**Graduate Council Meeting Minutes, DRAFT**

**Thursday, February 4, 2020, Remotely with Google Meet 3:30 – 5:00 pm**

**Present:** Laura Baker, Brady Chen, Becky Copper Glenz, Petri Flint, Michael Hoberman, Megan Krell, Viera Lorencova, Amy McGlothlin, Heather Ruland, Renee Scapparone, Robert Shapiro and Deborah Stone

**Absent:** Soumitra Basu, Diane Fors, Nancy Murray, and J.J. Sylvia

**Guests:** None

**Review of minutes from December 3, 2020**

**Motion to Review:** Petri Flint

**Second:** Megan Krell

**Vote:** Approved

Viera Lorencova Abstained

**Discussion Topic – NECHE Standard 4 Committee Questions Related to**

**Graduate Studies at the University.**

**First question – How are graduate program learning outcome reviewed in your school?**

**Program Review** – There is a program review process in place at the University and this process required programs to articulated their program learning outcomes

**Program specific accreditors and programs tied to professions that require licensure often have preset required learning outcomes** – These external agencies provide the foundation and guide for learning outcomes in programs such as education, counseling, nursing and business for example.

**Some Programs Are Working with Redefining/Updating** Program Learning Outcomes

**Action Item –** Becky plans to send a request to all Graduate Chairs asking them to submit their program learning outcomes so they can be posted in the catalog and on the website. She will share copied of the learning outcomes with all Graduate Chairs once she has them so they can see how these are structured in other departments.

Graduate Curriculum Committees - The group also confirmed that all departments have a graduate curriculum committee or a designated group of faculty established for reviewing graduate programs within each department separately from undergraduate curriculum.

Renee, added that her department also includes several adjunct faculty on the graduate curriculum committee.

**Question 2 – What are some things you would like to see from SGOCE to better support scholarship and research for students and faculty?**

* Software and other related resources to support research – Nvivo, Open Access resources and other.
* Grants and other financial resources to support collaborative research between students and faculty.
* Support and incentives for interdisciplinary research and project work.
* Consider a graduate research conference on campus like we have for the undergraduate students as an aspiration.
* Consider prioritizing support for research at professional conferences and with field specific associations as a priority above a University specific research conference. The rationale is that our graduate students should be contributing to their field and seen as professionals in their community of practice so we should encourage research and scholarship at external events. This will also help with recruitment and visibility of the University.
* The 7 week online accelerated model makes it difficult to complete long-term research projects within the curriculum. Providing support for continued research would help students to conduct on-going research on specific topics leading to stronger scholarly contributions to the field.
* There needs to be a financial mechanism in place to attend conferences/travel costs and registration. Any amount would make graduate student at Fitchburg more attractive. The more we send students out to regional conferences the more visibility and recognition we bring to Fitchburg State.
* Consider that many graduate faculty are adjuncts therefore do not have time or resources to conduct research. What resources might the University provide to faculty to assist them in participating in research and scholarship?
* Graduate students also have challenges finding time outside of their coursework to participate in research and scholarship. What opportunities might we create for graduate students that have limited time. One suggestion is to have graduate students assist faculty in their scholarship and research. How can we better facilitate and promote this?
* Be more intentional about finding grant opportunities that are related to graduate level research.

**Question 3- How do we identify graduate work vs undergraduate work? How do we make sure the level of learning at the graduate level? How do departments distinguish this difference?**

**Introduction to and participation in the scholarly tradition** - For some programs, instruction at the graduate level is developed with the understanding that students already have foundational level knowledge within the discipline therefore the focus of the coursework is on creating an awareness of an understanding of how to participate in the scholarly tradition within the field. It is about going beyond the theory and description to look at a critical examination of theory and application of theory.

**Level of independent learning and higher level critical thinking and application of** learning - Other programs have students entering that do not have any prior experience in the discipline and other programs have students with varying amounts of experience and prior knowledge. In these programs graduate level work is defined by the level of independent working learning expected.

**Specialized program accreditors and external agencies guide the standards** – Specific professions like education and nursing define the levels of learning between graduate and undergraduate programs.

**Level of understanding is measured by how students apply learning in their field** – Licensure based education programs, nursing and programs like business require graduate students to participate in applied learning experiences.

**Graduate programs are designed to align with the Undergraduate program so students can progress from one level to another intentionally** - Departments work to make sure the learning between both programs is not duplicated and allows students to demonstrate ongoing progression in the field.

**Action Item** – A discussion came up regarding how departments evaluate new faculty and how to access online classrooms for observations. Becky indicated she will share a review with the chairs on the course and faculty evaluations policies/processes. Becky will also check with HR to make sure the faculty evaluation reminders are still going out.

**Question 4 – What major changes have taken place since 2012 in relation to graduate education at Fitchburg?**

The relationship with Academic Partnerships and the expansion of online accelerated learning was discussions.

The pandemic was also discussed a something that has had a major impact on education for students, faculty and staff across the University.

**Question 5 - What are your aspirations for graduate education at the University?**

* Expanding the amount of research that we do and also thinking about a summer institute that provides specialized project work or opportunities for interdisciplinary work with programs such as Criminal Justice and Nursing for example.
* Incentives and options for interdisciplinary collaborations within programming and in grant applications.
* Improve marketing and opportunities to better share the success of our students.
* Create opportunities for faculty and student scholarship and research
* Seek out more grant opportunities, explore options for matching funds and expand on grant opportunities to include both undergraduate and graduate activities.
* Options for full-time graduate faculty
* Support for the incubation of new programs and expansion of programs by exploring innovation.
* More understanding of technology and areas to enhance learning and research through technology.
* Opportunities to recognize and award adjunct faculty and also innovative instruction.

Next meeting March 4th and proposals due Feb 24th

Motion to Adjourn – Petri

Seconded Viera

**Adjournment: 4:20 pm**