Graduate Education Council  
Meeting Agenda  
Thursday, January 26, 2017  
2:00-4:00 p.m.  
300 Morrill Hall  

Present: Victor Barocas, Robert Blair, Lyn Bruin, Arlene Carney, Abhishek Chandra, Etty DeVeaux (staff), Vlad Griskevicius, Emi Ito, Joe Kapusta, Kendall King, Ron Krebs, Mary Jo Kreitzer, Scott Lanyon (chair), Deborah Levison, Veronica Postal, Katherine Scheil, Carissa Slotterback, Katie Thomas, Randall Victora, Char Voight (staff), Andrea Wolf  

Guests: Karen Starry (Graduate School)  

Discussion Items:  
1) Policy Review Subcommittee: Draft policy: Admission for Master’s and Doctoral Degrees (Carissa Slotterback, 1.26.17 version of revised policy): Slotterback summarized the major changes and issues, including a clarification of the roles in admission decisions. The central graduate admissions office does NOT make admission decisions. ALL such decisions are made by programs. However, because central admissions issues a letter on behalf of the program, there is often misunderstanding of this issue.  

The GEC also discussed the issue of admission prior to the completion of a BA or comparable degree. Current policy states that U of MN students with 7 credits or fewer (2 courses) left to complete the BA can be admitted to and matriculate in a graduate program. However, they must complete the undergraduate degree by the end of the first term in their graduate program. If they do not, their graduate registration is placed on hold until they can provide proof that the undergraduate degree has been completed. GEC members wondered why this was restricted to U of MN students? Would there be any disadvantage or unintended consequence to allowing this for all undergraduate students? How common is this? After discussion, the GEC suggested that this clause be opened to all undergraduates, as long as it is made clear in policy that it is at the discretion of the program to decide if such students will be admitted and allowed to matriculate.  

Finally, Slotterback explained to the GEC that language related to guidance on a minimum standard for English language proficiency for admission of students whose native language is not English had been added to the policy, as well as several FAQs. Additional information on English language proficiency standards for students who will be TAs was also added. This provides programs (and students) with guidance on best practices, and information on where to locate resources and direct questions.
2) Policy Review Subcommittee: Policy Draft: Readmission for Master’s and Doctoral Degrees (Carissa Slotterback, 1.26.17 version of revised policy): Slotterback summarized the proposed changes, none of which are considered major by the subcommittee. GEC members had no major issues or comments on the proposed draft, which will go to SCEP in March or April for review and approval. A GEC member did raise a question concerning what happens when a degree program is discontinued and there are still students in that program who have not completed. In such cases, the program is required to provide the Provost with a transition plan that addresses what will happen to current students.

3) Policy Review Subcommittee: Draft: Eligibility to Serve on Graduate Examination Committees Table (Katie Thomas, 1.25.17 version of table): Thomas explained the change to the table, which would no longer allow an outside expert to chair a committee or serve as an advisor unless they were given an appropriate faculty appointment. This reflects current practice, and would not negatively impact programs that frequently use outside experts as committee members. The GEC agree that this was appropriate. Staff to the subcommittee will work to draft a procedure and best practices to accompany the policy.

4) Policy Review Subcommittee: Draft form UM1762: Director of Graduate Studies Exception Request: Appointment of Non-Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty Member, Current DGS Exceptions Form in Policy Library, and Typical Roles and Responsibilities of the Director of Graduate Studies (1.20.17 version, Karen Starry): Starry explained the purpose of the form to the GEC along with the rationale for revisions. The form requests an exception to the policy requiring the DGS to be tenured or tenure-track faculty. The intention it to make sure the person serving as DGS is able to fulfill the typical roles and responsibilities so that students are not disadvantaged by not having a faculty member in the role. Programs propose the exception, and collegiate units approve. There is also a role for Graduate School approval. Scott Lanyon wondered if there would ever be a circumstance in which the Graduate School would reject the recommendation of the collegiate unit. Additional questions to consider for the next revision of the form include: asking for information on how long the proposed individual has been at the U and in what capacity; asking about the individual’s experience with graduate education and graduate students.

5) GEC spring election (Scott Lanyon, table showing current GEC membership and terms): Lanyon proposed to the GEC that the same election procedure that has been in place for the past two years be used again this year, and that consideration of changes to the procedure be revisited once we have had a discussion about the roles and responsibilities of the GEC and any changes to these. He also asked GEC members to consider nominating colleagues, and for help in explaining to their peers the role of GEC members.

Updates:
1) Policy Issues Updates
   a) **Policy Review Subcommittee Update on PAC discussion (1.18.17) of doctoral and master’s policies: performance standards and progress, and completion (Char Voight).** Voight informed the GEC that the four policies had been presented to PAC for discussion and a vote. There were no major issues or concerns with any of the policies, though some minor revisions were suggested. The doctoral and master’s performance standards and progress policies were voted on and passed unanimously. The vote was deferred on the two completion policies pending revision to the form and procedure associated with requesting a hold on the thesis (embargo). The issue will go before PAC again in February for a vote.

   b) **Administrative Policy: English Language Proficiency Requirements for TAs (Char Voight).** Voight gave an update to the GEC about the policy related to minimum English language proficiency for non-native English speakers in TA positions. There had been some question as to whether a policy or minimum standards existed.

2) **Council of Graduate Schools RPF: Understanding PhD Career Pathways for Program Improvement** (Scott Lanyon): Lanyon alerted the GEC to the recent RFP from CGS involving proposals to survey current students and alumni about career pathways. The U of MN would like to submit a proposal, and will be exploring the possibility over the next several weeks. Proposals are due May 1. This would give the U a chance to be part of a 15-institution cohort that can compare results and share best practices.

**Spring semester**
Monday, February 20, 2-4, 101 Walter
Tuesday, March 7, 2-4, 101 Walter
Tuesday, April 18, 2-4, 433 Johnston
Monday, May 22, 1-3, 237 Morrill