Dean’s Response

M.S. Manufacturing Engineering

Response from the Program Director

1. Discuss with the Department Chair possible ways to address the issue of interactivity of online classes and advising as well as the issue of communication between faculty members and students. Adopting/incorporating a D2L based chat/teleconferencing function (available - “Elluminate” software) could help. Adopting such a system may also increase the potential responsiveness of faculty/advisors to students.

While it is preferred due to the software operating within D2L, Elluminate will likely not be supported by UW-System or UW-Stout. Adobe Connect Pro shows potential and will be supported by UW-System. Our MS-Manufacturing Engineering program will use Adobe Connect Pro as directed by UW-System even though it does not function within D2L. This will not be as seamless for our students, but will at least allow online conferencing.

2. Discuss with the Department Chair the potential need for increasing the availability of classes. This potential concern is related to the lack of dedicated graduate faculty.

The Program Director discussed with the Department Chair and Associate Dean various ways of increasing availability of classes. Program size seems to be one of the main factors in course availability. As the overall program grows, more classes can be offered on a regular rotation. Additionally, a few courses may be deleted from the program to reduce the number of offerings to concentrate students in the remaining offerings. As a result of our discussion, both program enrollment projections and potentially deleting courses are on the agenda to discuss with the Program Advisory Board at the next meeting. If the board agrees, the program will set new enrollment goals and delete courses as needed. These two actions together will improve availability of classes in the future.

Response from the Chair

1. Discuss with the Program Director possible ways to address the issue of interactivity of online classes and advising. Adopting/incorporating a D2L based chat/teleconferencing function (available – “Elluminate” software) could help. Adopting such a system may also increase the potential responsiveness of faculty/advisors to students.

The program director and I have discussed this issue. It was agreed that we would try to utilize software supported by the university where possible. If no appropriate software was available, the program director will identify other software tools to support interactivity.
2. Facilitate the process of incorporating more (dedicated) graduate faculty in the program. This should also help with the issue of class availability.

   The program is currently has insufficient enrollments to support dedicated 131 “soft” money supported positions. The program will be reviewing possible program revisions to reduce total number of courses and thus increase average course enrollment.

3. Discuss with the Dean the possibility of increasing faculty compensation.

   While compensation increases are needed, current budgets preclude this option. Compensation for field project advisement is recommended.

4. Discuss with the Dean the possibility of increasing tuition. Note that the Program Director reported that this is part of an ongoing discussion between the Program Director and the Dean.

   It is recommend to the Dean to authorize a tuition increase. This issue will be discussed by the program advisory board.

Response from the Dean

1. Facilitate the process of incorporating more (dedicated) graduate faculty in the program. This should also help with the issue of class availability.

   The MS in Manufacturing Engineering has a customized instruction tuition structure. The number of faculty hired to teach in the program is based on revenue generated from tuition. When sufficient students are enrolled to generate a stable revenue it would naturally follow that more instructors would primarily teach for the program.

2. Discuss with the Department Chair the possibility of increasing faculty compensation. Note that the Program Director reported that this is part of an ongoing discussion between the Program Director and the Dean.

   The topic was discussed with the program director and department chair. The current salary offered to faculty teaching courses in the MS MfgE program have consistently been at the high end of the rate paid to faculty teaching online courses. I don’t foresee this increasing in the coming months.

3. Discuss with the Department Chair the possibility of increasing tuition.

   The program director has been requested to start a review of comparable online graduate programs. It is anticipated the study will be completed this summer. After review a recommendation will be made to the Provost.