
For information
1. Announcements by Henning Schroeder
The Extended Quality Metrics committee held its final meeting on December 12 and hopes to have a preliminary report to the Provost by the end of January. The report will provide recommendations on whether to connect quality metrics with funding. A committee has been formed to develop a set of graduate student learning outcomes measures that will complement the quality metrics recommendations.

As of the date of this meeting, there were only three applicants for the position of Associate Dean for Graduate Education. The position will remain open until more applications are submitted.

2. The update on the graduate education transition was rescheduled for the January GEC meeting.

3. Update on GRIP (Henning Schroeder)
Eight graduate programs are participating in Graduate Review and Improvement Process (GRIP), a new initiative in the Graduate School that aims to establish ongoing, qualitative models of assessment centered on students and action-oriented outcomes. Feedback has been positive, and in some programs, discussion between students and faculty is already leading to positive outcomes.

For discussion and action:
GEC members unanimously approved notes and minutes from meetings held on September 27, 2012, and October 15, 2012.

For information/discussion
1. Report from the GEC nominating committee
Committee Chair Shawn Curley reported that the nominating committee has met once and have sent an email message to tenured and tenure-track faculty soliciting nominations. Two nominations have been received to date.

Henning Schroeder provided background on the issue. Graduate schools are obliged to make new knowledge available to the public. However, graduate students who submit dissertations may delay (“embargo”) their publication and may also ask for renewal of the embargo after 2 years. Other universities have various deadlines, but all limit embargos to 2 years. Delays are most often related to patent issues. Journals normally accept information that is in the dissertation process. A growing number of students are requesting embargos. Should the University of Minnesota look into changing its policy?

Belinda Cheung added that all first requests for embargos are approved; there are no initial screening criteria for turning them down. Only extenuating circumstances should be accepted as cause for extensions, which hold up graduation. Many of the embargo requests are coming from specific programs.

GEC Member discussion points:
- Embargos are almost unknown in some graduate programs, while in others they are common.
Members disagreed over whether it is appropriate for the University to permit embargos and, if permitted, whether the time limit should be 6 months, one year, or 2 years. The University’s goal is to have theses published quickly, to disseminate research results in a timely way and to help students get jobs. Some GEC members thought it should be more difficult to get an embargo and that each request should be reviewed individually.

Students who request embargos fear their proprietary information will be stolen or rejected by journals if the information is published in dissertation form before being patented. Ph.D. theses become public knowledge. Other members believed that citations are needed when using thesis material.

Patent reasons, sponsored research agreements and confidentiality agreements are associated with sponsorship of research and must be considered when embargos are requested. It was suggested that these should perhaps be the only reasons to delay publication of the thesis.

A student who is concerned about intellectual theft can pay $120 and file a provisional patent to protect his/her information for a year before submitting an actual patent application. Another alternative is to publish in a journal before publishing the dissertation, and to request copyright permission from the journal.

Some members warned that if embargos are discontinued, theses would change. One reason students delay thesis publication is to protect new avenues of inquiry not fully explored in the thesis; if it is not possible to delay publication, students would leave out new ideas that might be “scooped.”

Although members suggested several changes to current policy on delaying publication of the thesis/dissertation, no action was taken. The issue will be revisited at next GEC meeting, and two guests will be invited for consultation: University Librarian Wendy Lougee and a representative of a graduate program in which embargos are common.

3. Expanded GEC role with respect to the review of proposals for new, changed and discontinued academic programs

A November 27, 2012 memo from Provost Hanson addresses the role of the GEC with regard to issues on graduate education. According to the memo, “At Vice Provost Schroeder’s request, the GEC will also review substantive proposals regardless of degree type.” Thus, the GEC could also be asked to discuss proposals for new, changed and discontinued master’s degrees and post-baccalaureate certificates.

When a proposal goes through college and departmental approval in PCAS (Program and Curriculum Approval System), it is forwarded to the Provost, at which time Karen Starry and Joe Shultz (Provost’s Office) review it. They identify any issues and engage in an informal dialogue with the proposers. If there are substantial issues, Karen Starry would consult with Dean Schroeder, who would have the flexibility to bring proposed changes to GEC for further consultation. The ultimate result is that Dean Schroeder would make recommendations to the Provost.

Appropriate revisions will be made in the GEC’s by-laws to reflect its expanded scope and will be presented to the GEC at the next meeting for formal approval. GEC members approved of this course of action.

Open discussion

Members asked for follow-up on the request for fellowship bridging funds, which the GEC discussed with Provost Hanson in November. Henning Schroeder responded that this request was in the Graduate School’s budget, was discussed in his annual budget compact meeting, and (he thinks) was viewed favorably.

The Medical School is considering pooling its funds for bridging fellowships. They’d love to follow up on that idea, if there is some way for the Medical School and Graduate School to consult.
Members also commented on the difficulty of tracking fellowship funds allocated to colleges for graduate students. They questioned whether the GEC could make a request to deans to demonstrate how they spent their allocations, or whether Finance and Planning would be able to provide this information.

*Adjourn*