Minutes of Graduate Council Meeting

The Graduate Council met on Thursday, December 3, 2009 at 3:00 p.m. in RSC 207.


I. Approve Minutes of November 19, 2009 meeting
Minutes of the November 19, 2009 meeting was approved with corrections.

II. Old Business
a. Discussion of Role of Outside Committee Member
Council continued discussing the role of the outside member on defense committees, and how to better ensure the outside member oversees the meeting on behalf of the Graduate School. It was suggested that more appropriate wording in any policy revisions include that the outside person “facilitate” rather than “preside over” the defense hearing to assure the thesis or dissertation meets the standards of graduate scholarship, and the committee treats the student appropriately during the defense. Council still agreed that the outside member be contacted by the Graduate School directly to review their responsibility upon receipt of paperwork to approve members of a committee. Council expressed concern that policy revisions will not correct all problems happening during defense hearings. Discussion will continue regarding the issue in upcoming spring meetings.

III. New Business
a. Support in Academic Colleges of Graduate Coordinators and Students
Associate Dean Masud asked for suggestions from Council regarding how the Graduate School can offer support to graduate coordinators and students (how to reach/interact with both audiences). Discussion centered on ways to streamline processes to free up time for coordinators. Suggestions included more use of electronic means for communications (i.e. regular emails to remind departments of deadlines, post training documents and FAQ’s on Blackboard, and running self-service reports at the Graduate School level rather than having coordinators run reports). Also, when scheduling meetings with coordinators, to look at the possibility of holding a shorter meeting each semester (30 minutes, rather than an hour or more). Council discussed concern with increasing faculty workloads (as faculty leave positions and are not being replaced), and what to do with students who cannot find a thesis advisor willing to take on additional students.

Council discussed the difficulty with getting deadlines and regulations out to all graduate students regarding plans of study, application for degree, oral defense dates, etc. The Graduate School will try to email information to departments as dates approach, as well as continuing the current means of communicating with students by letters, individual emails and postings to the Grad School website.

IV. As May Arise
No items were brought forth.

Meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.