

Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Meeting over Interactive Video Network

17 December 2013

9:00-11:30

Meeting Summary

Participants: Ed Houde (UMCES Vice President for Education and Chair of Graduate Faculty Council, CBL), Don Boesch (UMCES President, Annapolis Office), Rose Jagus (IMET), Feng Chen (IMET), Mike Wilberg (CBL), Bob Gardner (AL), Andrew Elmore (AL), Tom Fisher (HPL), Ming Li (HPL), Raleigh Hood (Chair of UMCES Faculty Senate, HPL), Emily Flowers (student, IMET), Dave Kazyak (student, AL), John Gardner (student, HPL)

Opening Remarks (Houde)

This meeting fulfilled the requirement that the GFC meet at least once each semester as prescribed by UMCES policy. Each GFC member is elected or appointed to a 3-yr term. The current GFC members' terms began 1 July 2013 and will terminate 30 June 2016. All incumbent GFC faculty members are eligible to be elected or appointed to a consecutive 3-yr term. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Graduate Student Council have full membership on the GFC. Jeanette Davis, formerly Chair of the GSC, has stepped down and the GSC is in the process of electing a new Chair and a Vice-Chair.

Revised Graduate Faculty Appointment and Reappointment Policy

An ad hoc Committee of the GFC (Fisher, Elmore, Wilberg), with Chair Houde, undertook a revision of UMCES Graduate Faculty policy on appointments and reappointments (UMCES Policy III-7.10.III).

The policy was revised and amended by the GFC in November 2013. The draft, amended policy is broadened to define Full and Associate membership, and the rights and privileges of appointment. It was written with a goal of broadening opportunities for UMCES faculty and scientists to participate in graduate education, while maintaining standards for appointment.

The draft, amended policy has been endorsed by the Faculty Senate and Executive Council. A vote of the UMCES Graduate Faculty is required to adopt (or reject) the amended policy. It was proposed that the VP for Education conduct email voting in January, providing two weeks for faculty to vote^{*}. It is important for faculty at each of the Labs to be aware of this new policy before Houde requests a vote.

Internal Management and Evaluation of UMCES Education, Information, Statistics, and Data

Discussion and recommendations.

The UMCES Office of the VP for Education will develop a plan and procedures to manage data and information on education, including faculty involvement, student progress, and learning outcomes. Chair Houde led a discussion on requirements and procedures that might be instituted. The MEES Office and UMCP Graduate School now hold much of the data. Relatively little data is held in the UMCES Lab Directors' Offices. Sources of information in UMCES that could be accessed include faculty Annual Merit Reports, and data on tuition returns. Houde will begin discussions with Dean Charles Caramello (UMCP Grad School) and MEES Director Ken Paynter to develop a plan for sharing and managing information. UMCES also needs to develop a planning process for its long-term involvement in the education process, including insurance that core and required MEES courses are taught regularly.

Accreditation Business and Updates

Chair Houde informed the GFC of latest actions by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and plans by UMCES for moving forward with the accreditation process.

The MSCHE has advanced UMCES to Candidacy. It is anticipated that joint degrees could be implemented by May 2014. Houde will meet with Dean Charles Caramello (UMCP Grad School) on 18 Dec. 2014 to discuss the implementation process.

UMCES needs to address recommendations of the MSCHE Applicant Assessment Team, including improvement in assessment of learning outcomes. A Self-Study Design will be developed and a Self-Study will be conducted by UMCES in the next two years. Broad involvement of faculty, administration and students is anticipated. UMCES can expect to host visits by MSCHE evaluators and teams.

MEES Program Restructuring

Chair Houde and GFC faculty members who are engaged in this process briefly discussed the MEES restructuring effort now underway. Tom Miller, CBL Lab Director, Chairs the Curriculum Committee and is leading this effort. The UMCES members of this Committee will meet on 6 Jan. 2014 to develop unity and discuss an UMCES strategy for restructuring MEES.

*Update 17 Dec. 2014, 16:00: The vote will be postponed until mid-February 2014 to provide adequate time for faculty to read and understand the draft amended policy.

Enhancement Funds

A substantial allocation of enhancement funds has been allocated to improve and reform graduate education in UMCES. Chair Houde led a discussion on these funds and their uses.

It is not expected that budget cuts announced or anticipated in the next year will affect the pool of enhancement funds.

The Office of the VP for Education has made funds available to support visits to an UMCES Lab by exceptionally qualified, prospective graduate students. Notification of these funds and guidelines for their use were provided to UMCES faculty. The Lab Directors, possibly through the Graduate Education Committees, will allocate the funds to highly qualified student applicants.

Funds have been allocated to purchase “Camtasia” software to facilitate development and production of video presentations for use in graduate courses. Such technology will be useful in course development and redesign, for example “flipped classroom” approaches.

Beginning in FY15, UMCES has allocated a significant portion of the enhancement funds to support Competitiveness Fellowships. These fellowships will be multi-year awards to attract the best student applicants to accept offers by UMCES faculty to supervise their graduate study.

Guidelines for awarding these fellowships must be developed. Accordingly, Chair Houde proposed that the GFC serve as an evaluation committee for selection of fellowship awardees. He appointed a standing committee of the GFC to develop guidelines and priorities. GFC members Jagus, Gardner, Ming, and Wilberg were appointed. The Grad Student Council will select a student for appointment. Houde will provide a charge to this committee.

Some suggestions (not an exhaustive list) for these fellowships included:

- Selecting applicants:
 - Chairs of AOSs to forward applications of outstanding applicants to GFC
 - GFC standing committee evaluates applicants and makes recommendations
 - GFC votes (or reaches consensus) on applicants
- Offering fellowships for multiple years will make them more competitive
- Applicants should be good fits to advisors
- Advisor must be identified before a student is awarded the fellowship

- Focus should be on Ph.D. students
- The fellowships should be advertised soon.

Faculty Workloads

Chair Houde briefly discussed faculty workload and distributed an annual report by USM on it. UMCES is not included in the summary statistics of this report. President Boesch offered to search for and send historical information to Houde on workloads. As UMCES moves forward in the accreditation process, it will be important to have readily available and defined expectations of faculty workloads.

Developing a Certificate Program

A discussion of the Professional Certificate Program in environmental science proposed by UMCES was initiated. The discussion was a useful introduction to this UMCES initiative, but it was apparent that the GFC was not prepared to make recommendations or commitments at this time. The GFC will revisit this topic after further thought and preparation by Vice President Houde.

The development of the proposed UMCES Certificate Program needs to be coordinated with efforts underway by the MEES Curriculum Committee chaired by Tom Miller, which also is considering certificate programs. Houde will confer with Miller.

Graduate Student Council

The Graduate Student Council met with key UMCES administrators on 18 November 2013 to discuss the USM and UMCES "Meet and Confer" policy that allows the GSC to recommend a vote by Graduate Assistants to contract labor representation. Subsequent to the meeting, the GSC decided against calling this vote.

GSC members Gardner and Kazyak presented recommendations on professional development opportunities for UMCES graduate students. A document on proposed professional development needs, drafted by the GSC, was distributed to the GFC. Seminars, workshops, and opportunities to become informed on environmental policy were among the topics discussed. Houde and the GFC will work with the GSC to develop a plan for selection and implementation of professional development opportunities. UMCES policy (III-7.11) indicates that such opportunities be available to its graduate students. UMCES faculty should be made aware of this need; it could be highlighted in the UMCES Student and Faculty Handbook.