University of Wisconsin-Madison
Graduate Faculty Executive Committee
1:30 pm – 3:30 pm, Room 52 Bascom Hall
October 6, 2017

MINUTES

Members Present: Caroline Alexander, Lara Collier, Kristin Eschenfelder, Yu Hen Hu (arrived after first voting item), William Karpus, Steffen Lempp, Christopher Livanos, Lisa Martin, Christa Olson, Nicole Perna, John Pfotenhauer, Parmesh Ramanathan, Tracy Schroepfer (arrived after first voting item), Steph Tai, Monica Turner, Earlise Ward, Kirsten Wolf

Members Absent: Michael Graham, Leslie Smith III

Guests: Elaine Klein, Jocelyn Milner, Tejumola Olaniyan, Sue Zaeske

Staff: Eileen Callahan, Marty Gustafson, Michelle Holland, Elena Hsu, LaRuth McAfee, Emily Reynolds

Dean William Karpus called the meeting to order.

The minutes of September 8, 2017, were approved as a matter of automatic consent.

Information Items:


Program Reviews and Updates:

1. Professor Tejumola Olaniyan, Chair of the Department of African Cultural Studies, introduced updates on the Institutional (10-Year) Review of the M.A./Ph.D./Doctoral Minor in African Languages and Literature. Professor Olaniyan noted that the department recently restructured to revamp its identity and curriculum to appeal to the modern student, including the new department name and the forthcoming new name of its academic programs to African Culture Studies. They hope this will help with recruiting and address the lack of underrepresented minority students. Professor Olaniyan also noted the department has met with Graduate School Assistant Dean for Diversity, Inclusion, and Funding LaRuth McAfee, and has created publicity materials to further support recruiting. Professor Olaniyan expressed concerns with his department’s lack of ability to fund students, but new undergraduate courses offered by the department have created additional teaching assistant opportunities.

2. Associate Dean Ramanathan introduced the Institutional (10-Year) Review of the Clinical and Community Outcomes Capstone and Graduate/Professional Certificates on behalf of former GFEC member Susan Thibeault. Ramanathan noted the strengths of the programs, which include an interdisciplinary design that fills an important niche in translational research and acts as an essential part of the Institute for Clinical and Translational Research’s community engagement and outreach priorities, a complementary piece of the M.S./Ph.D. programs, projects often resulting in a publication,
clearly stated requirements, satisfied students, an engaged director, and yearly surveying of students. Ramanathan also discussed challenges to the program, including a difficult sequence of coursework for students to complete without careful planning and heavy reliance on one staff member. Ramanathan also mentioned concerns that came up during the review process which the program has since addressed, including a history of low enrollment, no handbook, and attrition issues. Ramanathan noted review committee recommendations, including increasing the sense of community, monitoring drop-out students from the program, developing a five-year plan, and increasing mentor/mentee interactions. The GFEC commends the program on its strengths and recommends it continues to engage in efforts to address the review committee’s concerns.

Motion: Moved and seconded to accept the Institutional (10-Year) Supplemental Accreditation Review of the Clinical and Community Outcomes Capstone and Graduate/Professional Certificates. The motion was passed unanimously.

3. GFEC member Kirsten Wolf introduced the Institutional (10-Year) Review of the M.A./Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies, including M.A./Ph.D. Named Options and Doctoral Minors in “Comparative Literature” and “Folklore Studies”. Wolf noted the strengths of the program, including a deep history and graduate students that highly value their faculty advisors and mentors. Wolf also discussed challenges to the program, including not having enough faculty to sustain the Ph.D. named option in Folklore Studies, a dated Comparative Literature program with few new courses, language requirements that are too demanding and increase student time-to-degree, problems with advising and guidance in Comparative Literature, and no professional seminar offered. Wolf discussed review committee recommendations for Folklore Studies, including separating it from Comparative Literature and reworking the Folklore Studies program into a certificate program. Wolf also discussed review committee recommendations for Comparative Literature, including reducing requirements for the major, revising and updating courses and readings to reflect current interests, creating a professional seminar, and organizing exams and dissertation committees that include an outside faculty member from the beginning. The review committee strongly recommended that the program be substantially remodeled. Dean Karpus asked Associate Dean Sue Zaeske to update the GFEC on actions the College of Letters & Science has taken since the review was undertaken, which include steps to decouple Folklore Studies from Comparative Literature. The GFEC noted many significant weaknesses of the current program and recommends the department quickly engage in efforts to address the review committee’s concerns including suspension of admissions to the existing program while major restructuring is undertaken.

Motion: Moved and seconded to accept the Institutional (10-Year) Review of the M.A./Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies, including M.A./Ph.D. Named Options and Doctoral Minors in “Comparative Literature” and “Folklore Studies”. The motion was passed with 15 for, 1 abstention.

4. GFEC Member Nicole Perna introduced the Institutional (10-Year) Review of the M.S./Ph.D./Doctoral Minor in Biomedical Engineering. Perna noted the strengths of the program, which include exceptionally well-funded faculty, very strong junior faculty, student satisfaction and student career opportunities, a flexible curriculum tailored to individual students, effective recruitment of underrepresented minority students, a good gender balance, and a positive climate. Perna also noted review committee recommendations, including seeking funding to support rotations for incoming Ph.D. students, improving communications with junior faculty and students with particular regard to revisions to program structure, creating a more sustainable approach to assessment and qualifying exams,
working with the College of Engineering to improve student interactions with Career Services, increasing teaching opportunities for Ph.D. students, and balancing the demands of undergraduate and graduate teaching to ensure availability of specialized courses. The GFEC commends the program on its strengths and recommends it engage in efforts to address the review committee’s concerns.

Motion: Moved and seconded to accept the Institutional (10-Year) Review of the M.S./Ph.D./Doctoral Minor in Biomedical Engineering. The motion was passed unanimously.

5. GFEC Member Caroline Alexander introduced the Institutional (10-Year) Review of the Ph.D./Doctoral Minor in Physiology. Alexander noted the strengths, including outstanding productivity and performance among graduate students, career outcomes that are consistent with training, clear and flexible course work, significant student satisfaction with the program, a diverse student body, required teaching during graduate training and a highly-regarded graduate coordinator. Alexander noted review committee recommendations included the need to increase faculty participation in training, update the website and promotional materials, continue to review the curriculum to improve training and reduce time-to-degree, and to discontinue the doctoral minor. The review committee also suggested the program create a succession plan for leadership roles. Associate Dean Martin noted that students that are teaching but not formally appointed as teaching assistants or lecturers should receive the same training as formally appointed teaching assistants. The GFEC commends the program on its strengths and recommends it engage in efforts to address the review committee’s concerns.

Motion: Moved and seconded to accept the Institutional (10-Year) Review of the Ph.D./Doctoral Minor in Physiology. The motion was passed unanimously.

Adjournment:
Motion: Moved and seconded to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.