

Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Meeting via IVN

8 December 2014

9:00-11:00

Meeting Summary

This was the second meeting in 2014 of the Graduate Faculty Council.

Participants: Ed Houde (UMCES Vice President for Education and Chair of Graduate Faculty Council, CBL), Cindy Palinkas (HPL), Feng Chen (IMET), Mike Wilberg (CBL), Johan Schijf (CBL), Bob Hilderbrand (AL), Tom Fisher (HPL), Sarah Laperriere (Graduate Student Representative, HPL) Ray Morgan (AL, participating while Andrew Elmore is on sabbatical), Rose Jagus (IMET)

Accreditation Process

Work conducted by the GFC is integral to the accreditation process. In October 2014, the UMCES Self-Study Design was approved and now UMCES is moving forward with its Self-Study. A first draft of the Self-Study is due 1 February 2015 and a completed draft by April 2015. UMCES has been requested by the Middle States Commission to provide names of potential peer evaluators. Ed Houde requested that the GFC forward names of recommended evaluators and Chair of the Evaluation Team to him. After submittal of the Self-Study and visit by the Evaluation Team, accreditation could be conferred in the November 2015 to April 2016 timeframe.

Presidential Fellowships

The goal of the Presidential Fellowships is to attract outstanding Ph.D. students to UMCES. The deadline for submitting applications was extended from 1 December to 15 December 2014. Currently, the Fellowship Evaluation Committee, chaired by Rose Jagus, has received 11 complete applications, with more expected. UMCES can award up to three Presidential Fellowships in this round of applications. Dave Kazyak, the student representative on the Fellowship Committee, must be replaced since he is graduating and will leave UMCES by end of December 2014.

The Fellowship Committee wishes to feature students who have received Presidential Fellowships on the UMCES website to publicize the fellowships and students who receive them. Amy Griffin will pursue this avenue with the two recent recipients. The Fellowship Committee expressed concern about not yet having the MEES applications of Fellowship applicants uploaded to the Moodle site (**Note:** The uploads were provided on 8 December 2014).

Future of the VP Education Office – Faculty, Student and Alumni Data, Data Flow, and Data Management

Ed Houde distributed a discussion document providing information on data and data management in support of the UMCES education program. The GFC discussed data and information to be collected and held by the UMCES Office of VP Education. The GFC discussed the kinds of data on students and faculty involvement in education (teaching and mentoring) that should be obtained and held by UMCES. Currently, most data related to educations, students, and faculty involvement in the education process are submitted directly to MEES, rather than being channeled from UMCES to MEES. For some kinds of data the UMCES Office of the VP for Education should be the initial or primary recipient of data that then flows to MEES.

The need to have more direct control over our involvement in education was noted by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in its review of the UMCES Accreditation Readiness Report. UMCES, and all accredited institutions, should compile and have direct access to student and course data. The GFC noted and agreed that this need also creates a database management issue. In this regard, it was noted that a database manager is now employed at HPL who possibly could assist in developing databases. UMCES does not have a registrar's office and many data on applicants, enrollments, faculty involvement, courses, and outcomes are handled by UMCP and MEES. There is a need to determine what data are best compiled and held by UMCES and how those data are obtained from UMCP or channeled to UMCP/MEES through the UMCES Office of the VP Education. A recommendation by the GFC was to appoint the MEES Program Director as an ex officio member to the GFC to facilitate overall interactions between MEES and UMCES, especially with regard to data needs and management.

UMCES and of the Office of the VP Education need to better document outcomes and success of graduated students in professional appointments. Various offices, including MEES, the UMCES VP for Institutional Advancement, individual Laboratories, and the VP for Education are conducting efforts to track alumni data. A plan to track this data in a more streamlined, coordinated way is desirable. Post-graduate data on success in professional appointments is a metric by which our graduate program can be evaluated.

Future of the VP Education Office – Faculty Activity Reporting (FAR)

Currently, the Vice President for Education and Graduate Faculty Council manage the appointment and reappointment processes for the UMCES Graduate Faculty. Faculty members submit materials to Lab Directors for merit evaluations each year, but there is no comprehensive software product or system to collect and manage these data. Ed Houde and Erica Kropp are researching Faculty Activity Reporting software as a way to manage faculty data

and to track and evaluate faculty productivity. Two providers of FAR products are Digital Measures and Lyterati who have offered to provide demonstrations of their products, which UMCES will evaluate in the New Year.

Future of the VP Education Office – Course Data

Houde suggested that channeling course data through the UMCES Office of VP for Education would be an improvement over having to obtain these data from MEES. This would allow a more active role in promoting and encouraging teaching, course delivery, and assessment/evaluation. The MSCHE suggested that UMCES take stronger, direct control of the collection and management of course data, including development of course syllabi and descriptions of learning outcomes and assessment tools. The GFC discussed potential issues that the Office of VP Education may face if it increases its management responsibility for course delivery in the MEES Program. Currently, the MEES Director has no authority to strongly encourage UMCES faculty to teach classes. The UMCES VP for Education may have stronger influence, via Lab Directors, in this arena.

Proposal: Data Committee

It was proposed that a committee of the GFC be appointed to address the data needs and management questions. Ed Houde appointed one GFC member from each lab (HPL: Cindy Palinkas, IMET: Feng Chen, AL: Bob Hilderbrand, and CBL: Johan Schijf) to the committee. Ed will provide a charge to the committee. A chair will need to be appointed.

MEES Restructuring: Information Item

Ed Houde informed the GFC of the status of the MEES Program restructuring effort. MEES is currently restructuring its curriculum and the program will change significantly. The present Areas of Specialization will go away. New foundation areas are being recommended by the MEES Curriculum restructuring committee, led by Tom Miller. The restructured program and curriculum will be more interdisciplinary and modern, and will include human dimensions of environmental science. The MEES Administrative Council, consisting of Provosts and Graduate School Deans from participating MEES institutions, will review the proposed changes in January or February of 2015.

UMCES Administrative Structure and Relationship to MEES

A request came from UMCES graduate students to explain the structure and relationship between UMCP, MEES, and UMCES. Ed Houde and Raleigh Houde produced diagrams to show the structure. The GFC produced a simpler draft version that more closely addressed the needs students had identified. The GFC version needs further work before it is brought to the attention of the UMCES Faculty Senate

and Executive Council. The diagram will have utility to show UMCES-MEES relationships in the accreditation Self-Study.