May 13, 2013

PRESENT: Tommy Anderson, Tim Barnett, PC Cinnella, Dana Franz, Dwight Hare, David Morse, Dan Reynolds, Scott Roberts, Wes Schilling, Juan Silva, Vemitra White (for Thomas Sellers), Amy Adkerson, Angi Bourgeois, Tim Chamblee, Gail Peyton (for Frances Coleman), Karen Coats, Lou D’Abramo, Teresa Gammill (for David Shaw), Jerry Gilbert, Peter Ryan, Forest Sparks, Chris Rousseau, Pam Sullivan

ABSENT: Russell Carr, Lara Dodds, Steve Elder, Rafael Hernandez (excused), David Lewis, Benjy Mikel, Steve Taylor

GUESTS: Barry Barnett, Stan Brown, John Lamberth, David Monts, Michael Seymour

---

1. The May 2013 meeting of the Graduate Council was called to order by Dr. Juan Silva, Chair.

2. Minutes of April 12, 2013, meeting: Minutes were not available.

3. Report from University Committee on Courses and Curricula, UCCC: There were nine proposals to discuss.
   
   **Master of Landscape Architecture (Modification)**—Subcommittee: Dr. Dan Reynolds (chair), Dr. Russell Carr, and Dr. Scott Roberts. Program Representative: Prof. Michael Seymour
   
   Dr. Reynolds stated that the subcommittee had several questions, one of which related to the 4000- and 6000-level courses. Prof. Seymour, M.L.A. graduate coordinator, responded that the program has few students who receive the B.L.A. at MSU and continue in the M.L.A. If that were to occur, these students, based on Graduate School policy, would be required to take substitute courses in place of those they had taken as an undergraduate. Dr. Roberts pointed out a reference to the degree on page 4 which is inconsistent with the M.L.A. designation and said there were also questions about the leveling courses. Prof. Seymour said the program has a list of leveling courses students take if they enter the program with another undergraduate major. These courses take a year and catch the students up on skills and abilities; the courses are all undergraduate. Dr. D’Abramo spoke to the issue of repeating a 6000-level course taken at the 4000-level. Dr. Angi Bourgeois said the program’s requirements can state that courses taken as an undergraduate can be replaced by elective coursework. Prof. Seymour stated that two of the courses are electives in the undergraduate program and agreed with the substitution statement. It was proposed that the program make available a list of courses suitable for substitution. Dr. Bourgeois said reference to a concentration should be removed but language should be added about the timing of the thesis or non-thesis option decision. Dr. Dan Reynolds moved to approve the proposed modification with clarifications requested by the Council. The motion was seconded by Dr. Wes Schilling and approved unanimously.

   **Ph.D. in Physics (Modification)**—Subcommittee: Dr. David Morse (Chair), Dr. David Lewis, and Dr. Keisha Walters. Program Representative: Dr. David Monts
   
   Dr. Morse said he forwarded the subcommittee questions to Dr. Monts. Dr. Monts and Dr. Mark Novotny, department chair, provided detailed responses to each question, satisfactorily addressing all concerns. Dr. Morse moved to approve the modification and Dr. Reynolds seconded. Dr. Cinnella questioned the number of hours required for the degree, stating that the information in the proposal is inconsistent. Dr. Morse replied that the proposal calls for competency, and Dr. Monts spoke to the written exams on those courses. Typically, most are taking 18 hours of graduate physics which they had not taken previously. Dr. Cinnella said he thinks the confusing sentence should be removed and the program description should acknowledge that the courses may have been taken in a previous program. The vote was taken, and the modification was approved unanimously.
**M.S. in Kinesiology (Modification)** – Subcommittee: Dr. Wes Schilling (Chair), Dr. Carr, and Dr. Roberts  
Program Representatives: Dr. John Lamberth, Dr. Stan Brown

Dr. Reynolds moved to approve; the motion was seconded by Dr. Anderson. Dr. Schilling said the subcommittee questioned the move from 33 to 36 required credits, saying that IHL is encouraging a reduction in required hours rather than an increase. He said the proposal stated the Kinesiology faculty is in favor of the increase but did not clearly say why. Dr. Lamberth stated that their new faculty members are encouraging the department to keep master’s students for two years to encourage more research. The department feels that one year is not long enough and wants students to spend summers in research and data collection. Dr. Schilling asked about the lack of a consistent format for the programs. Dr. Bourgeois said that clarity of concentrations would be beneficial and the formats should be parallel. Discussion continued about how adding three hours would accomplish the goal of increased research, the possibility of negative impact of added hours, and the rigor of the program. Dr. Gilbert pointed out that the national trend toward fewer hours for undergraduates should not be something MSU wants to apply to graduate education, further stating that IHL does not consider the number of graduate hours required for degrees. Dr. Bourgeois said that UCCC has seen repeated modifications of Kinesiology programs and that the challenge is for the department to find the best way to accomplish their goals. She stated that Graduate Council can vote to approve with a contingency (which ensures no proof that the contingencies are met) or table the motion (meaning it must be resubmitted to Graduate Council). The third option is to reject the proposal, forcing the department to submit a revised proposal to UCCC.

Dr. Reynolds amended his motion to table the proposal. Dr. Dana Franz said she is working with the department on other proposals and will work with them on this as well. The vote was taken, and the proposal was tabled.

**Master of Agribusiness Management (Modification)**– Subcommittee: Dr. Schilling (Chair), Dr. Franz, and Dr. Dwight Hare; Program Representative: Dr. Barry Barnett, Graduate Coordinator

Dr. Tim Barnett moved approval of the proposal, and Dr. Reynolds seconded. Dr. Barry Barnett spoke to the proposal, saying that currently the program has required courses and two areas of electives. One group of electives has 12 hours of agricultural economics courses, and the second group is nine hours approved by the student’s committee. The proposed modification gives more structure to the electives: in the 12-hour segment, the student must take two courses not taken at the undergraduate level; in the general elective section, the student must take Economics for Managers if he/she did not take Intermediate Microeconomics as an undergraduate.

The vote was taken, and the proposal was approved unanimously.

**M.S. in Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture (name change)**– Subcommittee: Dr. Silva (Chair), Dr. Schilling, and Dr. Roberts

Dr. Schilling moved to approve, and Dr. Morse seconded the motion. Dr. Silva stated that the department had recently changed its name, and this proposal changes the name of the major to reflect that. Dr. Chamblee noted that corrections in the proposal must be made before it is submitted to IHL. The vote was taken and the proposal approved unanimously.

**Master’s and Ph.D. in Computer Engineering**

These proposals delete both the Master’s and Ph.D. degree in Computer Engineering on both Campus 1 and Campus 5, due to the recent approval of Master’s and Ph.D. in Electrical and Computer Engineering on Campus 1 and Campus 5. Dr. Silva proposed considering these as a group. Dr. Cinnella moved to approve the deletions; the motion was seconded by Dr. Tim Barnett, and passed unanimously. Dr. Bourgeois announced that Dr. Kirk Swortzel is the incoming chair of UCCC.
4. Report from the Office of the Graduate School (OGS): Dr. Louis D’Abramo, Dean of the Graduate School

- **Graduation, Spring 2013**
  The unofficial total of graduate degrees awarded for the spring 2013 semester is 343 (283 master’s degrees, 4 education specialist degrees, 2 doctor of education degrees and 54 Ph.D.s). A total of 128 Ph.D. degrees have been awarded for 2012-2013 (summer and fall, 2012 and spring, 2013). For the last three academic years, the totals of Ph.D. degrees awarded have been 143, 139 and 135, so a slight decrease has continued annually since the all time high of 143 was reached in 2009-2010. Nonetheless, Ph.D.s awarded during each of the last 4 years represent the 4 highest years in the history of MSU.

- **Outstanding Graduate Student Mentor Award**
  The 2013 recipient of the Outstanding Graduate Student Mentor Award, jointly sponsored by the MSU Alumni Association and the Office of the Graduate School, was Dr. Gary Ervin, Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences. Dr. Ervin received the award at the annual Faculty Awards and Recognition Reception held on April 25. He will accordingly be nominated by the OGS as a recipient of the annual Outstanding Graduate Student Mentor award sponsored by the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools.

- **Applications and Admissions**
  For summer, as of May 9, 2013, applications and admissions were down 6.8 % and 7.6 %, respectively, when compared to the numbers recorded for the same date last year. Admissions for distance education were down 1.6 %. Admissions represented 46.8 % of applications for 2013 versus 47.2 % for 2012. For the fall 2013 semester, as of May 9, applications are down 5.0 % relative to the numbers for last year at the same time (2170 vs. 2061). Independently, distance education applications are down 15.6 % when numbers are compared with that for the same date last year. With the removal of distance education applications, applications are down 3.8 %. For admissions, the number (522) is 7.9 % less than that for last year at the same time. Distance education admissions are down 77.7 % (21 vs. 94 for last year). With the removal of distance education admissions, the remaining number would be 5.9 % higher relative to that of last year. The percentage of those who apply that are admitted is the same as that of last year for the same date, approximately 25 %. A reduction in applications is of concern because programmatic activities are directly tied to application fee revenue. For example, a decrease of 100 applications represents a $6000 decrease in revenue.

- **New Graduate Student Application Form**
  The new graduate student application form will be inaugurated most probably during the last week of July for spring semester 2014. The changes are designed to eliminate confusion, making it easier for students to indicate majors and concentrations. Also, no application will be permitted to move forward for processing without confirmation of payment of the application fee.

- **Office of the Graduate School Magazine, Benefacta**
  The inaugural issue of Benefacta is scheduled for a July 1 release. Ultimately, plans will be to produce 2 issues per year, pending availability of funds.

- **Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) Dissertation Awards**
  We will submit one nominee each for the CGS Proquest Dissertation Awards in Biology/Life Sciences and Humanities. A committee composed of graduate faculty reviews the dissertations that have been submitted and collectively provides a nominee for each discipline to the OGS. The OGS will then submit the nominees to the CGS.
Graduate Teaching Assistant Orientation/ Classroom Culture and Communication Workshop
The Graduate Teaching Assistant Orientation is scheduled for Monday and Tuesday, August 12 and 13, from 8:00 AM until noon, each day. The orientation will be followed by the Microteaching Simulation for classroom certification on August 14 from 1:00 to 5:00 PM. For those students who will be teaching laboratory sections of courses, lab certification and microteaching simulation will be conducted independently on August 13, 2013 at 10:45 AM until noon and August 14, 2013 at 1:15 to 4:15 PM in Hand Laboratory. The following day, Thursday August 15, 2013, the Blackboard Learn Workshop (optional/limited seating) will be offered.

The International Teaching Assistant Workshop (Classroom Culture and Communication) is scheduled for August 5 through 9 in Coskrey Auditorium in Memorial Hall. English Certification (international students) is scheduled for August 9, 2013 (9:30 - noon).

Online Registration for these programs/activities becomes available May 21, 2013 on the Office of the Graduate School website.

New Student Orientations
"Find Your Feet", the orientation for new international graduate students is scheduled for Friday, August 16, 2013, at 9:30 AM in the Swalm Auditorium. The new graduate student orientation followed by the graduate student fair located in the Mitchell Memorial Library is scheduled for Friday, August 16, 2013 starting at 1:00 PM in the Swalm Auditorium.

Travel Assistance Grants for Graduate Students (TAGGS)
Application acceptance intervals and corresponding intervals for travel have been modified in the TAGGS program. There are now three, rather than two, travel intervals to submit applications. This change is designed to reduce turnover times for decisions as to whether or not funds will be awarded. Under this new change, the first application interval is August 1, 2013 through October 15, 2013 for travel between November 1, 2013 and February 28, 2014. Information is available on the OGS website.

Graduate Student Housing - Aiken Village
An Aiken Village Task Force appointed by Provost and Executive Vice President Gilbert to determine the fate of the Aiken Village area continues to make progress toward developing a recommendation. As part of the study, Demographic Perspectives, a group with expertise in conducting focus groups and housing preference assessments with graduate students was contracted to provide information to assist in the decision making. Last week, a representative visited campus to view the Aiken Village area and representative housing units that were formerly occupied. Focus groups consisting of single and married graduate students, both domestic and international, were conducted to provide information to develop a survey. The results of that survey will guide the task force in developing a plan for Aiken Village relative to graduate student housing. The recommendation to the Provost and Executive Vice President has a July 1, 2013 deadline for submission.

Rubrics for Scoring Oral Comprehensives and Thesis/Dissertation Defenses
Associate Dean Coats will soon provide Department Heads and Graduate Coordinators suggested templates for consideration in the development of department-specific rubrics for scoring oral comprehensive examinations and thesis/dissertation defenses. A survey of graduate coordinators indicated that 26 of the 38 responding departments (68.4 %) did not use rubrics and had no future plans for development. Eight departments (21.0 %) were using rubrics, primarily to meet accreditation standards. Three departments (7.9 %) were developing a rubric for future implementation. These rubrics represent tangible documentation of strengths and weaknesses and could serve as a strong quantitative guide and record for determining pass or fail according to the scoring by each member of a graduate student’s committee.
• **Grant Preparation and Submission – Financial Literacy**
  The Office of the Graduate School, through the organizational leadership of Associate Dean Coats, is working with an array of faculty who are experts in different aspects of financial planning/economics to establish a strategy to prepare a financial literacy grant application that will be submitted to the Council of Graduate Schools.

• **Preparing Future Faculty Program**
  The very popular Preparing Future Faculty Program, jointly offered through the efforts of the Office of the Graduate School, the Mitchell Memorial Library, the Center for Teaching and Learning, and Dr. Megan Millea, has started the capstone phase of the 2012-2013 program which is a Maymester course. Twenty-three graduates are anticipated for the third year of this program.

• **Thank you**
  On behalf of Associate Dean Coats and the staff of the Office of the Graduate School, I thank you for your dedicated service to graduate education as members of the Graduate Council for the past academic year of 2012-2013. Your time and conscientious efforts are sincerely appreciated.

5. Dr. Silva announced that the Search Committee for the new Dean of the Graduate School had completed its assignment and submitted recommendations to the Provost. Dr. Silva thanked Karin Lee, Dr. Coats, and Dr. D’Abramo for their assistance in the past year with Graduate Council. He also thanked Dr. D’Abramo for his work and leadership as Dean of the Graduate School for the past five years. The Council expressed its appreciation with applause for Dr. D’Abramo.

6. Officers for the 2013-2014 year are Dr. Silva as chair and Dr. Scott Roberts as vice-chair.

The meeting was adjourned.