

**Graduate Council
Mississippi State University**

Number: 2

Date: September 23, 2005

Present: E. Bergiel, L. Bonner, J. Boyle, R. Burrell, T. Chamblee, L. Crittenden, L. D'Abramo, C. Forde, T. Hosie, D. Martin, W. Person, D. Reynolds, C. Scanes, R. Shivaji, C. Sides, F. Sparks, B. Spencer, P. Sullivan, D. Wise, N. Younan

Absent: L. Ballweber, L. Barrow, P. Bonfanti, F. Coleman, G. Dunaway, J. Gilbert, S. Nobles, R. Taylor, S. Willard

1. Dr. Tom Hosie called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. in Conference Room 611 Allen Hall.
2. Dr. Hosie asked for any revisions of the minutes (August 26, 2005). On a motion by Dr. John Boyle and second by Dr. Lou D'Abramo, the minutes were approved as distributed.
3. UCCC Report

No report
4. Report from the Office of Graduate Studies
 - a. Dr. William Person reported that the official graduate enrollment for academic year 2005-2006 on the 10th/12th day was 3,289, an increase of 81 graduate students (2.5%).
 - b. Dr. Person reported that of the 185 graduate students who participated in the General T.A. Workshop, 168 passed, 17 failed.
 - c. Dr. Person reported that 13 graduate students were admitted due to displacement by Hurricane Katrina. All except one student was enrolled by September 16, 2005.
 - d. Dr. Person reported that he visited the Tougaloo College campus on September 16, 2005 to participate in their Graduate Professional School Conference. He met with 48 undergraduate students; many of the students showed interest in continuing their education at MSU. Most of the students were interested in Computer Science or Biological Sciences.
 - e. Dr. Person reported that the research projects of 18 graduate students were affected by Hurricane Katrina; most of the research projects were in Engineering, Veterinary Medicine, and Forest Resources.

- f. Dr. Person reported that OGS received a second no-cost extension for GAANN funding amounting to \$400,000 in the discipline areas of chemistry and engineering -physics. New GAANN proposals are due November 14, 2005.
- g. Dr. Person reported on the proposed electronic submission of graduate applications process. Ms. Rita Burrell and he have met with ITS concerning this process which will be implemented in stages after Banner 7 is in place in November 2005. The first implementation will be a checklist by which applicants can monitor their application status.

5. Report from Graduate Student Association

Mr. Erich Bergiel informed the Council that the first GSA meeting was held on September 22. Concerns of the students include student health insurance, increase in assistantships, library hours, and fees. The GSA travel budget is \$2,000.00. GSA travel award assistance to graduate students will be up to \$200.00 this year. The organization would like to do more but has limited funds. GSA has been informed that they will receive \$10,000.00 for the annual budget. Mr. Bergiel noted that GSA will explore information about access to the City of Starkville's restaurant food tax money and what happened to the money they were suppose to receive.

6. Old Business

- a. Transfer of hours relative to minors

Dr. Hosie asked if the Council would like to make a motion to discuss changing the policy.

Dr. Lou D'Abramo made the motion to bring back to the table for discussion the policy concerning minors. Dr. Dwayne Wise seconded the motion.

Dr. Dwayne Wise made a motion to maintain current policy. Dr. D'Abramo seconded the motion.

Discussion followed.

Ms. Rita Burrell gave the history of the "transfer of hours relative to minors" issue.

Dr. Hosie said that the Council seems to have consensus to go another direction. He called for a vote on the motion to maintain the current policy not to accept transfer credit from other institutions.

The motion did not carry.

Dr. John Boyle made a motion to adjust the current policy concerning minors

to allow for the transfer of up to 1/3 of the requirements (i.e., a minimum of 9 hours for a minor at the master's level or a minimum of 12 hours at the doctoral level). The hours transferred must be current.

Dr. Wise seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

- b. Comprehensive preliminary examination and final defense of dissertation – what constitutes a pass/fail.
 1. Dr. Boyle noted that most departments tend to use a simple majority. He asked if that is sufficient or if we want to be more stringent. The opportunity should be provided for a committee member to cast a negative vote.
 2. Dr. Colin Scanes noted that it would be disconcerting for a student to know s/he passed by 3/2 vote and said a 2/3 majority does have advantages. Dr. Scanes noted that Dr. Boyle had suggested a pass would require the vote of a super majority or 2/3 of committee members as opposed to a unanimous vote.
 3. Dr. Boyle noted that there are two results at hand here: 1) the minimum vote to pass and 2) one negative vote cannot prevent passing.
 4. A motion was made by Dr. D'Abramo that a vote of not less than 2/3 constitutes pass. One vote does not fail. Dr. Ratnasingham Shivaji seconded the motion. Discussion followed. One vote cannot be used to prevent passing an examination or defense. Dr. D'Abramo moved a substitute motion that no more than one dissenting vote is allowed for a pass regardless of the size of the committee. The motion was seconded by Dr. Wise. Motion carried with one dissension. It was noted that this policy applies to both the examination and defense.
 5. Dr. Boyle asked if we should stem the tide of programs that want a unanimous vote. He moved to prevent that veto if it could prevent a person from passing. Dr. Person informed that Council that Sociology uses a veto; that program requires a unanimous vote at every step. Dr. Barbara Spencer asked if the Council could or should discuss an issue that affects Sociology with no one from that department present. Dr. Scanes suggested tabling discussion to allow Sociology Department's input.
 6. Dr. Wise moved to table the motion to next month's Graduate Council meeting in order to consider the matter with representation from the Sociology Department present. Dr. Barbara Spencer seconded the motion. Motion carried. Dr. Hosie agreed to contact Sociology Department.
 7. Subcommittee of the Graduate Council Report on Reviewing the Academic

Dismissal Policy and Current Procedures Utilized in the Academic Dismissal Process

Dr. John Boyle presented the report to the Council. Current academic dismissal policy allows students to appeal academic dismissal. Several problems with the process have been identified and include:

- 1) although policy allows student to repeat one course per degree (with approval of the graduate coordinator and college dean), many students have not been afforded the opportunity to take advantage of this opportunity;
- 2) students receive notification of intent to dismiss prior to dean's approval;
- 3) students' schedules are often not canceled following dismissal;
- 4) the process is fairly lengthy and does not allow students to appeal and receive a decision in a timely manner;
- 5) the length of the process affects international students' eligibility to be in the U.S.

The subcommittee presented the following recommendation:

Request that the Office of the Registrar generate a report each semester that flags all graduate students who receive grade(s) of C or lower and U. This list should reflect only the previous semester and not a cumulative report. This list will be sent to the respective dean who will review and distribute the information to the appropriate graduate coordinator. The report should be generated at the close of the semester so that information may be distributed in a timely manner.

The subcommittee proposed the following changes to existing policy:

After review by the graduate coordinator and in conjunction with the respective dean, the student will be placed on probationary status in the next regular semester following the unsatisfactory academic performance semester. Specific information relative to repeating courses or completing remedial work will be outlined by the appropriate academic advisor. If the student intends to pursue the academic appeals process, it must be done during this probationary semester. Note: Students cannot take comprehensive/preliminary examinations or defend/submit theses/dissertations during the probationary period. If at the end of the probationary semester the student has not met the requirements outlined by the appropriate academic advisor, s/he will be dismissed.

Discussion followed.

Dr. Scanes suggested that the second sentence be changed to read as "Specific information relative to repeating courses or remedial work will be outlined by the appropriate academic advisor and *graduate coordinator, student committee and approved by the respective graduate coordinator.*"

Dr. Wise moved to accept the subcommittee's report with the suggested modification. Dr. Nick Younan seconded motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

- c. Dr. Scanes provided the following information to the Council:
- there was an increase in graduate student enrollment for the academic year 2005-2006 by 81 students (2.5% increase);
 - there are thirteen displaced graduate students that have enrolled at MSU due to Hurricane Katrina;
 - there is a need to streamline the admissions process, making it more rapid and efficient, an electronic system; he suggested a subcommittee to investigate and would like volunteers, including John Boyle;
 - the budget for the University is unknown;
 - we must maintain integrity to ensure the state's budget is not cut;
 - a proposal to the federal government is being sought for supplemental assistance for the EPSCoR and NSF projects by MSU;
 - federal agencies are submitting claims for damages, i.e., Gulf Coast Labs, displaced faculty working here;
 - an increase in enrollment in all but one college with the largest increase in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences;
 - we are looking for supplemental funding.

Dr. Person expanded on Dr. Scanes' comments that:

- a committee is being formed to expedite the graduate admission process electronically;
- he is in the process of planning a graduate coordinators' meeting soon to discuss the implementation of electronic scanning;
- Dr. Scanes wants the Graduate Council to be involved and supportive;
- the Imaging/Scanning system has been approved by the University and implementation is based on the implementation of Banner 7 and will have to be implemented in stages;
- Dr. Scanes would like earlier admissions decisions.

In response to Dr. Scane's request for a subcommittee to work with OGS on matters concerning the electronic admissions process, the Council indicated preference that Dr. Person report to and update the Council on this matter.

7. New Business

Academic Dean signature on approval page of thesis and dissertation

Dr. Hosie state that the Academic Dean signature on approval page of thesis and dissertation will be considered at next month Council meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.