Graduate Education Council
Meeting of
Wednesday, November 6, 2013
2:00 – 4:00 p.m., 433 Johnston Hall

Attending: Melissa Anderson, Lyn Bruin, Phil Buhlmann, Liz Davis, Jigna Desai, Tim Kehoe, Ameeta Kelekar, Sally Gregory Kohlstedt (chair), Linda Lindeke, Lynn Lukkas, Nicole Scott, Ryan Thompson, Fran Vavrus, Char Voight (staff recorder), Betsy Wattenberg

Guests: Bruce Gerbi (Department of Therapeutic Radiology), Emily Ronning (Provost's Office), Karen Starry (Graduate School)

1. Academic Programs:
   a. Proposal to reconfigure and rename the Biophysical Sciences & Medical Physics MS and Ph.D. programs to Medical Physics (Linda Lindeke on behalf of the GEC subcommittee).

   Lindeke reported that the subcommittee had reviewed the proposal carefully and would recommend approval by the full GEC. The proposed changes are aligned with the changing field, and will allow the program to deliver the content and experiences graduate students in the field want and need in order to be successful. The subcommittee had no major concerns or issues. They did recommend some minor changes in the regionally-focused language of the proposal to more clearly reflect the potential national and international importance of the program. DECISION: The proposal was voted on and passed unanimously.

   b. Proposal to discontinue M.F.A. in Art at UMD (Karen Starry, Emily Ronning)

   This proposal was posted on the GEC Moodle for review by Council members. Council members providing feedback indicated they did not believe the proposal warranted full review by a subcommittee, as it was very straightforward. Admission to the program has been suspended since 2011. Starry and Ronning indicated that they believed the program had taken the necessary steps to ensure there was a reasonable expectation that the two students remaining in the program could complete their degrees by the proposed 2015 discontinuation date. DECISION: The proposal was voted on and passed unanimously.

2. Update: GRIP initiative (Melissa Anderson). Anderson reported that a letter was recently sent to all DGSs and department chairs by Sally Kohlstedt inviting them to consider participating in GRIP beginning in spring 2014. The eight pilot programs last year used a year-long developmental approach to program assessment that yielded a number of important insights. Two additional programs began the year-long assessment process this year. The Graduate School would like a minimum of five more programs to engage in what
will be a more abbreviated process in the spring building on the insights gained through the earlier pilots. The spring 2014 programs will still have access to a GRIP consultant and to the whole GRIP team, as did past pilots. The project team will also make tools and best practices available on a web site as a resource to other programs that may want to adopt the approach.

3. COGS Survey Results (Ryan Thompson).

In partnership with the Graduate School, COGS sent out a graduate student survey in Spring 2012. The full report on the survey results is available online on the GEC Moodle, and is also available from COGS. Some of the questions were very open-ended, making it challenging to interpret the responses. Thompson highlighted some key findings, which included students’ concerns with the lack of training for teaching assistants at the program level. Kohlstedt will ask the graduate education associate deans if they believe programs in their colleges are providing the necessary training and preparation for students. She will also make them aware of the resources that are available on campus (e.g., model programs, PFF) for them to do their best job. Kohlstedt also made GEC members aware of a new, web-based resource related to advising. The web site features tools a resources for students and faculty, and can be found at gradvising.umn.edu.

4. Update: October 30 SCEP Meeting (Kohlstedt)
   a. Graduate education policies approved (acceptable grades: master’s, doctoral and post-baccalaureate certificate programs): Kohlstedt reported that the policy revisions restricting the inclusion of D grades on master’s, doctoral, and post-baccalaureate certificate program degree plans were discussed by SCEP, which voted unanimously to support the suggested policy changes.
   b. Kohlstedt also asked SCEP for feedback on whether they would support a policy establishing time limits for use of the express readmit process. A previous version of the paper form included a checkbox to indicate whether a student had been inactive for five years or longer. Students who were past the time limit were required to apply for readmission using the full application rather than express readmit. Revisions to the form and a conversion from paper to on-line resulted in a loss of the checkbox. SCEP’s opinion is that this should be brought back. The consensus of GEC members was that this was a reasonable practice, and they would also support reinstating the five-year limit. It is important to note that the time limit does not apply to students if they are on an official leave of absence. It is also important to note that programs are free to impose more rigorous requirements on readmission, and are under no obligation to approve readmission for students regardless of whether they use the express readmit process or the full readmission process. The policy represents the minimum standard.

5. Update: FY15 Graduate School budget request (Kohlstedt): Kohlstedt reported to the GEC that the top three priorities in her budget request were: 1) funding for a new position responsible for academic and professional development, 2) an increase in funding for the DOVE Fellowship, and 3) an increase in funding for the DDF. She will meet with provost to discuss the request tomorrow.
6. Report from the Chair (Kohlstedt):

   a. Graduate School strategic planning process: Kohlstedt presented the GEC with the most recent draft of the Graduate School strategic planning document. Work on strategic planning has been ongoing since summer of 2013. The current plan does not yet include the action plans and outcomes tied to each goal. She is aware that President Kaler is also engaged in strategic planning, and that the recommendations from the Special Committee are likely to have implications for what the Graduate School will focus on moving forward. The fact that all of these efforts are taking place simultaneously presents an excellent opportunity to raise the visibility of graduate education within the University. Kohlstedt invited comments and input on the plan.

   b. Spring 2014 GPEA topic: The topic of the spring 2014 GPEA will be “Graduate Education in a Digital Age.” The date of the Assembly is Wednesday, April 2. The specific time has not been set. Kohlstedt invited GEC members to send their ideas on subtopics that should be covered or specific people who should present to Vicki Field or Char Voight.