Graduate Education Council
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 10, 2014
2:00 – 4:00 p.m., 433 Johnston Hall

Present: Victor Barocas, Lyn Bruin, Dick Brundage, Kathleen Conklin, Liz Davis, Ameeta Kelekar, Timothy Kehoe, Sally Kohlstedt (chair), Ann Masten, Keaton Miller, Nicole Scott, Ryan Thompson, Char Voight (staff recorder), Elizabeth Wattenberg

- Announcements/Updates (Sally Gregory Kohlstedt)
  - Enrollment and diversity: Alex Friedrich from MPR was present at a recent Board of Regents meeting where the issue of diversity in graduate education was raised. He has interviewed Kohlstedt several times on the issue since, and the story has been appeared also in the Daily and the Associated Press. The AP story related how the U of MN recognizes that the lack of diversity in graduate education (among students) is an issues, and how the institution is attempting to address this issue. Enrollment of African Americans graduate students is declining across the country. Kohlstedt shared data with the GEC that showed there is an overall drop in domestic students nationwide and at the University, including white students. She also reiterated that diversity goals in graduate education, unlike undergraduate education, are complex and best determined at the program level.
  
  - Academic and professional development: Kohlstedt clarified the status of the Graduate School position related to academic and professional development. It is not the case that the Graduate School will no longer offer academic and professional development opportunities for graduate students. A new person will be hired in a one-year position sometime in the next few weeks. This person will be devoted to this work full-time, and will work in partnership with other Graduate School staff members on these offerings.
  
  - Graduate Student Orientation: Orientation for new graduate students will take place on August 26th from 8:30 am-12 pm in STSS. The program for the day has been determined and is posted on the orientation web. There has been a great deal of interest by various offices and units on campus that would like to participate. The Graduate School will also be hosting a second event at the beginning of spring term for first-year students as a follow on to the fall orientation.
  
  - DGS Orientation: Orientation for new DGSs will take place on Wednesday, August 20th and Thursday, August 21st. The exact times have not yet been set, but each day will feature a half-day session (one in the morning, the other in the afternoon). The sessions will be identical, so DGSs need only attend one. Although the focus is on people who are new to the position, current DGSs are welcome to attend if they think it will be useful to them.
• Graduate School leadership transition: Henning Schroeder will be returning from his year-long Dean-in-Residence position in the fall. He will spend some time in August transitioning back but will officially return to his position on September 2nd.

• Planning Ahead (Kohlstedt)

• Possible topics for Spring 2015 GPEA: There was consensus among GEC members that the report from the CGS Commission on Pathways Through Graduate School and Into Careers would serve as a good basis for the Spring GPEA on career pathways and professional development. The issue of career planning and advising students regarding their options upon completing their degrees has drawn national attention and has also been identified as a priority for students at the University. Ideas for the GPEA included:
  i. Featuring a CGS speaker for a keynote address, followed by breakout sessions on topics related to diverse career paths for students.
  ii. Feature a breakout session on student debt and financing graduate education. This topic is timely and related to career opportunities. Students should realize the constraints placed on them if they complete their graduate studies with substantial accumulated debt. Encouraging students to think about their lifelong career path in conjunction with financial planning would be useful. We need to advise students in certain fields that they should not take on debt to earn their degrees because it is not financially sound to do so. This should not be a session on how to establish a budget, but should be looking at the larger issues related to debt and financing post-secondary education. Attention should be paid to the differences between students who get full or partial support and those who are self-paying.
  iii. One topic could also be helping students to understand their “fit” with different careers. For instance, if you do not like presenting in front of an audience, then you may not want to pursue a teaching career. Will your chosen career involved solitary work? Teamwork?
  iv. Alternate career paths: It would be valuable to include alumni on a panel addressing this topic so that they can share their experiences pursuing careers in a variety of fields. What preparation did they receive as graduate students to prepare them, or what preparation did they wish they would have received. We would also include employers from different fields who could address the skill sets they are looking for and the expectations they have of new hires.
  v. We should address the issues of dual careers and work/life balance.

• Review Strategic Plan for 2014-2015 (Kohlstedt; Handout: Graduate School strategic plan, SCEP/GEC duties and responsibilities comparison table): Kohlstedt called GEC members’ attention to the current version of the Graduate School’s strategic plan. This version contains action steps and tactics, along with
the goals and strategies. Graduate School staff recently held an all-day retreat to discuss the strategic plan. The next steps are to identify and communicate the priorities in the plan. Kohlstedt asked the GEC to give their input on the plan generally as well as on priorities. She also reviewed the tactics and outcomes under each of the goals and strategies.

Discussion:

Goal One: Strategy #1 (Recruit and admit highly qualified students by improving quality

- **Increasing the funding for graduate education**, including the number and amount of fellowship support for students, was identified as a very high priority by the GEC. If we do not increase our ability to offer competitive multi-year fellowship packages, then we will not be able to meet the goal of recruiting the best students.
- **Fellowships should be compatible/align with Grand Challenges**. We need to find ways to integrate students and support for graduate students into Grand Challenges research and curriculum. How does this strategic plan align with the movement toward Grand Challenges generally?
- The current budget model is also an obstacle to innovative graduate education, and examining how this impacts teaching and research should be a priority. GEC members recalled that there had been a committee devoted to examining the budget model and making recommendations on changes to that and the tuition model several years ago. What were the recommendations and where does that issue stand currently? Thought to changing the tuition model? There have been conversations with finance but the question is where does the financing come from? People have come up with alternatives and have presented these but there has not been any movement. With every change there are “winners” and “losers.” There is talk about tuition bands because we have 57 different tuition rates for graduate students. Different rates really have a negative impact on the graduate experience.
- **Question**: What is it that is “new” in this strategic plan? Kohlstedt talks about the use of admissions technology to enhance recruitment (e.g., ApplyYourself, Connect.). How is this new? Is this just about continuity? Really need to look down at the tactics to see what’s new.

- Goal#2: Kohlstedt talks about the issue of designated space for graduate students and the possibility that this has gained traction with the Provost to some extent.
- Is there anything in the plan about including philanthropic efforts focused on graduate education (e.g., in the capital campaign)? It is complicated because the Graduate School cannot “compete” with the departments or programs to fundraise. This should be an ongoing effort not tied solely to a single campaign. GEC members surprised that there is no designated development officer focused on graduate education. Focus should be on both individual donors but also major foundations. 21st Century Fund was an
overarching campus effort that focused attention on the need to fundraise. We don’t have a good way of tracking where the money is coming in and for what. Programs can be proprietary about this.

- Accreditation team will come in October 15 2015 or so. Learning goals need to be in place. There does not seem to be a lot of conversation taking place along these lines. Planning needs to happen in the summer for implementation in the fall. Suggestion that we tell programs they will not get block grants or DDFs if they don’t do the SLOs. There are models available on the web that people could use. Discussion about carrots and sticks to make people do the SLOs. Accreditation team wants to be able to ascertain that there was a process.

- GRIP will now be fee for service. This will be a nice effort that will probably not be sustained because of the cost. TC Deans got the brochure yesterday and there was some thought that this could be something used for accreditation. The student involvement was key and was a very small investment for the outcome. The initiative has moved to MESI.

- ID initiatives: There was good information in the Special Report and also in the Graduate School staff report. Where does this stand? The really ambitious things in the staff report have not really gained traction, possibly because of the “waiting mode” due to being in the midst of strategic planning. If we position students in terms of Grand Challenges will provide natural opportunities for these kinds of experiences. Have to create environments to foster interdisciplinarity. Training grants are also another vehicle to foster ID.

- Goal #3: Have tried to advance this by working more closely with GPS Alliance. Henning is interested in this and will likely pursue this goal. Jacobs Foundation will fund visit to labs internationally in Child Development. There are several foundations that will fund this type of thing. What is the intersection of MOOCS and graduate education (Ann Masten)? Students are taking free mini-courses to supplement the training they get at the U.

- #4: Integrity in research and scholarship:

- #5: diversity issue: Masten recent accreditation review and there was a focus on diversity among faculty. Not a lot in general in strategic plan about faculty and this is clearly linked to students. There is quite a bit of focus on this, and a lot of conversation among deans and with president and provost on ways to do this.

- #6: position graduate education more centrally and visibly within the University:

- GEC Agenda/Priorities 2014-2015 Academic Year

GEC Agenda/Priorities for 2014-2015 Academic Year

What are we doing ahead of accreditation?

Tracking placement

Diversity recruiting
Space for graduate students

Linking in to Grand Challenges

Keep eye on Provost’s plan for restructuring

ID conversation, how to foster and gain traction in this area (Kohlstedt talks about consortium of ID centers and institutes in October).

Where does GEC fit in in terms of decision making? Is this just for endorsement? Would like to be able to drive the agenda and not just be reactionary. Table of GEC versus SCEP is very general. GOVERNANCE ISSUE NEEDS TO BE ON THE TABLE. How do we balance this with president’s perception that there are too many committees? What is the value added purpose of the GEC? One thing that has not happened this much this year is the need to approve of new and changed programs. Kohlstedt talks about the changes with SCEP and how they will be meeting less frequently (one a month) in a more focused way. Would be worth viewing GEC as advisory but also look at how members can take leadership roles on issues in strategic plan (e.g., form subcommittee to work with staff to work on things like GPEA, advising, SLOs, etc.). Give people a “portfolio” within the GEC. Not do what administrators should do but take leadership in initiatives. This will be the agenda in August.