committee (JAGS) is part of review process and includes members from various offices on campus (legal, Provost Office, FS Chair, University Administration)
 - Q: What types of things should UGC bring to JAGS? Age of Courses policy used as an example.
 - Because that is a high-impact policy, Provost suggests UGC consult a broader audience for discussion and feedback (Faculty Senate, Academic Council).
- Q: Is Provost Office receiving feedback about graduate specific items? Hearing enough from faculty who work with grad students? Opportunities for input?
 - Provost: Hears from Deans, meets with Dean Ogilvie regularly, meets monthly with Department Heads
 - Concern from Council that Provost Office doesn't have accurate perspectives from graduate faculty
 - FS: there is a rep from every department on FS and it's their responsibility to represent undergraduate and graduate concerns to Senate.
- Q: Co-convened policy is good example of UGC gathering feedback widely and it worked well. As part of these discussions, became aware of a quality issue in co-convened courses. During discussions, department heads as a constituency were opposed to changes because changes would make it more difficult to run courses and offer them (because of funding model) . UGC eventually developed a policy where co-convened courses were taught at the 500-level with reduced expectations and learning outcomes for
 - Provost: Great example pointing to importance of shared governance. FS often not involved with budgeting, but Academic Council has discussions about budgets and funding. Also points to importance of not stretching grad programs by adding certificates or new degrees if depts don't have resources to support and have to lean on things like co-convening courses
 - Provost continued: encourage communication with budget office when appropriate and continue to share and discuss across councils/senate/departments
- Q: In the CiM system, should the workflow be changed so UGC doesn't approve a program proposal prior to funding being approved? Lots of approvals/reviews before UGC. Or course proposals where there are missing parts even after many reviews before UGC?
 - Swinford: Courses approved at department and college level indicate they have the funding to offer it.

- Continued: for programs, no indication that if approved the dollars are committed centrally. The program review workflow starts at Provost Office, but Provost Office does not do a significant review at that time. Provost Office reviews after Faculty Senate approves.
 - At 3 and 5 years, every new program is going to be re-evaluated and if don't meet graduation projections, program will be placed into moratorium (this is new from OCHE)
- Q: Resources are finite because we are not getting infusion of funds from OCHE. What are the constraints on receiving more funds from OCHE or not raising tuition?
 - Provost: State taxpayer dollars are the general fund, which comes from the Governor's budget, which is approved by legislature. OCHE then allocates to campuses. Tuition dollars increase by population or by raising tuition. State pays MSU based on resident tuition full time equivalents. Non-residents pay 3x over resident tuition.

Adjourned at 11:31 am

Next scheduled meeting – March 7, 2022