

## **Graduate Faculty Council Meeting**

18 May 2015 (postponed from 30 April 2015)

IVN Meeting

1:00-2:30 PM

### **Meeting Summary**

This was the first meeting in 2015 of the Graduate Faculty Council.

Participants: Ed Houde (UMCES Vice President for Education and Chair of Graduate Faculty Council, CBL), Feng Chen (IMET), Rose Jagus (IMET), Mike Wilberg (CBL), Johan Schijf (CBL), Bob Hilderbrand (AL), Jenna Luek (Graduate Student Representative, CBL), Raleigh Hood (Chair of Faculty Senate and GFC *ex officio* member)

### **Membership**

Per UMCES policy, the UMCES Graduate Faculty Council (GFC) is comprised of a) chairs of the Graduate Education Committees (GEC) from each laboratory unit, b) one elected member from each UMCES lab, c) two graduate students (the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Graduate Student Council), the Vice President for Education (chairs the Council), and two *ex officio* members, the UMCES President and the Chair of the Faculty Senate. The term for faculty members is three consecutive academic years, while the term for student representatives is two academic years.

### Membership

Jenna Luek, (student, CBL), is the new Chair of the Graduate Student Council (GSC) and has replaced Emily Flowers on the GFC. Anna Priester, (student, HPL), is the Vice-Chair of the GSC and has replaced Sarah Laperriere. Both student members to the GFC have voting privileges. Mike Wilberg will step down as Chair of the GEC at CBL, and will be replaced by Carys Mitchelmore, who will be seated on the GFC beginning 1 July 2015. GGC members whose terms will expire on 30 June 2016 include Tom Fisher, Feng Chen, Rose Jagus, and Andrew Elmore.

### **Summary of GFC Activities and Accomplishments**

The GFC and its committees have done commendable work over the past two years since the Council was reinstated, including:

- Assumed the responsibility of appointing and reappointing UMCES faculty members to the UMCES Graduate Faculty. The Council evaluates application packages and recommends approvals. These packages also go forward to the MEES Program to insure that UMCES faculty members have graduate faculty status on the College Park campus.
- Undertook a substantial revision of the UMCES Policy on Graduate Education (III-7.10), with approval by President Boesch in March 2014. Substantial and important changes to categories and criteria for appointment and reappointment to the Graduate Faculty were instituted, including establishment of an Associate Graduate Faculty category. This work was primarily conducted by a GFC Committee consisting of Andrew Elmore, Tom Fisher, and Mike Wilberg.

- Instituted Presidential Fellowships; developed protocols and procedures, solicited applications, evaluated files, and recommended awards to outstanding PhD students. Two Presidential Fellowships were awarded early in 2014 and the students matriculated in September 2014. Two additional Presidential Fellowships were awarded early in 2015 to students who will matriculate in September 2015. The Fellowship Committee of the GFC in 2014 consisted of Rose Jagus (Chair), Mike Wilberg, Cindy Palinkas, Bob Hilderbrand and Fan Zhang (student).
- Initiated inquiry into data collection, data flow, and data management needs in the Office of the Vice President for Education. A GFC committee, appointed in December 2014, investigated needs to document activities and productivity of UMCES faculty members, control and archive data on graduate students, and define responsibilities of the Office of the VP Education with respect to data management and flow. The committee submitted a report to the VP for Education in April 2015. The committee, consisting of Cindy Palinkas (Chair), Bob Hilderbrand, Feng Chen, and Johan Schijf has additional work in the coming months.

### **General Remarks on Status of Education in UMCES**

A Consumer Information Page (CIP), "Education at a Glance," required as part of the Institutional Profile submitted to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, was developed and posted to the UMCES website. This was first produced in summer 2014 and is now being updated. The revised CIP will note that UMCES is now a degree-granting institution.

The Office of the VP Education worked with the Director of Public Relations (Amy Pelsinsky) and the Associate Vice President for External Affairs (Dave Nemazie) to develop marketing and branding plans for UMCES in 2014. The Hatcher Group was contracted to assist in developing website content on education in UMCES (now available on the UMCES website) that improves information content, visibility and appeal to prospective graduate students.

The MEES Administrative Council, formed in 2013, consists of provosts and graduate deans from the five USM institutions that participate in MEES. UMCES is represented on the Council by the VP Education (Ed Houde), the Director of IMET (Russell Hill), and the Director of HPL (Mike Roman). The Council provides oversight and guidance to the MEES Program. It drafted a framework agreement in 2014 that is intended to facilitate and improve the inter-institutional administration and conduct of the MEES Program.

The MEES Curriculum Committee, chaired by CBL Director Tom Miller, has important consequences for education in UMCES. Several UMCES faculty members are represented on the Committee and the UMCES VP Education participates in *ex officio* capacity. The Committee developed and proposed substantial revisions to the MEES curriculum that will strengthen foundational elements and course offerings. Amy Griffin has filled the full-time position of Assistant to the VP for Education in November 2014.

The UMCES website now has archived summaries of GFC meetings and associated documents, located under the GFC section at <http://www.umces.edu/people/GFC-info>

VP Education Ed Houde has posted status reports of the activities of VP Education, the GFC, and other educational activities <http://www.umces.edu/ed-updates>

## **Accreditation Process Update**

The UMCES Self-Study is nearing completion, with report drafts due for distribution to the Self-Study Steering Committee on 22 May 2015. Reviews and revisions to the report will be undertaken during June-July. On 2 September 2015, Dr. Nancy Targett, Chair of the Middle States Commission Evaluation Team, will pay a preliminary visit to UMCES to familiarize herself with our self-study and to make any recommendations that she feels are warranted. The Evaluation Team visit is scheduled for 1-4 November 2015.

## **Data Committee Report (presented by Johan Schijf)**

The GFC Committee on Data Collection and Management was appointed in December 2014. It includes Cindy Palinkas (Chair, HPL), Feng Chen (IMET), Bob Hilderbrand (AL), and Johan Schijf (CBL), with Amy Griffin as VP Education liaison. The committee met in February and March of 2015, focusing on Graduate Faculty data, course data, student data, and alumni data.

- February Meeting
  - The committee reviewed data collection and flow, assigning the four topic areas to committee members for research.
- March Meeting
  - Faculty data: the committee felt that UMCES should focus on faculty data related to their educational activities and not productivity (therefore, did not look at Faculty Activity Reporting, FAR)
    - Most educational activities by faculty are gathered through course data, with some exceptions (for instance, membership on student committees, membership on other committees). UMCES should have a faculty database with queries on specific information.
    - Wilberg suggested that during annual evaluations, information gathered could be added into a faculty database.
    - Houde stated that there are a number of commercial firms that provide FAR software for a fee.
    - Hilderbrand suggested that multiple groups should be involved (for instance, the Faculty Senate) in FAR decisions.
  - Course data:
    - Currently, the MEES Office sends out emails regarding which classes faculty plan to teach. New course approval differs among the four UMCES Labs. Teaching responsibilities are not obviously tracked or enforced.
    - Course evaluations are based on a form sent to the MEES office (filed there). This form is not ideal and not all students fill it out. Improvements are needed. The UMCP now has an online course evaluation system, but it isn't clear how it is (or can be) implemented through MEES.
    - Recommendation: The Committee felt that most course data and course evaluation data should flow from the MEES office to UMCES.

- A better course database is needed. Course frequency, list of courses,, credits, instructor, year, etc. need to be the basis for search queries.
- Course evaluations should be quantifiable; they are not at present. UMCP has an online evaluation form that UMCES and MEES need to evaluate for possible adoption.
- Student data:
  - For the ongoing accreditation process, the Office of the UMCES VP Education has gained access to much of the data from MEES, but it is in multiple excel sheets. The Office of the VP Education should manage these data, with data flow as needed moving reciprocally between UMCES and MEES
  - Many data on students need to be collected and managed, including GPA, testing scores, AOS, Lab Unit, advisor, exam dates, defense dates, etc.
  - Alumni data:
    - Only IMET appears to have a functional alumni database. IMET alumni receive a quarterly newsletter.
    - The MEES office has an alumni website and listserv. It, however, is not linked to the MEES webpage.
    - The USM has a central alumni database, updated twice per year. David Balcom's office has access to it.
    - Alumni in an UMCES database should primarily be students who have graduated, but we could also consider post-docs and faculty alumni.
    - Recommendation is to build an alumni database derived from the USM database, but modeled after the IMET database.
  - It should be ensured that any UMCES alumni database complies with USM security policies.

### **UMCES Presidential Fellowships**

There is approximately \$300,000 left in the UMCES Presidential Fellowship fund. These funds should be committed to new Fellows by FY17. There were some delays and inconsistencies in the nomination and selection process for Presidential Fellows in the past year. The GFC and its Fellowship Committee need to ascertain what problems were situational, and what problems must be remedied by revising procedures. Problems faced this year included: delayed availability of necessary student information, missing prerequisites that were not recognized, and transcripts difficult to read or interpret.

It was recommended that the Fellowship Committee for 2015-16 (Rose Jagus, Chair, IMET; Cindy Palinkas, HPL; Bob Hilderbrand, AL; TBA, CBL; TBA, Student member) have all application materials sent directly to them, rather than accessing such materials from MEES. There must be an effective procedure to evaluate student applicants for the Fellowship and to quickly ascertain if the student has been accepted by the MEES Program.

Rose commented that the student representatives on the Fellowship committee have been extremely helpful, and everyone agreed.