Graduate Education Council  
Wednesday, February 27, 2013  
1:00 – 3:00 p.m., 101 Walter Library  
Meeting minutes  

staff: Belinda Cheung, Vicki Field, Toby Greenwald, Char Voight  

For information  
1. Announcements  
Dean Henning Schroeder encouraged everyone to attend the Graduate and Professional Education Assembly on April 3. Registration is almost full.  

2. Update on the graduate education transition and Enterprise System Upgrade  
Frank Blalark and John Vollum, Academic Support Resources, reported that the University of Minnesota is in the iterative Design and Prototyping stage of the Enterprise System Upgrade (ESUP), looking at gaps between what we currently deliver and what the new PeopleSoft functions deliver. We will favor using delivered functionality in PeopleSoft so that students, staff, and faculty can log in directly and complete their business. ASR will return to the GEC for advice on how to involve faculty members (many of whom have not used PeopleSoft directly), and to ask for opinions on specific areas of interest to faculty. Belinda Cheung suggested that ASR staff also engage the Faculty Consultative Committee for feedback.  

Timeline: by October 31, 2013 determine all changes in student records; by late November, 2014 roll out the upgrade for financial services, student records, human resources, reporting, and the portal. The course catalog and course search function is part of PeopleSoft. The entire system will have to be shut down for several days during the switchover.  

Belinda Cheung reported that the admission trends of last year are continuing in 2013: overall domestic applications are the same as last year while international applications have increased. The number of domestic applications for Ph.D.s is almost the same as last year at this time, but domestic master’s applicants are down 4%. Conversely, international master’s applications are up 7% compared to last year, but international Ph.D. applications are down 3% from the previous year. It is too early in the cycle to report on admission and enrollment numbers.  

Doug Hartmann noted that some CLA graduate programs are decreasing the size of their cohort because they can’t support students over multiple years. In some cases, funds are being shifted to pay upper-level undergraduate TAs. Similar changes are happening in CBS, but not in CEHD, according to other GEC members. In the College of Design, research assistants may be hired from other colleges (e.g., computer science) according to the skills required for a particular job.  

4. Short-term plan to assist recruitment for 2013-14  
Belinda Cheung pointed to the February 18, 2013 memorandum from Provost Hanson and Henning Schroeder regarding short-term plan to be implemented now for students recruited to begin here in 2013-14. Between the Provost’s Office and the Graduate School, one-time funds have been identified to provide an extra year of matching fellowship support for up to 19 graduate fellowship offers that have been issued to high quality Ph.D. applicants. The plan described in the memo is in response to faculty concerns regarding financial challenges in recruiting top Ph.D. students, including colleges’ unwillingness to risk making more offers than they can fund.  

GEC members engaged in a discussion that focused on the approach used to distribute the additional funds, the effectiveness of an additional fellowship year to recruit students versus funding that might be
used for other purposes (e.g., travel), and the University’s need for more resources to attract top graduate
students and support them to degree completion.

For discussion and action:

1. Approval of the notes and minutes from the January 29, 2013 meeting
No action was taken on the notes and minutes from the January 29, 2013 meeting.

For information/discussion

1. Graduate student advising initiative
Jan Morse, Director, Student Conflict Resolution Center (SCRC), reported that her office has been
sponsoring an initiative on improving mentoring and advising relationships. Results from a 2007
University of Minnesota survey showed that one-third of respondents either experienced or witnessed
harassment (defined as offensive, hostile, intimidating behavior that reduces a student’s ability to learn).
Morse’s office formed a working group that created a website with links to helpful resources on how to
prevent and manage difficult behaviors. Outstanding advising—and recognition of advising excellence—
is one antidote to toxic behavior in the academic environment. SCRC is partnering with the Graduate
School in an effort to improve advising and awareness of good advising as a critical component in student
academic success.

Richard Brundage, who participates as a member of the working group, said he is very impressed with the
resources developed to date. He would like to see advising considered in faculty promotion and tenure
decisions. The value of advising in interdisciplinary and collaborative research should also be recognized.

2. Graduate student learning outcomes and assessment initiative
Henning Schroeder formed a committee to look at graduate student learning outcomes. Claudia
Neuhauser, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at UM Rochester, presented a subcommittee’s draft
report of initial ideas, which includes six principles to stimulate discussion about discipline-specific
student learning outcomes in research-based doctoral and master’s degree programs. A small group of
pilot programs will begin to test the use of these principles in fall 2013.

Most GEC members strongly supported the list of principles. One of the GEC’s student members
commented that draft principles would also be helpful for students who are going into industry, not just
those who plan academic careers.

3. Report from the GEC nominating committee
Char Voight, Graduate School, reported that the GEC nominating committee met on February 8 and
extended the nominating deadline by one week. During that week, the number of additional submissions
effectively doubled the pool, which now stands at 21. The committee will meet on March 8, and at the
March 26th GEC meeting will present a slate of nominees for the April election. Ballots will be sent out
on April 19th, with a two-week election period. Election results will be announced around May 10.

4. Report to the Provost of the Quality Metrics Committee (QMC)
Belinda Cheung provided background on the report. With the restructuring of graduate education, the
Block Grants were changed to the Quality Metrics Allocation pool. After a period of feedback and
adjustment, colleges asked to have a voice and input in the allocation process going forward. The
decision was made to keep allocations the same for FY14. In July, 2012 Provost Hanson and Henning
Schroeder created the extended Quality Metrics Committee that included representatives from all colleges
and professional schools except the Law School. The committee met during fall 2012. Rather than
issuing a set of recommendations, the committee presented the Provost with key issues and views that emerged in their discussions.

Cheung elaborated further on issues associated with the current metrics allocation program (including the difficulty in tracking the funds once they have been allocated) and some of the approaches identified by the committee. GEC members then engaged in a discussion in which various viewpoints were expressed regarding the allocation of these funds subsequent to the restructuring and some of the ideas expressed in the committee report.

*Adjourn*