Graduate Council

Number:  4
Date:  November 19, 2004


Absent:  M. Binkley, S. Byrd, L. Crittenden, G. Dunaway, W. Person, J. Pote, and B. Spencer.

1. Dr. Tom Hosie called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. in 611 Allen Hall.

Dr. Hosie asked Council members to review the October 22, 2004, minutes.  Dr. John Boyle made the motion to accept the minutes; Dr. Dwayne Wise seconded the motion.  Motion carried.

2. Report from Office of Graduate Studies

   a. Dr. William Person submitted a written report.  Ms. Rita Burrell gave the unofficial count for December 2004 graduate degree applicants as of November 15, 2004.  There were 308 applications: 49 Doctoral students; 21 Education Specialist; and 238 Masters.

3. Report from the Graduate Student Association

   a. Ms. Lakiesha Claude, President of the Graduate Student Association, presented the report. GSA held its last meeting on October 10, 2004.  Ms. Deborah Lee, University Library, was the guest speaker.  Ms. Lee presented information regarding useful resources for writing theses and dissertations.  November 9, 2004, the GSA held an essay sponsored activity for graduate and non-traditional students, which was a success.  November 13, 2004, the GSA held a community service activity, a clean-up day for GSA.  The GSA will hold its last meeting for the semester December 3, 2004, in 125 McCool Hall.  The GSA is currently researching possible dates for the Research Symposium, as well as possible dates for the GSA Awards Banquet.

4. Report from Vice President of Research and Graduate Studies

   a. Dr. Hosie asked Dr. Colin Scanes the status or outcome of the Office of Graduate Studies restructuring.

   b. Dr. Scanes reported that the committee was still gathering information.  Dr. Scanes indicated the information needed for the restructuring is to (a)submit the proposal; (b) President Lee will need to sign off on the proposal; (c) the assurance the proposal will increase the procedure of processing graduate applications; and (d) space for the staff that will be relocated.  Dr. Scanes estimated a time-line of two to four weeks.  Dr. Scanes indicated that there would need to be physical changes in Allen Hall to accommodate additional staff.  He also questioned the assessment of the current graduate application procedure.  It is very efficient, but is it at the level it needs to be for 2004-2005, in terms of electronic communication?
c. Dr. Scanes asked the Council for suggestions in creating an MSU Graduate Excellence Fellowship Program, i.e., funds available, should it be considered a supplement, or match, or a one-year funding with the departments/programs funding the scholarship after one year? Dr. Scanes indicated an estimated commitment of $100,000 per year. Dr. Scanes asked the Council to develop a proposal.

d. Dr. Scanes reported that he had met with graduate students regarding two impediments to recruiting. One issue is out-of-state waivers for graduate students; this change would require legislative approval. The other is health benefits for the families of graduate students, which would also require legislative approval. Dr. Scanes asked the Council to look into other issues needing to be addressed that would require legislative changes and requested the information by mid-December in order to bring to the next legislative session to begin in January 2005.

e. Dr. Scanes reiterated the issue of recruitment of graduate students as critically important. Dr. Jerry Gilbert clarified the issue of out-of-state waiver of tuition. Currently, the University, in some cases, waives out-of-state tuition. Waivers are taken from budgeted monies and applied to the student’s account. Dr. Scanes would like to classify the student as an in-state student even though he/she is actually from another state. If out-of-state tuition is not charged, money from the “central pool” will not have to be used to repay the University for the out-of-state tuition waiver, which is mandated by State of Mississippi law. Dr. Gilbert stated the University budget has an “out-of-state” graduate student waiver pool for students in departments that do not pay out-of-state tuition; the monies are taken from this account, unless the waiver is paid through a grant. The monies are budgeted during the University budget preparation period. Dr. Boyle inquired about out-of-state band or choir members who receive the waiver. Dr. Scanes indicated that for out-of-state athletes the Department of Athletics pays the out-of-state tuition if there are no waivers. Dr. Gilbert stated that for alumni daughters and sons, and for MSU faculty/staff that receive half tuition, there are funds set aside in the “central pool” in order to pay the tuition. Discussion followed.

Dr. Dwayne Wise asked if graduate “fees” are under legislative mandate, indicating that the fees for a graduate student currently equal one-month’s salary, making a nine-month stipend equal to an eight-month stipend. Dr. Gilbert responded to the question regarding fees saying that a department, if it has the money, can pay the fees for a student. Many grants do not allow departments to charge a student’s tuition automatically as part of the grant, but a department can absorb the student’s fees as a contractual charge by a manual process that requires a letter from the department to Wayne Bland, Controller’s Office, to include the student’s name and social security number, the amount of credit to be applied to the student’s account and the departmental account, (grant or other source) that will serve as the source of the funding. Discussion followed. The Council formed a sub-committee of Dr. Wise, Dr. Boyle, Dr. Hosie, and Dr. Lora Ballweber to develop a proposal for a MSU Graduate Excellence Fellowship Program. Dr. Scanes set a date of December 15, 2004, for the subcommittee recommendations due to the possibility of submitting the proposal to the MSU Foundation.

f. Dr. Hosie reported he attended the Associate Deans Meeting and discussed the Graduate Academic Misconduct Policy. It was very well received with the exception of the final step in the student appeal process. There was discussion on who should make the final
decision in the appeals process. For example, in the case of grade appeals, the final
decision is made by the Provost. Concerning the undergraduate academic misconduct
policy, the decision is made by a committee, and only appeals in which policy is not
followed go to the Provost for the final decision. Ms. Ruth Prescott is discussing the issue
with the University attorney to determine whether a committee versus one individual
should make the final decision. Dr. Gilbert stated that Mr. Mike White, Dean of Students,
is not in agreement with Ms. Prescott regarding having one individual versus a committee
making the final decision. Discussion followed.

5. Old Business

Dr. Hosie distributed the handout from the February 27, 2003, – Modifications to Graduate
Policy. The next issues to be discussed will be Doctor of Philosophy-
Preliminary/Comprehensive Examination; time limit for the master’s, education specialist and
doctoral degree; and provisional admission.

6. New Business

Dr. Lynn Reinschmiedt addressed the Council concerning adjunct appointments to the
graduate faculty. He stated that many colleges give adjunct appointments to employees
associated with the University and departments that often provide assistantship funds. The
adjunct appointees have been teaching, advising students, directing dissertations and/or
theses, and serving as major professor and have never been challenged. Interpretation is now
that adjunct appointees can be a co-major advisor and direct a dissertation. Dr. Reinschmiedt
asked the Council for clarification and asked that these adjunct appointees be allowed to
serve as major advisors. Dr. Reinschmiedt referred to a handout from the Graduate Studies
Bulletin, page 233-235. Dr. Reinschmiedt stated that these individuals are integrated into
these departments, have had long-standing relationships with the University, and are as
equipped as anyone else to serve in this capacity.

Dr. Gilbert stated that in a majority of cases, this issue would not be a problem, but if
disciplinary action were needed, this individual, who is the major advisor or chair of a
committee, is not a University employee. The University would have no authority to
discipline this person if acting unethically or sexually harassing a student. The only
authority the University would have would be to revoke the adjunct status. The University
does not have any way of evaluating adjunct performance on a yearly basis as with a
University employee. As a non-employee, the University has no input into an individual’s
annual review, progress, or anything related to conduct. The University would not have
access to certain information or have the ability do to things one could with an employee in
terms of disciplinary action and accountability. Dr. Wise and Dr. Boyle referred to the
Graduate Studies Bulletin, page 233, paragraph 4; line 3; **the adjunct appointments will be
differentiated for record-keeping purposes as appointments in Level 1A (A is for Adjunct) or Level 2A categories.** Discussion followed. Dr. Lora Ballweber suggested the Council
approve adjunct appointments to serve as major professors on a case-by-case basis. Dr.
Gilbert stated that the current rules do not preclude a committee comprised of all adjunct
members; in essence, we are allowing outsiders to set the standards for our graduate students.
For example, we could have an all-industry adjunct. In theory, all committees could be from
industry, adjunct appointments could come in, the major professor could be an adjunct, all
committee members could be adjunct, and essentially, we would have no University input to
the quality of that degree. Dr. Boyle stated that the graduate coordinator would have to sign off on the individual Program of Study. Ms. Burrell stated that the adjunct level is not reviewed at the same level as a Level 1 faculty. Level 1 adjunct are reviewed every five years; Level 2 are not reviewed. Discussion followed.

Dr. Gilbert proposed that the majority of a committee must be non-adjunct and the chair of the committee also needs to be non-adjunct. An exception to the rule would need Graduate Council approval. Dr. Ronald Taylor stated he had served on the initial committee that drafted the current Graduate Faculty Policy. It was developed to have two levels to make sure that someone who chaired a dissertation had an active research agenda, qualifying that person to chair the dissertation. Dr. Taylor supported Dr. Reinschmiedt's plea to allow this specific adjunct to serve as chair on the committees. If the Council wanted to add something about the research agenda or add something about a one-time appointment, they could have the issue rest at the department level or brought to the Council’s attention.

Dr. Reinschmiedt restated he was seeking an exception to this individual case. Discussion followed.

Dr. Boyle made the motion to modify the policy, The Graduate Faculty, Appointment Process, about Level 1 and Level 1A categories to read:

4. Effective with the Fall 1993 semester, the term of appointment to the Graduate Faculty shall be for five years. During the fifth year of appointment, Graduate Faculty members in Level 1 and Level 1A category must undergo review for reappointment. If the candidate or the department head does not submit a request for reappointment in this category, the faculty member will automatically be re-appointed in the Level 2 category. The underlying criteria for reappointment to Level 1 membership is a record of sustained involvement in graduate education and a sustained record of scholarly/research/creative endeavors.

Dr. Reinschmiedt seconded the motion; Dr. Taylor called the motion to question. Motion carried. Dr. Boyle clarified that current policy does not negate the student in question from receiving his/her degree in December 2004.

Dr. Wise made the motion to modify the policy to state that the major professor and at least one-half of the graduate committee must hold academic appointment and must be MSU employees, but exceptions to that rule can be approved at the appropriate level. Discussion followed. Dr. Nick Younan seconded the motion. Dr. Taylor called to question. Motion carried by a majority of the Council.

Dr. Boyle asked that the issue of membership on the Graduate Faculty be revisited at a later date.
7. Dr. Boyle requested the Council meet December 10, 2004, in order to expedite the process of the modification of all programs within the Agriculture College. All programs are being placed under three umbrella programs, Master of Agriculture, Master of Agriculture and Life Science and Master of Food Science, Nutrition and Health Promotion. The department is matching the existing programs with the current CIP classifications; current programs will now be concentrations under each one of the umbrellas.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.