Minutes/Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Executive Committee Meeting

September 9, 2011

Members present: Joe Singer, John Herron, Dianne Smith, Jim Sturgeon, Wai-Yim Ching, Charles Robinson, Deborah Smith, Virginia Blanton, Rafia Rasu, Ronald MacQuarrie (Chair), in-coming Dean Denis Medeiros, Connie Mahone (administrative support)

Excused Absences: William Black, Jeff Gorski, Deep Medhi, John Laity, Charles Wurrey

I. Meeting called to order at 2:00 p.m., with minutes of the July 8, 2011 meeting approved.

II. Introductions/Role of Committee Members
Introduction of in-coming Dean Denis Medeiros and new committee members. Ron MacQuarrie discussed the charge of the committee and an overview of the bylaws.

III. Announcements
• 37 graduates for Fall 2010, Spring 2011 and Summer 2011 (listing provided)
• 390 students currently enrolled
• 87 students admitted for Fall 2011 semester with 38 of those currently enrolled.

IV. Discussion of Site Visit Report
Ron MacQuarrie reminded members that the intent of the Site Visit is to improve program quality. Members were asked to identify those areas from the summary they felt needed to be addressed in order to improve the overall quality of the program. The following items were identified and discussed by members:

• Admissions process is too complicated (ISAO slows process down)
• Website needs to be updated so that it is clear and attractive – hire person to redesign the website
• Difficulty in finding on-line applications and supporting materials
• Need to define interdisciplinarity - should the name be changed?
• Need to talk about imbalances in program coursework and the need to facilitate more discussion between disciplines
• Is the program really interdisciplinary? Does the one size fits all work for everyone?
• Need to insure that accurate information is given
• Schedule an open meeting with all doctoral faculty to discuss program issues
• Experiences with problems in the exam process – is it interdisciplinary in disciplines?
• May be necessary to send reminders to faculty of program requirements

Further discussion ensued as to whether or not major/minor disciplines should be considered rather than coordinating and co-disciplines. Some members were of the opinion that coursework requirements/imbalances resulted in students not being competent in either field.
Since there are five discipline areas a recommendation was made to explore the development of consortiums in each area, modeled after the SSC. This model would allow the lead discipline to make admissions decisions with students entering a cohort during their first year, allowing for complete immersion in the discipline.

Recommendation that a committee put together a plan to talk with faculty and to also get feedback from discipline coordinators.

V. Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.