**Graduate Council Meeting**

**November 18, 2016**

**107D DEV**

**Minutes  
(approved 1/27/17)**

**Faculty Present**: B. Bettinghaus, A. Booth, A. Bostrom, D. Balfour, A. Campbell, S. Choudhuri, M. Harris, B. Harvey, L. Huang, B. Martin, K. Ozga, G. Schymik, M. Staves, W. Sun, M. VanderKooi

**Administrative Ex-Officio Present:** B. Cole, I. Fountain, S. Lipnicki, M. Luttenton, J. Potteiger, S. Soman

**Elected Students Present:** C. Dolan, D. Dunneback

**Ex-Officio Students Present**: K. Stevenson

**GSA Officers Present:** J. Lawton

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| **AGENDA ITEM** | **DISCUSSION** | **ACTION/DECISION** |
| **I. Call to Order** | A. Booth called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM. |  |
| **II. Approval of Agenda** |  | The agenda was approved by acclamation. |
| **III. Approval of Minutes October 28, 2016** |  | The minutes were approved by acclamation. |
| **IV. Chair’s Report – A. Booth** | The chairs of the Graduate Council, UCC, UAS, and FSBC plan to meet in December to discuss the Graduate Council bylaws changes. |  |
| **V. Curriculum Subcommittee Report – M. Staves** | There is one course in the queue which will be reviewed at the next subcommittee meeting. |  |
| **VI. Policy Subcommittee Report – A. Booth** | The policy subcommittee met and discussed the proposed master’s degree in interdisciplinary studies and the student initiated combined degree program and how those will be implemented. Also discussed was quality control for theses/dissertations. Other institutions were surveyed to see what they had in place to ensure high quality theses/dissertations, such as workshops and second readers.  Graduate Admissions Changes The Graduate Council recently approved a change to international graduate admissions requirements wherein the university now accepts the Pearson Test of English. Other admissions requirements were reviewed and it was discovered that university’s graduate admission requirements for international students includes a personal statement. However, 28 graduate programs already require a personal statement in their program applications. Graduate program directors were surveyed and it was found that none of them use the personal statement from the international graduate student application to make admission decisions.  Financial Support Requirement for International Students The Admissions office evaluates international student applications based on a checklist, including test scores and a financial statement showing that the applicant has adequate funds to support their education for one year. When the student is admitted, an I-20 is generated which the student presents to the embassy. The embassy will not issue a visa if the student cannot prove they have financial support.   Unfortunately, sometimes a student will meet the financial requirement and is therefore admitted, but due to currency fluctuations, the value of their funds decreases so they are ultimately denied a visa. The university does not consider currency fluctuations when verifying financial ability. | **Motion:** M. Staves moved to approve the removal of the personal statement requirement from the international graduate student application. M. Harris seconded. Motion passed unanimously. |
| **VII. GSA Report – J. Lawton** | The total operating budget for 2016-17 is $15,650 with $10,570 left. The GSA sent a survey to all graduate students to gauge their interest in social events and PACES to find ways to increase participation. The 3-Minute Thesis competition is being planned for February and the Finals Foodfest is being planned for exam week.  The GSA has raised the cap for conferences to $4,500 per group. The individual cap per person is the same at $500. |  |
| **VIII. Dean’s Report – J. Potteiger** | TGS Newsletters  The Graduate School is publishing a new newsletter, “Grad News: Headlines from Across the Nation” that will focus on graduate news in Michigan and nationally. “6 in 60” focuses on news in the GVSU community.  New Graduate Student Orientation  The New Graduate Student Orientation is a joint effort between The Graduate School and Pew Student Services. The event is successful in that we receive positive feedback from attendees. However, attendance is typically 30-40% of all new graduate students. In order to increase attendance, a postcard will be mailed to all new graduate students with a list of topics on how the orientation will help them succeed in graduate school. RSVPs will not be requested so that students understand that they are expected to attend. The orientation will be held January 4, 2017.  Grad Student Preview Day  TGS will host a “Graduate Student Preview Day” on March 17, 2017 from 3-5 PM. Prospective students who have been admitted to GVSU will be invited to visit, attend a presentation, meet with graduate program directors, take a tour of the DeVos campus, and learn about what is offered in the Grand Rapids community. The intent is to persuade students to choose GVSU for their graduate education.  Quality Control for Theses/Dissertations  In response to previous discussion at Graduate Council and with the graduate program directors, J. Potteiger and M. Luttenton met with P. Johnson in the Writing Center about increasing writing support for graduate students. There is a consensus opinion among graduate faculty that taking a workshop or non-credit writing course will not help students become good writers. However, including a writing component in courses would help students develop their writing skills, but this would increase the workload of the faculty member. University Libraries also has liaison librarians available to help students with citations, copyright clearance, and such matters.  Three-Minute Thesis Competition  The 2016 3-MT Competition was very well received with 11 students participating. This year, the application period is open between November 28 through January 16, and the event takes place on February 22. If there are numerous applicants, a process will need to be put in place to narrow the participants down to a reasonable number. GC members may be asked to review submissions or preliminary rounds may be held. |  |
| **IX. Old Business** | I. Changes to Graduate Council Bylaws The Graduate Council had previously discussed changes to the Graduate Council bylaws to move from curriculum review to program review. The GC chair will be meeting with the chairs of several committees to ensure that responsibilities will not be duplicated nor will there be gaps created.  II. List of Substantive Changes for Curricular Review A list of substantive changes for curricular review was provided, which shows areas of curriculum review that the GC-CC currently handles and could potentially continue handling after the bylaws changes are made.  Some components of new course proposals are not reviewed at GC-CC level, such as library resources and the number of faculty hires but are left up to the appropriate university committees.  Currently, when reviewing course proposals, much of the GC-CC’s focus is on course objectives and methods evaluation to ensure they reflect graduate level rigor. If the GC-CC will no longer review course proposals in-depth, a checklist and consent agenda could be posted and Course proposals could be reviewed via a checklist and consent agenda.  There is a provision in UCC’s membership, that a member of the Graduate Council or someone representing graduate education would have an ex-officio seat on UCC and would be involved in review of graduate level curriculum. The position has been vacant because Graduate Council has been doing its own curriculum review. The Graduate Council chair will request UCC to have faculty with graduate faculty status review graduate courses.  After discussion and review of the list of substantive changes, it was decided that items relating to programs would stay with the Graduate Council because they would impact program review. |  |
| **X. New Business** | Revised Capstone Definition UCC created a draft definition for the capstone experience, but the graduate capstone experience was limited to thesis/dissertation. However, some graduate programs require a project, capstone course, exam, or internship as their capstone experience. Thus, the GC Policy Subcommittee will draft a definition for capstone experiences for graduate programs. | **Motion:** M. Staves moved to accept the capstone definition for the undergraduate capstone experience and the GC Policy Subcommittee will draft a definition for capstone experiences for graduate programs. B. Martin seconded. Motion passed unanimously. |
| **XI. Adjournment** |  | **Motion:** M. Staves moved to adjourn. A. Bostrom seconded. Meeting adjourned at 10:54 AM. |