

Graduate Council

Number: 1

Date: August 27, 2004

Present: L. Ballweber, L. Barrow, P. Bonfanti, J. Boyle, S. Bridges, R. Burrell, L. Calude, F. Coleman, L. Crittenden, L. D'Abramo, C. Dill (for D. Wolfe), G. Dunaway, C. Forde, J. Gilbert, T. Hosie, W. Person, J. Pote, L. Reinschmiedt, R. Shivaji, B. Spencer, D. Wise.

Absent: M. Binkley, S. Byrd, and C. Scanes.

(Please note the audiotape of this meeting was inadvertently omitted.)

1. Dr. Tom Hosie called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. in 611 Allen, asking each member to introduce him or herself.

Dr. Hosie asked the Council members to review the minutes, Dr. John Boyle made the motion to accept the minutes from the May 14, 2004, meeting. Dr. Lynn Reinschmiedt seconded the motion. Motion carried.

2. Report from Office of Graduate Studies

- a. Dr. William Person announced the addition of Ms. Pam Sullivan, Graduate Program Assistant, to the Office of Graduate Studies. Ms. Sullivan will be responsible for updating the Graduate Bulletin, maintaining the Graduate Faculty database, working with ESL students, and assisting with the audit process.
- b. The number of graduate degrees awarded for summer 2004: 319 at the Master's level; 19 at the Education Specialist level; and 28 at the doctoral level. Dr. Person noted degrees awarded for summer 2003: 342 at the Master's level; 25 at the Education Specialist level; and 19 at the doctoral level.
- c. The International Graduate Teaching Assistant Workshop was held August 2 -9, 2004, with 89 participants. Seventy students passed the workshop and 19 students failed. The General Teaching Assistant Workshop was held August 11-12, 2004, with 235 participants. Of this number, 196 students passed the workshop and 39 students failed.
- d. The Alliance for Graduate Education in Mississippi (AGEM) Summer Graduate Bridge Program, partially funded by NSF, was held July 7 – August 6, 2004, with four participants in the program. In conjunction with the Bridge Program, OGS conducted a two-hour mentoring workshop for graduate faculty and staff for approximately 20 participants.
- e. The International Student Office (ISO) and the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) jointly sponsored the New Graduate Student Orientation August 13, 2004. The program opened

with a welcome luncheon hosted by the Graduate Student Association in the East Skybox at the Football Stadium. Approximately 150 students participated.

- f. Graduate student enrollment on the main campus as of August 27, 2004, (8th class day) is 2,876. Our final fall 2003 enrollment was 3,108.
- g. Dr. Jonathan Pote and Dr. Person have scheduled a special meeting with the Graduate Coordinators on Monday, September 20, 2004, at 3:00 p.m. in the Union Small Auditorium.
- h. Dr. Pote and Dr. Person are working on a Ph.D. completion proposal to the Council of Graduate Schools for tracking the matriculation of doctoral students. This program would allow our institution to create a data management system to assist us with both short-range and long-range planning for graduate education.
- i. Discussion followed regarding reporting lines. Dr. Person stated he reports to the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies regarding general administration issues and to the Provost for academic issues. The Graduate Council reports to the Provost for Academic Affairs.

3. Report from Graduate Student Association

- a. Ms. Lakiesha Claude gave the report for the Graduate Student Association. The GSA will hold its first meeting September 8, 2004, at 5:30 p.m. in McCool 125. Dr. Jerry Gilbert will be the guest speaker. The GSA held its fall function August 13, 2004, at 5:00 p.m. on the drill field with 100 students in attendance.
- b. The GSA is planning social events for International and Domestic students to include food and intramural sports.
- c. The GSA sent an email July 26, 2004 seeking department representatives to increase activity at the monthly meetings.

4. Old Business

- a. Dr. Hosie called on the committee reviewing the Modification of Graduate Bulletin and "Graduate Not Good Standing." Dr. Barbara Spencer reported the committee has developed a Petition for Recalculation of Graduate GPA form with input from Mr. Butch Stokes, University Registrar. The policy for Recalculation of Graduate GPA was proposed as follows:

Graduate students may petition to have specific course grades eliminated from the calculation of their overall MSU grade point average. This may occur because the student has changed from one program to another, or because a student initiated graduate study at MSU in the past without completing a degree. In such cases, specific courses may be flagged by the registrar and will not count toward the

*overall GPA. This decision must be approved by the student's **current major professor** (academic advisor), graduate coordinator or department head, and dean.*

The Graduate Council will establish a standing subcommittee to oversee this process. This group will review cases as needed in the following situations: (1) The Registrar believes that policy is not being followed correctly; or (2) The student cannot secure the needed signatures and wishes to appeal.

Discussion followed. Dr. Dwayne Wise suggested the term *academic advisor* be changed to **current major professor**. Discussion followed. Dr. Boyle suggested the Council look into what other universities are doing. Dr. Hosie will contact Butch Stokes and Ms. Rita Burrell will check MSU's peer institutions: Dr. Hosie informed the Council that this issue would be the first issue at the September 24, 2004, meeting. (See attachment No. 2)

5. New Business

- a. Dr. Hosie referred the Council members to an email sent from Dr. Alex Thomasson, Associate Professor and Graduate Coordinator for Biological Engineering, regarding students pursuing the thesis option (minimum of 24 hours) who are usually restricted to 8000-level courses beyond the minimum and have it apply to their course of study. Dr. Thomasson recommended the requirement that 50% of the minimum requirement be 8000-level or higher. Discussion followed.

Dr. Hosie referred the Council to the Summary of Graduate Council Activities for 2003-2004, "Policy Recommendations Approved by the Council." (Item 3).

The Council recommended requiring at least 15 credit hours of 8000 level coursework for a non-thesis master's program or 50% of coursework at the 8000 level for a thesis master's program (April 23, 2004).

It was suggested that additional coursework did need not be included on the program of study.

The Council did not vote.

- b. Dr. Jonathan Pote addressed the Council regarding feedback on the status of graduate education at MSU. He noted we are looking for ideas regarding changes that should be made and solutions that should be implemented. He further noted that we would be meeting with the Graduate Coordinators on September 20, 2004, to receive similar feedback. Several Council members made the following suggestions: Responsibilities of Graduate Coordinators in the departments, common duties and responsibilities; decentralization; electronic thesis/dissertations; quality control by the Deans; Admissions (distance education and continuing education).

- c. Dr. Phil Bonfanti addressed the Council regarding the new SEVIS (Student Exchange and Visitor Information System) Fee requirement for F-1 students, as well as, the status of International Student Enrollment. (Attachment No. 3).

The new SEVIS fee will be implemented by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) beginning September 1, 2004. This rule requires F-1 and J-1 visa applicants to pay a one-time fee of \$100 to supplement the administration and maintenance costs of the (SEVIS). Dr. Bonfanti noted that this would delay the Visa process, affecting students who will be applying for admissions for spring 2005. Ms. Cheryl Dill, Office of Admissions, explained the admission deferral process. Discussion followed. (Attachment No. 1)

The Council recommended that out of state and international students be entitled to a deferral of admission for one calendar year (12 months) without issuance of additional admission fees. Dr. Bridges made the motion to accept the recommendation. There was no further discussion. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.