UMGSB GRADUATE COUNCIL

MINUTES

Thursday, September 9, 2021

Zoom Meeting Hosted by UMB

**In Attendance:** ErinGolembewski, Janet Rutledge, Jeff Halverson, Bethany Lee, Nikita Aggarwal, Jia Bei Wang, Shahin Hossain, Jennifer Maher, Minjoung Kyoung, Jenny Owens, Sarah Chard, Danya Qato, Lisa Morgan, Bill Jackson, Mathangi Gopalakrishnan, Steve Pitts, Kathy O’Dell, Eileen Meyer, Kirsten Corazzini, Joel Tyson, Weidong Zhu, John Basile,

# Welcome and Introductions

The meeting started with a round of introductions.

# Approval of Minutes from Council Meeting held on May 6, 2021

A motion was made to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and all were in favor.

# Announcements UMBC

* UMBC has had record enrollment in graduate school this year. The previous high was 2,772 in 2013 and as of today, the Graduate School is at 2,795 with the expectation to cross 2,800. Most of the growth is in new students with 1,000 new students starting. This year has one of the largest cohorts of international students coming in.
* Additional funding was secured to award four additional dissertation fellowships this year. Dissertation fellowships are for one semester to help students complete their dissertation. Students must have passed the candidacy stage and it is for students who have exhausted their funding.
* Freeman Hrabowski will retire in June of 2022. A search has been kicked off by the Board of Regents. The Chancellor will be coming to UMBC later this month to talk about the process and how they will select members from UMBC to be on that committee.

# Announcements UMB

* UMB hosted a successful and exciting graduate student orientation in-person.
* Students who deferred last year were able to join UMB this year. There are still a few deferrals for this fall mostly related to deferrals due to travel.
* Changes were made to graduate assistant stipends in a few programs and a committee was commissioned to take a look at stipends on a regular basis.
* There is a big push on completing program reviews. UMB has a number of reviews to do this academic year and will conduct all of them virtually.

# GSA Reports UMBC

Joel Tyson

* All GSA events have been virtual so far. However, while the GSA has been cautious about scheduling in person events in this first semester, the GSA is slowly ramping up and planning some outdoor and virtual events to get graduate students together. In general, students are excited to come back to campus and there was high attendance during the opening meeting held on Wednesday, September 8.
* This year, the theme of the GSA is belonging. One of the things the GSA is doing to achieve a sense of belonging is featuring “Grad Student of the Week” on our website and social media platforms.
* The GSA is in the process of developing trainings on identity, inclusion and belonging and will also be focusing on the international student experience, transit, housing, etc.

# GSA Report UMB

* The GSA hosted a couple of social events one of which was a crab feast.
* The shuttle bus has been up and running since the first week in August.
* The Maryland Psychiatric Resource Center has come up with a mental health first aid training for graduate students. The training will take place on September 28 and September 30 and is a 9-hour training. Participants will receive a certification which will be effective for three years.
* Former GSA President Emily Smith was award student of the year.
* There are a few upcoming social events for the fall and include National Hispanic and Latino Heritage month activities which begins on September 15; and there will be a fall/winter social in October.

# Overview of the Graduate Council & Committee Structure

The Graduate Council is a joint council between UMB and UMBC. This is joint graduate school although most of the operations are separate. The joint graduate school is actually the degree granting authority for graduate programs on both campuses. Basically, all of the graduate programs live under the University of Maryland Graduate School, Baltimore. The Council is elected from regular members of the graduate faculty and is charged with setting and overseeing the administrative policies that govern graduate education in this joint graduate school. So, in theory, any faculty member from either campus can serve on committees and advise students. This gives us a broader university of faculty to draw from for all of the different activities we have.

***Program Review Committee***

All academic programs are required to be reviewed every seven years by Board of Regents policy. This committee will review the documents that the program prepares for their external self-study, the external review team’s report as well as the program’s responses to ensure thoroughness of the review and that important issues that affect academic quality are being addressed.

***Graduate Faculty Committee***

This committee conducts a review of faculty who have put in applications for regular or special level graduate faculty status. Applications for associate status are approved within the Graduate School offices. The Council is in the process of refining criteria. The Graduate Faculty Committee spearheaded an ongoing discussion last year about the definition of a regular member of the graduate faculty. To explain, with the joint graduate school, there are three levels of graduate faculty (regular, special and associate). In order to chair a PhD committee, a faculty member has to be regular and to be a regular member you have to have a full-time appointment, have a certain level of experience with: serving on graduate committees, doing research and engaging, teaching, and committee work at the graduate level. Special is for people who do not qualify for regular or associate membership. These are often adjunct instructors or people who are at another university who may be engaging in regular research activities and we want to make it easier for them to serve on committees. An associate member is typically anyone who is coming in as a new assistant professor. Associate members can chair a master’s committee, serve on a PhD committee and can teach graduate classes. College Park does not have this rank. If you are a tenure track faculty member at College Park, you can go straight to being a regular member of the graduate faculty. Although this works for College Park, we have reaffirmed for many years that there is a benefit in having associate membership because we felt that it was beneficial to graduate education on whole for people to have a little bit more experience before they are able to chair a dissertation committee.

With that said, the council’s attention was directed to the draft version of the Graduate Faculty Guidelines. The first page of the document contains the original wording about being appointed as a Regular member of the Graduate Faculty. This version has some points listed with a short explanation paragraph. Basically, the council agrees with the broad concept presented in the original version, however, the Council is trying to get the words to reflect the actual practices and differences between the faculty on both campuses. The council has been trying to figure out how to include other experiences. For example, one-on-one mentoring (is that counted as teaching). On the second page is a much finer grained breakout of what we considered committee experience, teaching experience, and research experience to be. Council members were asked to read over the draft and be prepared to vote during the next meeting.

***New Courses Committee***

New courses committee reviews all new courses as well as major changes to courses. We are still figuring out leadership for this committee because of heavy workload challenges. The possibility of utilizing a co-chair is being considered and Kirsten is willing to help.

The draft version of the new courses checklist was shared. Council members were asked to read over the draft and be prepared to vote during the next meeting.

***Long Range Planning & New Programs***

This committee reviews proposals for new program and major changes that are happening within a program. Program representatives are invited to attend meetings to provide a bit of an overview and answer questions that the committee might have. For UMBC, once a program comes out of Grad Council, it moves on to Faculty Senate, so UMBC has another layer of approval that does not happen at UMB. For UMB Grad Council is the last stop for new programs and changes. When there is a new program proposal, the Council is looking at the academic parts of the program and there is another committee that looks at the budgetary parts. Although the budget will be part of the new program proposal, the only thing that the Council has to look at with regard to budget is if there is anything in the budget that makes it look like it might affect the academic quality of the program.

The Council reviewed the draft version of the Cover Page for Program Changes and Non MPS Tracks. This form was developed because the Council thought it would be useful to have one to serve as a guide so that people would know what they are supposed to submit with their proposal. This would also cut down on having to return proposals for additional information or documentation. Also, in the past we were not clear on who needed to sign off on the proposal. So, we did not know whether the department had approved and if the dean was aware of and supportive of the proposal. It was explained for new programs MHEC has an established structure. The Council was asked to review the draft form and be prepared to vote during the next meeting.

# New Business

Dr. Halverson announced that he is looking for three volunteers to serve on the Grievance Committee to consider a student dismissal appeal. It was explained that at one point, the Grievance Committee was a regular standing committee of the Grad Council. However, due to the low volume of work for this committee, it became an ad hoc committee. Kirsten, Steve, and Kathy volunteered to serve on the committee.

# FYI

As a side, it was explained that because of the way the bylaws are set up, the deans are the co-chairs of the Graduate Council and the UMBC Faculty Senate does not allow a dean to report into the Senate, therefore, we always have to pick a faculty member who is on the Graduate Council to serve as the liaison to the Faculty Senate. Steve Pitts has been our volunteer.

# Adjourn Meeting to Convene in Committees

Next Meeting

October 7, 2021

Teleconference

Led by UMBC