

Graduate Council Minutes
Mississippi State University
2001-2002

NUMBER: 2

DATE: September 28, 2001

PRESENT: John Boyle, Chair; S. Bullington; F. Coleman; D. Hare; R. Harkess; T. Hosie; R. Jenkins; A. Pearson for E. Milam; K. Paul; W. Person; L. Reinschmeidt; G. Rent; R. Shivaji; C. Sides; S. Thrower; A. Arnizaut for S. Watson; C. Wang; D. Wolf; D. Welch; and Jimmie Wesley.

ABSENT: R. Altenkirch, G. Dunaway, J. Miller, B. Spencer, S. Schoenholtz, and C. Taylor.

1. Dr. John Boyle called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. in room 611 Allen Hall.
2. The minutes of the August 24, 2001 meeting of the Graduate Council were considered. A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to approve the minutes.
3. There was no report from the University Committee on Courses and Curricula.
4. Dr. William A. Person's report from the Office of Graduate Studies included the following:
 - Ms. Shurunda Thrower has been employed in the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) as a part-time Administrative Assistant I. Ms. Thrower is a faculty member on leave from the University of Arkansas, at Pine Bluff to pursue her Ph.D. in sociology here, at MSU.
 - There are three active subcommittees deliberating on appeals of academic status.
 - Dr. Person participated in a graduate fair at Lambuth University in Jackson, Tennessee on September 26-27, 2001. Several departments will be receiving referrals of prospective students from that fair. Dr. Person has also communicated with Lane College in Jackson, Tennessee, and the Dean of Natural Sciences at Dillard University in New Orleans to identify outstanding students to participate in Mississippi State University's Science, Mathematics, and Engineering programs (SMET).
 - Requests for proposals for the Recruitment Assistance Grants (RAG) Program were sent to departments during the first week of September and are due to the Office of Graduate Studies on October 15, 2001. Dr. Person requested that Graduate Council members encourage their departments to apply for the funds.

The awards range from \$400-\$600 and are used for the recruitment of graduate students. Early next week, a reminder of these deadlines will be sent out to department heads and graduate coordinators.

5. Ms. Ana Arnizaut, Treasurer of the Graduate Student Association (GSA) reported that several departments still need to select one representative and one alternate to the Graduate Student Council. On September 15, 2001, the GSA hosted their second annual Fall Function, and the event was a success. Forty-six students attended and over \$100 was collected for the American Red Cross. Two graduate students from the GSA are now serving on the student senate, representing graduate students. The next GSA meeting, to be held on Wednesday, October 17, 2001 at 5 p.m. in 130 McCool Hall, has been designated "bring a friend day." The 2001-2002 Officers of the GSA are Stevie Watson, President; John Dee Perkins, Vice President; Michele Williams, Secretary; Ana Arnizaut, Treasurer. Ms. Arnizaut distributed a copy of her report to the Council members.
6. As an item of old business Dr. Boyle requested Ms. Frances Coleman, Dean of University Libraries report to the Council on the status of the Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Dean Coleman reported that over the last year there were 21 Electronic Theses and Dissertations submitted. Dean Coleman encouraged other colleges and schools to pursue this method. It was decided that the graduate coordinator or major professor (not the department head) would write a letter to Dean Coleman, listing the students who will be submitting their documents electronically. Dean Coleman requested that the Office of Graduate Studies update the *Guidelines to Dissertations and Theses* to include the URL where the guidelines for electronic submission of theses and dissertations are published.
7. Dr. George Rent gave an updated report on the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) policy on residency requirement. In the proposed SACS criteria no residency is required; however, the current SACS criteria states a residency requirement is necessary for doctoral programs. Dr. Rent spoke with Jack Allen, Administrator of SACS, in Atlanta, Georgia who affirmed the current policy. The only program that is involved in this issue is the distance learning Engineering program located at the Stennis Center. Because the Stennis Center is an approved site it should contain all things needed to fill the residency requirement for students taking classes there. Dr. Rent suggested that the Council revise MSU's existing residency requirement, to be consistent with SACS policy. Council members are to bring a proposed requirement to the next meeting for consideration.
8. Dr. Boyle requested that the Council consider general course requirements for majors in master's degree programs. The 2001-2002 *Bulletin* states (p.39) that "A student is required to complete a minimum of 18-21 hours and may be permitted to enroll in another area, a minor, to satisfy the remaining credit hours." Several suggestions and points were made. It was decided that Dr. Boyle would write a proposal and present it at the next meeting.

9. Dr. Boyle requested that the Council consider course level requirements for master's degree programs. The 2001-2002 *Bulletin* states (p.39) that "[o]ne-half or more of the program, exclusive of thesis credits, must be made up of courses at the 8000 and 9000 levels." Dr. Boyle stated that there are no course level requirements for doctoral programs; however, it is assumed that doctoral programs would be composed of upper level courses. It was pointed out that departments may use up to six hours of Directed Independent Study (DIS) to meet the 8000 level course requirements which satisfied the Council's concern regarding this issue.
10. Dr. Boyle informed the Council that at the request of Dr. David Cole, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, he and Dr. Rent have been meeting with the Academic Deans to discuss the renewed emphasis on graduate education. Dr. Boyle stated that this issue will be discussed at the next Council meeting and that members should be prepared to present suggestions for mechanisms designed to improve the quality of graduate education. Dr. Rent stated that graduate student enrollment should comprise at least 20% of a research institution's total enrollment. MSU's graduate enrollment is currently 19% of its total enrollment. Dr. Boyle indicated that he would give a detailed report of the meetings he and Dr. Rent have had with the deans as soon as they have concluded.
11. The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.