

GPSA Coordinating Committee
Meeting Summary
17 September 2009

Present were Alok Bhandari, Travis Cox, Jerry DeWitt, Mike Duffy, Mark Gleason, Matt Liebman, Francis Owusu, Charles Sauer, and Mary Wiedenhoeft.

Agenda items

- 1) appointment of DOGE
- 2) new faculty applications
- 3) renewal of RA MOU with Leopold Center and CALS
- 4) candidates for director of Leopold Center
- 5) committee updates
- 6) MS / MCRP double degree
- 7) ad hoc items

Mary Wiedenhoeft called the meeting to order at 4:10 PM.

1) Following past precedent, in which the outgoing program chair takes on the position of DOGE, Mary nominated Mike Duffy to serve in this capacity.

Resolved: The committee voted unanimously to approve Mike Duffy as DOGE.

2) Steve Fales (AGRON) and Suzanne Millman (VDPAM & BMS) have applied to join the graduate faculty of the GPSA.

Resolved: The committee reviewed the application files and unanimously endorsed an election. A ballot will be created and sent to faculty as soon as possible.

3) For the past several years, the GPSA has received an annual allocation of research assistantship funds from the Leopold Center and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) in the amount of \$20,590 from each. The terms of this allocation were set down in a formal MOU, which expires on 30 June 2010, the end of the current fiscal year. In order to be prepared for the Fall 2010 recruiting cycle, it was proposed to negotiate a new MOU.

Jerry DeWitt was present and agreed that it would be appropriate to proceed with a new MOU prior to his retirement as Center director.

A brief discussion centered on whether an increase should be requested and, if so, based on what formula. The majority favored an increase. Suggestions for calculating the increase included basing it on tuition or basing it on a selected percentage.

Resolved: The program will undertake the negotiation of a new MOU for RA funding from the Leopold Center and CALS. The GPSA will propose an increase in the allocation, based on a simple percentage calculation.

4) Mary Wiedenhoefl commented briefly on the candidates for the directorship of the Leopold Center. Mary asked two GPSA students, Nikki D'Adamo and Stefan Gailans, to serve as representatives of the student body at the candidate public fora. In this role, they will interact with each candidate, pose questions, and collect input to share with other students. Nikki represents the social sciences (home department Sociology) and Stefan represents the natural sciences (home department Agronomy).

Resolved: No specific action was required nor taken.

5) Mary reported that Dick Schultz has agreed to chair the admissions committee to replace Mark Gleason, who was elected as associate chair. She observed that the term of service for the members has exceeded the recommended time limits and that it is time to rotate membership. Associated with this rotation, Mary proposed that the size of the committee be reduced. (Historically, the committee began with 8 members. Meetings have been difficult to organize at which a quorum will be present.) Mary also suggested that the committee could take a more active role in seeking faculty advisor matches for applicants.

Matt Liebman suggested that there be committee representation from the departments with the largest faculty membership, including Agronomy, Sociology, and NREM. Jerry DeWitt referred to earlier discussions relating to streamlining committee operations and recommended that there be appropriate follow up. Francis Owusu observed that it is important to establish optimal committee size: a large committee allows for wider departmental representation but complicates scheduling while a smaller committee facilitates scheduling but may not offer adequate opportunities for faculty to participate.

Mary also reported that Heidi Asbjornsen will continue serving as chair of the curriculum committee for one more year. She proposed that an associate chair be named to the committee and that this person will be groomed to make the transition to chair. Matt O'Neal was named as a possible candidate.

Mary proposed the creation of an ad hoc committee to deal with publicity and promotion. The committee would not be permanent but aim to generate some specific products that respond to the audiences named in the January 2009 retrospective and that address recruiting needs. One proposal for such a product was a standard PowerPoint presentation that could be provided to faculty who are traveling to conferences. The presentation could be prepared with varying slide counts and content, tailored to the event and audience. It was also suggested that some new print and Web media content be generated. Mark Honeyman, Lisa Schulte, Gretchen Zdorkowski, Alison Robertson, and Carmen Bain were suggested as possible members for the committee. Mary indicated that she has been in contact with students who are also interested in serving. Jerry DeWitt indicated that some assistance may be provided by the Leopold Center in the form of their student employee, who has been working on similar publicity projects.

Resolved: Mary will follow up with Dick Schultz upon his return to begin reorganization of the admissions committee. Mary will also follow up with the proposed candidates for the curriculum and publicity committees, consulting with Mark Gleason and Mike Duffy as needed.

7) ad hoc items

- Spring 2010 applicants – Mary circulated a summary spreadsheet of applicants. No action was taken.
- An initiative has been launched by Arne Hallam to create an undergraduate minor in sustainability studies. It was resolved to collect more information and, if appropriate, seek collaborative opportunities.
- Also noted was work on the creation of a minor in local food systems, with the Department of Horticulture as the lead. More information will be sought.
- Travis Cox observed that sustainability is a high-demand topic for honors courses. Opportunities for collaboration may lie in this direction.
- Jerry DeWitt proposed meeting with Merry Rankin to discuss centralization of sustainability resources on campus.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.