Present: Anja Beilinsky, Michael Bowser, Jarrod Call, Juliette Cherbuliez, Belinda Cheung (staff), Shawn Curley, Vicki Field (staff), Toby Greenwald (staff), Vicki Hansen (via Skype), Caroline Hayes, Greg Lindsey, Chris Phelan, Steve Polasky, Henning Schroeder, Char Voight (staff), Pamela Weisenhorn.

Guests: Frank Blalark, Nita Krevans, John Vollum

For action:
1) The notes and minutes from the May 13 provisional GEC meeting were approved.

For discussion and action:
1) Proposal for a new intercollegiate, interdisciplinary minor in Whole Earth Dynamics and Sustainability: A subcommittee consisting of Shawn Curley, Caroline Hayes and Jarrod Call reviewed the Whole Earth Dynamics proposal. The subcommittee has prepared feedback for the proposers and will pass this information on to them along with additional comments from other GEC members. The subcommittee will meet with the proposers to provide feedback and clarify the issues related to this draft. Steve Polasky has agreed to attend this meeting also. The proposers will be given the opportunity to respond to the feedback and revise the proposal. Members of the subcommittee will review the revised proposal before presenting it with their comment to the entire GEC (likely in early August). Program start date could be spring 2012 if the revised proposal is approved in August.

2) Proposal for a co-directed Ph.D. degree in Civil Engineering with the University of Liege (Belgium): Mike Bowser presented feedback on the proposals on behalf of the reviewing subcommittee, which also included Vicki Hansen and Mike Kilgore. Due to the complex nature of the proposed program and the many questions from both the subcommittee members and the larger GEC, the Council decided to table the discussion to give subcommittee members additional time to clarify a series of issues with the proposers.

3) Request to discontinue the Theriogenology track for the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Veterinary Medicine. Mike Bowser presented the track discontinuation request. There are no faculty to teach the courses and they have not been admitting new students to the track. A motion was made to approve the request. The motion passed, with the stipulation that any students currently in the track be allowed to finish.

For discussion:
1) Outcome of spring 2011 Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship competition and planning for next year’s competition: Henning reviewed the outcome of the spring 2011 DDF competition results and committee comments about the review process. The key changes in the process this year were requesting the student’s CV rather than a transcript, and shifting the focus of the research proposal from a discussion of such things as research methodology to that of the significance and impact of the research on the field and the student’s abilities as an independent scholar. Based on reviewer comments and feedback from DGSs and students, next year the
Graduate School will provide better instructions and clearer guidance on how to prepare the research proposal portion of the nomination packet.

GEC members wondered whether the number of allotments awarded to colleges for DDF nominations would remain the same for next year. Some colleges received a large allotment of nomination slots and did not use all of them. The Graduate School will review this and consider whether adjustments should be made for next year.

2) Graduate Education Transition update: Frank Blalark and John Vollum updated GEC members on their work with WorkFlow to automate what are now paper forms (e.g., milestones for PhD) as well as work to give people access to the digital resources that the Graduate School manages.

3) Update from the Graduate Education Policy Review Committee: Nita Krevans gave a brief recap of the committee’s work this year. The policy on eligibility to serve in a graduate examination committee is the only policy that has been through the entire process and is approved and in effect. Policies on leave of absence, appointments to director of graduate studies, degree requirements, and application of credits will go before the President’s Policy Council on June 14. If they move forward, they will then enter a 30-day public comment period. Because the public comment period will be over the summer break, the committee is strategizing about a communications plan so that people will be informed. An email will also be sent to DGSs and DGSs assistants before fall semester to make them aware of the policy changes.

The next policies that will come before the GEC as drafts are: a) revisions of the degree progress (master’s and doctoral) policies; b) admissions and fellowships; c) transcripts and grading; d) course numbering; and e) a policy on grievance.

The committee has determined that the policies being developed do not apply to certificate programs because these are too varied to be governed by a single U-wide policy. The question to resolve now is whether a policy needs to be written stipulating that colleges must develop policies for the certificate programs.

Finally, the Policy Review Committee met with Frank Blalark and Brad Bostrom to discuss issues related to the transition, policy revision and the technology to make sure work is coordinated to the greatest extent possible and that communication is ongoing. The committee will similarly meet with representatives of the Graduate Education Financing Task Force later this week.

4) Quality metrics for graduate education. Henning introduced the topic of quality metrics for graduate program evaluation and funding allocations. The goal is to develop a fair system to be used in making decision on graduate student support. Key discussion questions are: 1) What quality metrics should be applied? 2) Should master’s programs be subjected to quality metrics evaluation? 3) How should the metrics be translated into dollar amounts for funding allocations?

While the GEC discussion did not lead to a determination of what metrics should be used to allocate program funding, there was a consensus that a first step must be a identification and articulation of the principles and goals underlying any metrics, and
that these principles and goals must be clearly communicated to programs and the University community.

Important questions concerning principles and goals include: How do we measure things such as innovation? What are our institutional priorities? What are the aspirational goals of the U of MN and how does our decision making fit with those goals? Can we articulate our decision making in terms of how it advanced institutional goals? How are the metrics tied to these goals?

There was also general agreement that the application of metrics should not be done in a formulaic manner, and that care should be taken to understand the broader context within a program that might result in a particular performance outcome based on specific metrics. For example, a program serving a large number of part-time students will likely have a longer average time to degree.

In the end, the amount of funding is small -- $4.5 million spread out over 15 colleges potentially. However, although the current pot of money is not large, the amount of available funding in the future could change and programs need to be thinking in terms of these metrics moving forward.

5) Next meeting; setting fall meeting dates: The GEC will reconvene on **Wednesday, August 3, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.** Current GEC members will be serving through December until the permanent members of the GEC are identified through the fall election process.