

UMCES Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Meeting Summary

9 May 2016

10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon

Chesapeake Biological Laboratory

Saunders House Conference Room

Participants: E. Houde (UMCES VP for Education and GFC Chair), L. Sanford (future UMCES VP for Education), J. Schijf (CBL), F. Chen (IMET), R. Hilderbrand (AL), M. Castro (AL), T. Fisher (HPL), B. Clark (GSC Co-Chair), M. Jackson (GSC Chair), A. Griffin (Assistant to the VP for Education)

GFC General Information

Professor Larry Sanford has been appointed interim VP for Education and will begin his duties on 1 June 2016, overlapping one month with Ed Houde who will retire on 30 June 2016.

1. **GFC Membership.** *Terminations and need for new appointments. Discussion and request for appointments.*

Houde reviewed membership terms and appointment/election policies.

Action Items:

- Tom Fisher (HPL) will be rotating off the GFC at the end of June 2016.
 - IMET, because it does not have a GEC, needs to make decisions on its appointments or reappointments. Houde and Griffin will remind IMET members and those rotating off the GFC to request new elections at their respective laboratories.
 - GFC members will notify Amy Griffin and Ed Houde of any pending changes to GFC membership from their respective Labs.
2. **Academic Data.** *MEES and UMCES. Who bears the load, and what is the load? How does data flow? (Continuation of work initiated by the GFC Data Committee⁵). Next steps are now informed by recommendations of the Evaluation Team from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Developing a plan and commitment. Revisiting and recommitting. Ed Houde*

The March 2016 accreditation of UMCES by the MSCHE has shed new light on data needs and management. A GFC data committee, appointed in December 2014, produced a draft report in April 2015 on flow and management of student data in UMCES and MEES. A key question is: How can UMCES facilitate the flow of student data from MEES? A second question relates to internal needs for data collection by UMCES. The MSCHE made several recommendations, indicating that UMCES can and should depend to an extent on services provided by UMCP and MEES, but UMCES must take control of academic data management to fully comply with MSCHE expectations. The GFC and VP Education should develop recommendations on how UMCES will respond to show progress by April 2018, the date UMCES must submit its Monitoring Report to MSCHE.

3. **Accreditation and Implications.** *With accreditation come new responsibilities, especially in the delivery and evaluation of education in UMCES. How can the GFC contribute to meeting these new expectations?* Ed Houde

Letter from Dr. Boesch to the MSCHE¹: UMCES responded to the Evaluation Team Report and 17 recommendations from the MSCHE. MSCHE Standards 8-14 are specific to Education. Recommendations on S8-S14 and some on administrative functions (S1-S7) in cases where they relate to delivery of education in UMCES need to be addressed².

The GFC discussed the MSCHE recommendations, particularly key recommendations related to education in Standards 5-14. UMCES must keep in mind that the MSCHE has requested a Monitoring Report in April 2018 to judge progress by UMCES in addressing its recommendations.

Standard 5: Administration. An MSCHE recommendation is directed to the Office of the UMCES VPE, its duties and responsibilities. Recognizing that the Office of the UMCES VPE differs from that of Provost at other institutions, the responsibilities and authority of the VPE need to be clearly defined.

Standard 6: The MSCHE Evaluation Team recommended a mandatory course on Responsible Conduct in Research for all students. Two such courses have been offered by UMCES faculty members in the past year. The Team also recommended that all faculty and staff take this course. Johan Schijf noted that NSF now requires such a course for all faculty and students working with NSF support. The GFC can have a role in promoting a standardized course. The student members of the GFC suggested that this course be offered early in the first semester as a week-long intensive course.

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment. A formal institutional assessment plan (recommended by MSCHE) would help to broadly define assessment procedures and their documentation in UMCES. If undertaken, the GFC and VPE could lead development of components to address educational assessment. The MSCHE recommended a plan that documents procedures, and their evaluations and outcomes in UMCES.

Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention. The MSCHE Evaluation Team recommended a data committee to document and manage student admission, retention, and progress in UMCES; the GFC presently has such a committee but its work must be redefined to specifically address the MSCHE recommendations.

Standard 9: Student Services. The Evaluation Team questioned whether UMCES provides sufficient student services and noted that services were not standardized across Lab Units. Also, the services usually are not evaluated or documented. A GFC committee should work to develop and recommend a plan to improve student services. This plan should be completed before submission of our Monitoring Report to MSCHE in April 2018.

Standard 10: Faculty. Several recommendations specific to teaching performance, student mentoring, improvements in faculty engagement in education, etc. must be addressed and documented collaboratively by the UMCES Administration, GFC, and Faculty Senate.

Standard 11: Educational Offerings. The MSCHE Evaluation Team made no specific recommendations and was satisfied with education offerings by UMCES. However, in our Self-Study we recognized the need to improve offerings and to address learning outcomes

and assessment (see also Standard 14), especially with institution of the new MEES curriculum. The GFC can play a key role in these activities.

Standard 12: General Education. UMCES was not required to address this Standard because it does not offer formal undergraduate education.

Standard 13: Related Educational Activities. No recommendations were made by the MSCHE Evaluation Team. MSCHE encouraged UMCES to continue these activities that add value to the education enterprise in UMCES.

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning. The MSCHE Evaluation Team recommended that UMCES improve the identification of learning outcomes and expectations at the course, program, and institutional levels. Ed Houde noted that UMCP has many online resources to assist faculty members in defining learning outcomes and their assessment that can benefit UMCES faculty members. It was noted that In the future, the GFC may have a role in vetting new proposed courses and syllabi by UMCES faculty members, as described in the Self-Study. Houde also noted the need for better procedures to encourage student evaluations of courses offered by UMCES faculty. UMCES (Administration, Senate, GFC) has substantial work to do to address MSCHE recommendations on Standard 14.

Ed Houde reported that a committee of the MEES Administrative Council met in February 2016 to initiate development of expected learning outcomes at the MEES programmatic level. A committee report will be prepared.

Action Items:

- The GFC and the VPE, with agreement of President Boesch, the Executive Council, and Faculty Senate, should develop and implement plans to address recommendations by MSCHE. The GFC principally needs to be involved in addressing recommendations for Standards 7-14.

4. **Presidential Fellowships.** *Rethinking the application process and selection of fellows^{3,4}. Dates (timing) for applications are important. What revisions to the application and selection process are needed?* Ed Houde, with input from a memo by Rose Jagus.

The timing of the Presidential Fellowship application and selection processes was discussed with an eye to improving procedures. The UMCES Executive Council suggested January 15th as an application deadline date. However, it was noted that GPILS does not begin to review applications or make acceptances until February 1. Rose Jagus proposed that we not set a deadline date. Bob Hilderbrand suggested that applications could be solicited each academic year until we have filled the two or three fellowship lines. He offered to provide language to support this idea.

In a memo to the GFC, Jagus suggested that the Presidential Fellowship stipend is not of sufficient value to be competitive. In its discussion, the GFC disagreed. The stipend (\$23,460) plus full health benefits and up to 24 credits per year is valued at ~\$45,000 annually.

Hilderbrand raised the question of how availability of additional faculty funding via grants or contracts should be used as a weight in recommending Presidential Fellowship awards.

Houde noted that the GFC had agreed three years ago that, **given equal outstanding qualifications**, Fellowship applicants who could expect one or two years of additional stipend support from faculty grants would be favored. However, lack of such additional support would not disqualify outstanding applicants

Action Items:

- Revise the application form. Clearly note the total monetary value/compensation of the package (stipend, healthcare, tuition, etc.) on the application form and in letters offering the Fellowship. When advertising, note explicitly the total value of the package.
- Bob Hilderbrand will send a summary of his recommendation on timing of the Fellowship application deadline to the GFC. The Presidential Fellowship Committee should meet and deliberate on revising the application and selection deadline dates, bringing its recommendations to the full GFC by 31 July 2016.
- Ensure that the full description and value of the Fellowship is on the UMCES website.

5. **Student Orientation.** *Will UMCES benefit from an UMCES-wide, New-Student Orientation? Progress report by the GFC/GSC committee that is addressing the question.* Carys Mitchelmore (designee Tom Fisher led the discussion).

Carys Mitchelmore, Tom Fisher, Emily Russ (student), and Jake Hagedorn (student) are working on a plan for a standardized, New Student Orientation. Carys is chairing the Committee. In its preliminary report, the Committee proposed consideration of two polarized ideas: 1) a half-day IVN meeting or 2) an immersive 5-day experience where Labs are visited, and resources and facilities are reviewed. As an alternative, Ed Houde suggested a middle-of-the-road alternative (in-person meeting on two days, perhaps in Annapolis). The Committee will meet again and develop its final report which, after approval by the GFC, will be submitted to the UMCES Executive and Administrative Councils for approval or further recommendations.

Mitchelmore has circulated a survey form to UMCES faculty, students and administration, querying them on their support (or not) of a New Student Orientation program.

It was suggested that videos of the Laboratories, key facilities, Human Resources, and key contacts could be developed for an Orientation meeting and subsequently be placed on the UMCES website as a ready source of information for new or prospective students.

Action Items:

- GFC members should review the document and survey that Carys Mitchelmore has sent to faculty, students, and administration. Provide your suggestions to Cary and her Committee.

6. **Student Handbook.** *The Handbook is being enhanced and revised in response to a recommendation by the MSCHE Evaluation Team. Progress report by GFC/GSC committee.* Amy Griffin. Jenna Luek and Anna Priester.

Amy Griffin and student representatives, Jenna Luek and Anna Priester, are working to update and revise the UMCES Graduate Student Handbook. Amy summarized the Committee's activities, including an outline of handbook topics that was reviewed by the GFC. The handbook is to be completed by end of summer 2016.

Information Items

- UMCES Website Redo. *Education pages.* Amy Griffin.

The UMCES website is under renovation. An UMCES-wide committee was appointed to review website needs and to work with a contracted company. The new website will be launched in September 2016. Substantial revisions to education pages are anticipated.

- Diversity and Culture. *Annual Reports are requested by USM and Regents. UMCES will begin to comply with this request by 2017. Data on plans and progress to increase or improve diversity in faculty, staff, and students are needed. It is expected that the GFC will contribute to these reports.* Ed Houde

All USM institutions except UMCES have been submitting annual Diversity and Culture Reports. Now that UMCES is accredited, it will initiate submitting these reports. The first report will be submitted to the USM in April 2017.

- Graduate Faculty Appointments and Reappointments. Ed Houde

The UMCES VP Education and VP Administration are working with MEES and the UMCP to resolve the problem of slow approvals of appointments and reappointments of UMCES faculty members to the UMCP Graduate Faculty.

Meeting Documents

¹ UMCES letter response to Middle States Commission, addressing the Evaluation Team Report. January 2016.

² Middle States Commission on Higher Education recommendations and suggestions. Plans and progress. Internal document, VP Education Office, February 2016.

³ Presidential Fellowships. Call for applications.

⁴ Presidential Fellowships. Application form.

⁵ UMCES Graduate Faculty Council, Committee on Academic Data, Data Flow and Data Management. Report on Current Status and Future Recommendations, 24 April 2015.