Graduate Education Council

Tuesday, January 29, 2013
9:00 – 11:00 a.m., 433 Johnston Hall

Minutes

Attendees: Shawn Curley, Jigna Desai, Douglas Hartmann, Ameeta Kelekar, Mike Kilgore, Cece Martin, Henning Schroeder, Ryan Thompson, Mary Vavrus, Elizabeth Wattenberg; Staff: Belinda Cheung, Vicki Field, Toby Greenwald, Char Voight; Guests: Phil Buhlmann, (Chemistry), Wayne Gladfelter (Associate Dean, College of Science and Engineering), Doreen Leopold (Chemistry), Eric Moore (University Libraries – Archives), John Vollum (Academic Support Resources), William Tolman (Chemistry)

For information

1. Announcements (Henning Schroeder)
   - The Graduate School’s website on training grant matching funds (including application instructions) can be found at https://www.grad.umn.edu/deans-office/TrainingGrants/index.html.
   - The 2013 annual meeting of the Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS) will take place in Minneapolis on April 10-12. Henning Schroeder will lead a session regarding Program Evaluation on April 12.
   - The next Graduate and Professional Education Assembly will be held on April 3. The topic is tracking graduate student career outcomes.

2. Update on the graduate education transition (John Vollum)
   - Graduate education transition activities are moving into the background. Much of the responsibility for tracking now lies with the colleges. Academic Support Resources (ASR) has digitized many graduate student administrative processes and is now working on the preliminary written examination form. ASR will improve efficiency by moving to PeopleSoft many of the systems and custom databases built for the Graduate School. ASR will replace the old list of “Faculty with Graduate Education Responsibilities” \ with a new list of “faculty roles,” which will be available on the graduate education web site. Remaining large graduate education transition projects include looking at the needs of departmental master’s programs.
   - John Vollum’s role as project manager for the graduate education transition project will end this summer.

Enterprise System Upgrade. All student records, human resources, finance and portal applications are being upgraded in a large 2-3 year project costing an estimated $83 million. John Vollum is working on the student side of the upgrade and will consult with the GEC when testing solutions. As a result of the upgrade and new digital tools, we will be able to track milestones better. Degree clearance will be more visible and transparent, and the portal will become an easily-accessed, one-stop interface for student records.

For discussion and action:

Notes and minutes from the December 13, 2012 GEC meeting were approved unanimously.

For information/discussion

   Joining Henning Schroeder and the GEC for this discussion were Eric Moore (Head, University Archives and Co-Director, University Digital Conservancy) and Doreen Leopold (Professor, Department of
Chemistry). Also participating were several Chemistry Department faculty and the associate dean of the College of Science and Engineering, Wayne Gladfelter.

Eric Moore described the Digital Conservancy as the institutional repository of the University of Minnesota. Henning Schroeder provided background on the issue of postponing publication of theses and the need to re-examine our policy.

Doreen Leopold distributed written materials compiled by the attending Chemistry Department faculty in which they supported their preference for continuing to allow thesis embargoes. In the view of these faculty members, the problem is that when a thesis is submitted electronically to the Digital Conservancy and is then sent directly to ProQuest, that thesis is quickly open to public access online. Wayne Gladfelter expressed the serious concern of the Chemistry faculty who became aware of this practice in 2010. Other universities commonly allow a 2-month to 2-year delay before online posting. The Chemistry Department encourages its students to include unpublished work in their thesis. Chapters are always written in collaboration with their advisor, and sometimes with other students. ProQuest suggests that if a thesis is likely to be submitted for traditional publication by a journal, it should be embargoed for up to 2 years. This is the reason requests for embargoes have increased here.

Bill Tolman, who also serves as editor-in-chief of a major chemical journal, told the GEC that his journal’s policy is to reject a paper that is already in a digital conservancy with open access. Only a select few journals do otherwise.

Moore reported that the University of Minnesota Senate Library Committee has discussed this issue. Their conclusion—which has not been passed yet by the full Senate—is that although we do eventually have to put articles online, faculty can opt out. Until 2008, said Moore, the University of Minnesota retained paper copies of theses. But after researching the practices of other universities, the institution decided to transition from paper to digital for the UMN campus copy. Initially, University students were able to submit to ProQuest, but could then request removal. Belinda Cheung added that subsequently, in some cases involving accusations of plagiarism, there has been no way to refer to the original, archived copy of a thesis because it has been removed from ProQuest. We also have no idea whether an online thesis has been edited, which ProQuest allows.

Moore also reported that ProQuest sells student dissertations; third-party distribution is the right of ProQuest. The importance of research in dissertations warrants the insurance of a campus copy that is controlled by the University of Minnesota for distribution. Moore viewed the increase in embargo requests as positive, demonstrating the student’s understanding of the distribution requirements.

A GEC member asked whether it would be possible for the University of Minnesota to keep an electronic, PDF copy of the thesis that isn’t accessible to the public—an alternative archive “bucket” for embargoed dissertations. This idea was well-received by the Chemistry representatives and some GEC members. Moore pointed out that a proposal to this effect (for a temporary archival PDF copy of the thesis during the embargo period) would need to go through the Senate Library Committee.

GEC members also discussed variations between disciplines with regard to publication of theses. Many of the humanities and social science presses have been willing to publish materials that have been available digitally. They also considered whether the initial time limit of one year for embargoes should be more flexible—e.g., 6 months—and whether there should be a specified process to determine whether an extension should be allowed after the initial embargo ends. No final conclusions were reached. GEC members encouraged Dean Schroeder to consult with University Librarian Wendy Lougee. Moore will return to the GEC for further discussion of this issue.
2. Report from the GEC nominating committee (Shawn Curley)
The deadline for GEC member nominations is Friday, February 1. Only eight or nine nominations have been received to date. Curley asked for the GEC’s authorization to extend the nominating deadline in order to recruit nominations from colleges or areas that have not been represented on the GEC, if this approach is deemed necessary by the nominations committee. The nominating committee will also solicit nominations during this period.

For discussion/action
1. Expanded GEC role with respect to the review of proposals for new, changed and discontinued academic programs (Henning Schroeder)

The responsibility for reviewing modifications to existing doctoral (non-Ph.D.), master’s and post-baccalaureate certificate programs has not been part of the GEC’s purview. However, it would be in the University’s best interests to add this responsibility, since the GEC is the only University-wide governance body charged with responsibility for graduate education matters. With this approach, the Provost can request the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education to review “substantive” changes and make a recommendation; Dean Schroeder may wish to consult with the GEC before making a recommendation. The nature of the change determines which proposals come to the GEC. (A list of “substantive” changes was included in the meeting materials, “Academic Plan/Sub-Plan Proposals: GEC Responsibilities and GEC Review Checklist.”)

MOTION: Mary Vavrus moved that the proposed revisions in the GEC bylaws be approved, with the addition of the word “substantive” to item 1a. The motion was adopted unanimously.

2. Open discussion
GEC members discussed next steps regarding the earlier discussion of embargoes of thesis publication and whether the initial embargo request should be subject to review. Members decided this was not necessary. It was also decided not to make any changes to current policy at this time. The GEC will pursue a solution that allows for the University to keep an electronic (PDF) copy of an embargoed dissertation that isn’t accessible to the general public.

Adjourn