

**Graduate Council
Mississippi State University**

Number: 8

Date: April 27, 2007

Present: J. Boyle, R. Burrell (for R. King), T. Chamblee, L. Cossman, E. Dibble (for D. Jackson), C. Forde Cynthia Hill (for S. Nobles), T. Hosie, , K. Lee, S. Morris, P. Rabideau, D. Reynolds, R. Shivaji, F. Sparks, B. Spencer, T. Swann (for M. Binkley), P. Sullivan, J. To, M. Thomas (for C. Matherne), S. Willard, N. Younan

Absent: H. Bailey, L. Barrow, Phil Bonfanti, F. Coleman, J. Gilbert, W. Person, K. Schulz, R. Taylor, D. Wise

1. Dr. Barbara Spencer called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. in 611 Allen Hall.
2. Dr. Spencer asked for any revisions to the minutes (March 23, 2007).

Motion was made by Dr. John Boyle and seconded by Dr. Lynne Cossman to accept the minutes.

Minutes were approved.

3. Report from Graduate Studies (OGS)

Dr. William Person was not present. In his absence, Dr. Spencer distributed a written report submitted by Dr. Person with the following information:

- a) Thirty-eight highly talented juniors and seniors from Mississippi and its contiguous states participated in the AGEM 2nd Annual IMPETUS-PGE Super Recruitment Weekend on April 13 and 14, 2007. These participants were from institutions such as Mississippi University for Women, Rust College, Jackson State University, Mississippi Valley State University, Delta State University, Alcorn State University, and the University of West Alabama. Our preliminary evaluations indicated that all aspects of the IMPETUS-PGE program, including the Graduate Research Information Fair and the Graduate Student Panel, were very successful and beneficial to the participants. Three MSU Doctoral Graduates; Dr. Sharron Herron, 1995 Public Policy and Administration; Dr. Noland Boyd, 1999 Chemistry; and Dr. William McHenry, 1977 Chemistry; as well as Dr. Howard Adams presented information to the participants. A luncheon concluded the event with guest speaker Dr. Peter Rabideau.
- b) A total of 344 graduate students have applied for May graduation; of that number 272 are master's, 11 are educational specialist, and 61 are doctoral degree candidates. Fifty-one (51) of the doctoral students who applied for graduation

have submitted their dissertation to the library for final review; therefore, we fully expect to have the 100 doctoral degrees awarded this year needed to restore our SREB Level I status.

- c) The Graduate Student Association officers for the 2007-2008 academic year have been slated. We will hold a transitional meeting with the new and old officers in the latter part of May.
- d) Please be reminded that the dates for our International Teaching Assistant (ITA) and General Teaching Assistant (GTA) workshops are August 6 – 10 and August 13-14, 2007 respectively. The ITA workshop will be held in Allen Hall, and the GTA workshop will be in McCool Hall. Our New Graduate Student Orientation has been scheduled for Wednesday, August 15, 2007, at 11:45 a.m.

4. Report from Graduate Student Association (GSA)

GSA President Mr. Curtis Matherne was not present. In his absence, Mr. Mark Thomas, Vice President of GSA, presented the following report:

The GSA held its final monthly meeting for the 2006-2007 academic year on March 29, 2007. In this meeting, we entertained questions/concerns for the upcoming events.

Here is a summary of the GSA Research Symposium: March 30, 2007:

Total Participants	Oral presentations break down as follows:
45 oral presentations	19 life sciences
<u>23 poster presentations</u>	21 physical sciences
68 participants	<u>5 social sciences</u>
	45 participants

Poster presentations break down as follows:

9 life sciences
8 physical sciences
6 social sciences
23 participants

GSA Research Symposium Winners::

First place in each category received a \$100 award and a framed certificate.

Second and third places received a framed certificate.

Life Sciences

Oral: 1) Daniel Sykes
2) Teresia Buza
3) Bonnie Wells

Poster: 1) Nelida Rodriguez-Osorio
2) Divyaswetha Peddinit
3) Kristie Manning

Physical Sciences

- Oral: 1) Vijitha Mohan
2) Amrit'anshu Thakur
3) John Ball
Poster: 1) Jutima Simsiriwong
2) Peerawan Wiwattananon
3) Travis Puzz

Social Sciences

- Oral: 1) Patrick Lach
2) Tinukwa C. Okojie-Boulder & Heshium Lawrence
3) Ashley Walker
Poster: 1) Meagan Medley
2) Jessica Wood
3) Heather Wolf

GSA Awards Banquet: April 17, 2007

- Total Nominations for Graduate Assistant of the Year Awards:
4 Nominations for the Donald Zacharias Master's Teaching Assistant of the Year
4 Nominations for the Donald Zacharias Doctoral Teaching Assistant of the Year
5 Nominations for the Master's Research Assistant of the Year
6 Nominations for the Doctoral Research Assistant of the Year
2 Nominations for Service Assistant of the Year

Graduate Assistants of the Year Recipients Received:

The recipient of each category received \$250 and a plaque. All nominees were recognized and received a framed certificate.

Donald Zacharias Teaching Assistant Awards:

Donald Zacharias Master's Teaching Assistant of the Year: Robert Banik
Donald Zacharias Doctoral Teaching Assistant of the Year: Zachary Williams

Research Assistant Awards:

Master's Research Assistant of the Year: Lucas C. Majure
Doctoral Research Assistant of the Year: Erick Chang

Service Assistant Award:

Service Assistant of the Year: Thomas C. Henry

We formally recognized Dr. John Boyle who is retiring this year from MSU for his outstanding commitment to quality graduate education.

New GSA Officers for the 2007-2008 academic year were sworn in:

President: Mark Thomas
Vice President: Terrence West
Secretary: Talisha Moore

Treasurer: Beth Rauhaus

Dr. Spencer commented that the Graduate Student Banquet was very nice and suggested that the winners of the awards be posted on the MSU website as well as on the GSA and Graduate Studies websites.

4. UCCC Proposal – Master of Science in Agriculture
(non-thesis option)

A copy of the Degree Program Proposal was passed around. Dr. Scott Willard and Dr. Tim Chamblee explained the details and need of the proposed non-thesis master's degree program. The non-thesis program will require the completion of 30 hours course credit that will include specific core courses offered by the Department of Animal & Dairy Sciences, the preparation and submission of a scholarly paper (topic to be chosen by the student in consultation with the Graduate Advisory Committee) and the completion of a comprehensive oral exam on course work. The program is aimed at professionals in the Animal Agriculture and Extension Sector.

Ms. Rita Burrell, Manager of Graduate and Distance Education in the Bagley College of Engineering, added that a sentence regarding the requirement of completing at least 15 hours at the 8000-level should be included in the proposal.

Dr. Tom Hosie made a motion to accept the new degree program of Master of Science in Agriculture (non-thesis option). Dr. Boyle seconded the motion.

The addition of the Master of Science in Agriculture (non-thesis option) was approved.

5. Old Business

a) Graduate Dean Search Update

Dr. Spencer asked the Provost, Dr. Peter Rabideau, to speak regarding the search.

Dr. Rabideau stated that he has not yet received anything from the Search Committee but is expecting their recommendation very shortly. President Foglesong has not yet met with the candidates but those meetings are still on schedule. The next step will be for Dr. Rabideau to review the Search Committee's recommendations and for President Foglesong to meet with the candidates.

b) Survey to Pre-test Electronic Application (handout)

Dr. Spencer stated that the survey results for the electronic application did go out and some responses were received. She stated that the biggest issue for many was that the concentrations did not show and one could not apply to a particular

concentration within a major. Dr. Spencer said that there seems to be a problem since these concentrations are not listed with Banner rules. The Registrar's Office is still looking into this problem.

Dr. Spencer urged everyone to take a look at their programs as they are listed on the electronic application to ensure that the information reflects what departments want listed.

Dr. Spencer stated that the subcommittee consisting of herself, Dr. Dwayne Wise and Dr. John Boyle did not yet meet due to time constraints, but the meeting is still scheduled for a future date. Dr. Boyle stated that Forest Sparks had already addressed most of the issues. Forest stated that Dr. Person had not been able to set up a meeting to discuss the other issues yet.

c) Thesis/Dissertation Policy for Distance Students (2 handouts)

Dr. Spencer stated that a thesis/dissertation policy statement and a form to certify off-campus research facilities was drafted by herself, Dr. Roger King and Ms. Burrell, and asked Graduate Council to review both documents, beginning with the policy statement.

Discussion ensued regarding the availability of library resources, such as workshops for distance students. Ms. Burrell stated a committee consisting of herself and Dr. Deborah Lee of Mitchell Memorial Library will be formed to insure that Library services are converted to include Distance Learning and create a workshop that can be delivered to distance students through the Library.

Mr. Mark Thomas raised a question regarding the supervision of the research, especially when it comes to IRB approval.

Dr. Spencer stated that it is the job of the student's committee to supervise the research. Distance students must comply with the same policies and steps as students on campus; they must prepare research proposals and they must present their proposals when they meet with their committees, though the means of meeting may be moderated by technology. IRB training is available online.

Dr. Nick Younan further explained that examinations in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering are currently handled the same way. The responsibility for determining the acceptable manner of conducting research ultimately lies with the student's committee.

Dr. Rabideau reminded Graduate Council that the doctoral distance program proposed by the College of Engineering heavily relies on the cooperation with another institution where a faculty member from that institution would closely supervise research.

Dr. Rabideau raised the question of whether it would and/or should be possible for a student to obtain a doctoral degree from Mississippi State University without ever having set foot on this campus, do everything electronically. He explained that a general University position is needed to find out whether a scenario as mentioned above is acceptable, and to ascertain views on this matter from the faculty. Seemingly, there are very diverse opinions on distance education by the faculty.

Dr. Spencer agreed that there is a large diversity of opinion and that this issue will be dealt with program by program. In this case, the Bagley College of Engineering has researched the sites carefully. However, the draft of the policy statement was written very carefully that it should not matter whether a research site has been identified. The policy states very clearly that the student must follow his or her committee's guidance in their research.

Dr. Spencer pointed out that presently there are many doctoral students who are ABD (All But Dissertation) and they are completing their research off campus. We as faculty work with them and we feel good about the results. How would a distance program be any different?

Discussion followed whether every program needs to have language concerning distance learning and theses/dissertations, even if they don't offer one. It was determined that only departments who offer distance programs need to include language regarding research hours via distance education. Some programs may never offer distance learning options.

Dr. Spencer reiterated that the proposed policy draft will serve as a template for future language to be included in the Graduate Bulletin.

Dr. Rabideau added that the Graduate Dean's approval should be included as a central authority as part of the reporting structure. Graduate Council agreed that an approval line for the Graduate Dean's signature will be required for the thesis/dissertation approval form.

Dr. Spencer stated that the last line in the draft of the Policy – Research (8000/9000) Hours via Distance should be modified from:

At the departmental level, specific language regarding delivery of research/thesis or dissertation hours via distance learning must be provided students in a published format (policy handbooks for approved distance graduate programs, website, etc.).

To:

Any department offering such a distance program must include specific language regarding delivery of research/thesis or dissertation hours via distance

learning to be provided to students in a published format (policy handbooks for approved distance graduate programs, website, etc.).

Motion was made by Dr. Younan to accept the policy draft for the thesis/dissertation policy statement, seconded by Dr. Boyle.

The policy was unanimously accepted with the above mentioned modification.

Dr. Spencer asked Graduate Council to review the proposed form to certify off-campus research facilities. She stated that a signature line for the Graduate Dean has already been added.

Discussion followed. It was determined that the title of the form should be modified to read “*Certification of Off-Campus/Non-MSU Research Facilities for Distance Students.*”

Graduate Council modified the text within the certification form as follows:

_____)MSU Id # XXX-XXX-XXX), a master’s/educational specialist/doctoral student in the _____ Program requests approval to conduct his/her thesis/dissertation research at _____, an off-campus/non-MSU research site. Justification for the request and a description facility is provided below or on an attached page.

(Space for description)

The previously noted facility meets research and security requirements and is available for use to allow completion of the research in a timely manner.

It was also determined that a signature line for the Graduate Coordinator should be added as well.

Motion was made by Mr. Thomas to accept the Certification of Off-Campus/Non-MSU Research Facilities for Distance Students form. Dr. Younan seconded the motion.

Graduate Council voted to approve the form with modifications.

6. New Business

a) Course transfers for International Graduate Students

Dr. Spencer alerted Graduate Council that the current policy in place may not be conducive to MSU's goal to become a more international university. The current MSU policy (Registrar's Office) states that transfer courses from international universities/colleges can be transferred only as S grades to MSU. However, graduate student policy (current Graduate Bulletin, Pg. 56) does not allow for transfer of anything but letter grades.

The current graduate student policy was put into place because of ACE credit and certificates.

Graduate Council discovered that the line "Courses in which grades of C or lower were earned or grades of Pass/Fail or S/U are not accepted for transfer" was left off the transfer item under the Educational Specialist listing in the current Graduate Bulletin. The error will be corrected in the next edition of the Graduate Bulletin and language will be standardized for all degrees.

The current policy severely restricts MSU in recruiting international graduate students. Discussion ensued regarding the problems that may occur if the policy is changed, especially when it comes to interpreting foreign transcripts.

Dr. Spencer asked Graduate Council to take a closer look at the Transfer Policy for Graduate Students. She proposed to assign her Distance MBA Students a research project of looking at transfer policies at peer institutions. Dr. Spencer further suggested that a subcommittee be formed which will be charged with evaluating the findings of the students and prepare material for presentation to Graduate Council.

Dr. Ratnasingham Shivaji, Ms. Burrell, Mr. Thomas and Dr. Tom Hosie agreed to serve on the subcommittee on transfer policy with Dr. Spencer. The subcommittee will meet in late August to discuss the issue.

b) Graduate Council formally bid farewell to Dr. Boyle. Dr. Spencer mentioned that Dr. Boyle was the first Chair of Graduate Council and that he had held that post for five years.

Mr. Thomas made a motion that Graduate Council officially thank Dr. Boyle. Dr. Spencer seconded the motion.

Graduate Council formally and officially thanked Dr. Boyle for his outstanding service and bid him farewell.

Dr. Rabideau shared the following information with Graduate Council:

IHL has identified a number of degree programs that may be in jeopardy due to low degree production. Programs must be put on probation for one year before they can be deleted. The numbers are counted from 2001. IHL stipulates that 18 graduates at the Master's level over the course of six years is considered satisfactory.

Workforce Education Leadership (1999) - 1 MS
 Community College Instruction (2004) – 4 MS
 Secondary Teacher Education, Alternate Route (2000) – 4 MS
 Applied Anthropology (2000) – 6 MS
 Landscape Architecture (2000) – 9 MS
 Biomedical Engineering – 11 MS
 Biological Engineering – 12 MS
 Economics – 12 MS
 Entomology and Plant Pathology (2004) – 16 MS
 Electronic Visualization – 16 MS
 Political Science – 17 MS

At the doctoral level, IHL stipulates that 9 graduates over the course of six years are considered satisfactory.

Cognitive Sciences (1998) – 1 Ph.D.
 Dr. Rabideau stated that this program was not put on probation for one year previously. He stated that a program must be put on probation for one year before deleting it.

Curriculum and Instruction – 2 Ph.D.
 Biomedical Engineering – 2 Ph.D.
 Applied Economics – 2 Ph.D.
 Counselor Education, Student Counseling and Guidance Services – 3 Ph.D.
 Environmental Toxicology – 4 Ph.D.
 Mathematics – 6 Ph.D.
 Computer Science – 6 Ph.D.
 Vet. Med. Science – 8 Ph.D.

Dr. Rabideau stated the previously mentioned programs are being closely watched and they are “yellow-lined.” MSU must report on all those programs on June 15. He further stated that some programs may be alright because they have embedded Master's programs. Ms. Burrell added that some of these programs may be saved through umbrella programs with concentrations like Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

The next Graduate Council meeting to be held on May 11, 2007, at 1:30 p.m., in the Conference Room at 611 Allen Hall was cancelled. A special luncheon meeting on Monday, May 14, 2007, at noon in 208-A McCool Hall will be held to review items sent forward by the University Committee on Courses and Curricula.