Minutes of the Graduate Council (GC) Meeting of December 3, 2014

Present: Bauer, Beise, Caramello (chair), Delwiche, Deshong, Fu, Gibson, Lang, Laskowski, Lim, Neubert, Popper, Rockcastle, Rowley, Sprinkle, Steele, Tits, Wang, Wilkinson, Yaros

Staff: Christopher, Franke, Leone, Shayman, Simpson, Winter, Woolston

I. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of October 1, 2014 were approved with no emendations.

II. Working Group Report on Teaching Assistant Training

Councilor Bauer reviewed the working group report and recommendations on Teaching Assistant Training. The report discussed the current state of TA training on campus, what is emerging at the national level, and what UMD can do to incorporate best practices. Recommendations include enhancing TA mentoring, creating a TA Resource Guide, and assessing MEI’s effectiveness in the English language preparation of international TAs.

Councilor Beise noted that the College of EDUC, of which MEI is a unit, is responsible for the program’s formal reviews.

Councilors Deshong and Popper commented that TA training will have to incorporate an outcomes assessment process to ensure that it is improving TA performance. Programs/colleges should assume responsibility for such assessment.

Councilor Delwiche proposed that TAs should be queried on their perceptions of the training they receive and on how it might be improved.

III. Announcements

Dean Caramello updated the GC on several GS initiatives. International initiatives include a joint seminar and research project on Frederick Douglass with University College Cork; planning for a joint seminar and research project on post-dictatorship Latin American literature with U of Chile and U Cordoba (Argentina); hosting the International Graduate Student Thanksgiving Dinner for over 450 students and families; renewal of the UMD-U Tübingen joint research and graduate training project in Neuroscience, Cognitive Science, and Bioscience.

Dean Caramello reported to the GC on scheduled meetings with Michael Kaiser, founder of the DeVos Institute, to discuss a proposed professional graduate degree in Arts Management, and with President Loh and Provost Rankin to discuss the future direction and shape of doctoral education at UMD.

IV. Graduate School Fundraising and Alumni Relations

GS Director of Development Dan Christopher discussed the GS’s current and future development efforts. Creation of a Development Office within the GS puts UMD on the cutting edge of graduate fundraising, along with distinguished peers like UC Berkeley and U Michigan. Fundraising priorities include fellowships, diversity initiatives, and student success initiatives.
V. Graduate School Communications

GS Communications Officer Niambi Winter discussed the GS’s new communication strategy. Historically, the GS has focused on internal communications within the campus. With a Communications Officer, the GS now can external communications as well. This additional focus will include contributing to the regional and national conversation on graduate education and positioning UMD as a leader in graduate policy and practice.

Ms. Winter reviewed progress to date, including total redesign of the GS website and publication of three GS newsletters, each of which targets a specific community: respectively, GS administrators and staff; campus Directors and Coordinators of Graduate Studies; and the broad graduate community, including students, faculty, alumni, and several external audiences.

VI. Preparation of PhD Students for Multiple Career Paths

Councilor Popper presented the report of the Working Group on Preparation of PhD Students for Multiple Career Paths. The GS and Career Center are partnering on a full time career services position to be housed in the graduate school. The appointee will work with multiple constituencies to develop relevant programming at the campus, college, and program levels.

The report discussed the current status of programming on campus and proposed some next steps. These include developing programs on broad topics aimed directly at students in multiple disciplines, developing “train the trainer” programs aimed directly at faculty mentors and indirectly to students, disseminating best practices, and funding access to The Versatile PhD.

Councilor Wilkinson noted that “trainers” should include college administrators, since they are examples of multiple career paths available within higher education.

Councilor DeShong raised a related matter of considering professionals from outside of higher education as members of dissertation committees. Dean Caramello noted that the Council could take up this issue for discussion, since it would constitute a change in policies and practices.

VII. Graduate Certificates

Dean Caramello informed the GC that a working group will be formed to study the issue of graduate certificates on campus and to make recommendations about how best to manage their growth to ensure both high standards and flexibility and responsiveness. The working group will be charged in the Spring semester and report findings to the GC in 2015.

There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 12 Noon.