Members Present: Caroline Alexander, Alex Dressler, Kristin Eschenfelder, Yu Hen Hu, William Karpus, Steffen Lempp, Lisa Martin, Christa Olson, Nicole Perna, John Pfotenhauer (arrived after approval voting), Parmesh Ramanathan, Leslie Smith III, Steph Tai, Monica Turner

Members Absent: Lara Collier, Michael Graham, Christopher Livanos, Tracy Schroepfer, Earlise Ward

Guests: Cecile Ane, Sue Babcock, Elaine Klein, Sarah Kuba, Jocelyn Milner, Mary Trotter, Eric Wilcots

Staff: Judy Bauman, Katie Block, Meghan Chua, Marty Gustafson, Michelle Holland, Emily Reynolds

Dean William Karpus called the meeting to order.

The minutes of January 12, 2018, were approved as a matter of automatic consent.

Dean Karpus introduced new GFEC member Alex Dressler.

Approvals:

1. Dean Karpus introduced Professor Cecile Ane from the Department of Botany, who presented a request to discontinue the Doctoral Minor in Biometry effective Spring 2018. Only one student has ever earned the minor and the small interdepartmental group of faculty who oversee the Biometry M.S. do not have the capacity to vitalize and maintain the doctoral minor.

Motion: Moved and seconded to discontinue the Doctoral Minor in Biometry effective Spring 2018. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Dean Karpus introduced Associate Professor Mary Trotter from the Department of English, who presented a request to approve a new Doctoral Minor in Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies effective Fall 2018. When the Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies program parted from the Department of Theatre and Drama, the doctoral minor in Theatre and Drama was not transferred. The Theater and Drama minor was recently discontinued, and this new minor will continue the long-standing practice of serving doctoral students interested in pursuing breadth in their degree by gaining advanced knowledge of theatre and performance history, theory, criticism, and theater and performance in everyday life.

Motion: Moved and seconded to approve the new Doctoral Minor in Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies effective Fall 2018. The motion passed with 1 abstention.
Program Reviews:

3. Associate Dean Parmesh Ramanathan introduced the Institutional (10-Year) Review of the Mathematics M.A./Ph.D./Doctoral Minor. Ramanathan noted the strengths of the program, including highly competitive admissions, excellent career outcomes for students, regular surveying of student climate revealing minimal issues, guaranteed four-year funding for Ph.D. students, and a strong doctoral minor program. Dean Karpus also commended the College of Letters & Science for improving opportunities for teaching assistantships for Mathematics students. Ramanathan also discussed the review committee recommendations, which included improving gender diversity among domestic students and developing a long-term strategic plan. Both the review committee and the GFEC were deeply concerned that 70 percent of students who failed the qualifying examination were women and asked that the department investigate and take action. The review committee also evaluated the M.A. named option in Foundations of Advanced Studies, and found that while the named option meets its enrollment targets, it relies on personal recruiting by its faculty director, Professor Shi Jin from four institutions in China. Professor Jin also oversees admissions, advising, and student placement, and the committee is concerned with the long-term viability of a program dependent on a single professor. Programmatic diversity was also a concern and GFEC recommends the program expand its recruiting efforts to enroll a more diverse student population to ensure this program will continue to thrive and support future initiatives. The GFEC commends the program on its strengths and recommends it engage in efforts to address the review committee’s concerns.


4. Former GFEC Member Sue Babcock introduced the Institutional (10-Year) Review of the Botany M.S./Ph.D./Doctoral Minor. Babcock noted strengths of the program, including diverse faculty and students, a time to degree well below peer institutions, strong career placement for graduates into undergraduate teaching colleges (an articulated goal of the program), a supportive climate, well-funded, productive, collaborative, highly-ranked faculty with broad expertise, spacious and well-equipped laboratories and facilities. Babcock also discussed review committee recommendations, namely a need to address disparities across tracks in the program, which show inconsistency in types of student funding, degree requirements, expectations and format for examinations, and student experience. Babcock noted the doctoral minor had only been awarded 5 times in the last 10 years, with the last award being in 2012-2013. Other recommendations include considering and clarifying the degree to which heterogeneity in the program is desirable; clarifying among the faculty expectations regarding student committee membership and responsibilities; recruiting students from institutions they consider to be their peers; and establishing a Board of Visitors for input into both direction and resources. 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 Botany M.S./Ph.D./Doctoral Minor. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Former GFEC Member Sue Babcock introduced the Institutional (10-Year) Review of the Water Resources Management M.S./Doctoral Minor. Babcock noted the strengths of the program, including its workshop for students that embodies the Wisconsin Idea, an interdisciplinary student body, production of practitioners with broad-based perspectives and real-world experience, loyal faculty, students, alumni
and employers; and a program size that allows simultaneous interdisciplinary problem-solving and individual contribution. Babcock also noted review committee recommendations, including reevaluating the advising procedures for the program, developing a comprehensive strategic plan for the next 5 – 10 years, exploring collaboration with other water and Nelson Institute programs on campus, exploring different budget models for the program, and considering forming an outside board of visitors to better connect with industry and the public sector for program guidance and workshop opportunities. 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 Water Resources Management M.S./Doctoral Minor. The motion passed with 1 abstention.

**Discussion**

6. Associate Dean Parmesh Ramanathan introduced discussion of a policy proposal for annual assessment and feedback of Graduate Students on progress towards degree. Dean Karpus noted that many programs already conduct annual assessment of students, but the practice is not uniform. In addition to seeking feedback from Directors of Graduate Study and School/College Academic Planning Councils, Associate Dean Ramanathan requested GFEC’s comments. Members noted it is important for any proposal to recognize the differences among doctoral student life experiences, academic and personal needs, and research areas that may lead to discrepancies in satisfactory progress that are acceptable. For example, they recommended using the narrower term “doctoral students” vs. “graduate students” to ensure that part-time master’s students in their third year will not be included. Members also stressed concern over increasing anxiety for graduate students. Associate Dean Lisa Martin noted that involvement of a second faculty member in assessment is an issue for some Schools/Colleges. GFEC members were very interested in learning best practices from their colleagues in other Schools/Colleges with higher annual assessment rates noted on the Graduate School’s Doctoral Exit Survey as a precursor to policy decisions.

**Adjournment**

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