Graduate Council  
Mississippi State University

Number: 4  
Date: November 19, 2009


Absent: P. Bonfanti (excused), T. Chamblee (excused), B. Hamil, N. Ponder (excused), P. Rabideau, P. Ryan, D. Seale, G. Steele (excused)

Guests: W. Diehl

1. Dr. Dwayne Wise asked any guests present to introduce themselves. Then he asked for revisions to the minutes (October 23, 2009).

Motion was made by Dr. Juan Silva and seconded by Dr. Dan Reynolds to accept the minutes.

Minutes were approved by acclamation.

2. University Committee on Courses and Curricula (UCCC)  
   No report because UCCC meeting coincided with Graduate Council meeting.

4. Report from the Office of the Graduate School (OGS)

Dr. Louis D’Abramo presented the following information:

- Awards for proposals submitted for the Graduate Recruitment Assistance Grants were announced yesterday. This year, an unprecedented number of proposals (23) requesting a total of $42,300 were submitted. The proposals were highly competitive. This overwhelming response precluded our ability to fund all proposals and priority consideration was given to preferences and special considerations as outlined in the request for proposals. Eight proposals were fully funded and 13 proposals were partially funded. A total of $32,000 will be disbursed. 6 colleges and 21 different departments are represented.

- A total of 13 Travel Assistance Grants for Graduate Students, amounting to $14,950 were awarded for the first travel period of the academic year. Students from 9 Departments in 4 colleges were recipients. The program provides primarily graduate
students funds to attend and give presentations at national and international meetings. Another call for applications will occur during the spring semester.

- Currently, there are 60 doctoral students who are listed as scheduled to receive degrees in December.

- The Office of the Graduate School thanks all faculty who volunteered and participated as judges in the Graduate Research Symposium that was held on November 6. Those graduate students who received awards represent 8 different departments or concentrations and are the following:

**Poster Presentations**

Life and Social Sciences
Winner: Madhavi Kakumanu (Agricultural Sciences - Agronomy)
Honorable Mention: Meng-Hsuan Ho (Molecular Biology)

Physical Sciences:
Winner: Aubrey Rainer (Chemical Engineering)
Honorable Mention: Chris Ryals (Agriculture- Engineering Technology)

**Oral Presentations**

Life and Social Sciences:
Winner: Anberitha Matthews (Agriculture - Poultry Science)
Honorable Mention: Hussain Al Rashed (Agricultural Life Sciences - Animal Physiology)

Physical Sciences:
Winner: Sachi Mishra (Earth and Atmospheric Sciences)
Honorable Mention: Sasan Nouranian (Chemical Engineering)

They will be honored at the GSA Banquet scheduled for the spring.

- The Office of the Graduate School is seeking faculty volunteers to participate during the afternoon of January 5th in Classroom Certification evaluation that is part of the Graduate Teaching Assistant Workshop.

- Applications for admission for the spring 2010 semester are up by 4.1% relative to last year at the same time. The gross number of international applications is down by 26, but the number of international students admitted has increased by 15.

- Through August 28, the OGS has received 3017 applications for the fall 2009 semester, a 11.4% increase. That increase is essentially the result of an increase of approximately 250 domestic applications. The number of graduate students admitted also increased, by 3.0% over last year. When compared to 2005, the number of applications for the fall
semester has increased by 33.0% with a corresponding increase of 10.5% in the number of students admitted.

- Reminder - The Alliance for Graduate Education in Mississippi (AGEM) will be hosting its annual Winter Scholar Symposium on Thursday, January 21 through Saturday, January 23, 2010 at the University of Southern Mississippi. We are also encouraging STEM graduate faculty to participate in the symposium activities, including the recruitment fair. We are encouraging our AGEM Scholars to present their research during the oral presentation competition. The deadline for on-line registration is December 7, 2009.

- A national evaluation of the impact of the Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) is being conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and the National Science Foundation (NSF). It’s an on-line survey seeking to determine the extent of impact of these alliances on the students they serve. By now, our AGEM scholars and graduate faculty at MSU should have received a 45-minute survey at this time. The deadline date for completion of the survey is December 4, 2009 and we hope that participation will be very good.

- Dr. Amy Wells and Ms. Ayana Johnson from the University of Mississippi are conducting an in-state assessment of our AGEM program which will include both AGEM scholars and faculty. Both students and faculty members are encouraged to respond to the online survey as promptly as possible.

5. Report from Graduate Student Association (GSA)

GSA President Beth Rauhaus presented the following report:

The eighth annual Graduate Research Symposium was held on Friday, November 6, at the Colvard Student Union. Twenty judges participated, more than ever before and the GSA would like to thank all of them. Over 60 graduate students took part in the symposium. GSA is very appreciative of the great number of volunteers this time who made this event run very smoothly.

Monday, December 2, GSA had the last meeting of the semester at a Mexican restaurant. Although it was meant to be a social event, very few graduate students attended.

The GSA meeting dates for the Spring 2010 semester are posted on the GSA website. GSA is looking for some great speakers to invite for the next few meetings.

GSA reviewed six travel awards and awarded three.

6. Old Business

- Graduate Faculty Draft Document (Handout)
Dr. Wise called for a motion in regard to the Graduate Faculty Draft Document. Dr. David Lewis made a motion to approve the document as presented. Dr. Reynolds seconded the motion.

Discussion followed. Dr. Doug Goodman made a motion to include a friendly amendment to the motion and change wording in the fourth bullet. However, the motion was not seconded and, therefore, not acted on.

Dr. George Adebiyi objected to the placing of the word “and” in the fourth bullet under Level 1 Qualifications and Responsibilities and requested a change. Objection was accepted and the word will be placed before the semicolon in the preceding sentence.

Dr. Radha Srinivasan, representing Dr. William Batchelor, requested that “as recommended by the academic dean” be included in the fourth bullet under Level 1 Qualifications and Responsibilities. The Graduate Faculty Subcommittee rejected the request. Dr. Meghan Millea pointed out that final approval rests with the Graduate Dean and any changes in the wording would undermine this authority.

Dr. Walter Diehl expressed the concern of the College of Arts and Sciences regarding qualifications to Level 1 and suggested that the wording of post-doc experience be added in the last bullet under Level 1. Dr. Millea responded that the subcommittee decided against including post-doc experience because post doc work can vary significantly by discipline.

Dr. Adebiyi commented that during the last Graduate Council meeting, members of the Graduate Council were asked to review the document now presented and to send any revisions and/or suggestions to the subcommittee via email. He stated that the discussion on this subject could continue during future Graduate Council meetings and reminded Graduate Council of the ultimate goal which is to have the best Graduate Faculty Document possible.

Dr. Ed Allen motioned to amend the motion on the table (to approve the document as presented) and completely remove the fourth bullet under Level 1. Dr. Srinivasan seconded the amendment motion. Discussion of the amendment motion followed. Dr. D’Abramo stated that the document is designed to serve graduate faculty and protect graduate students which is part of the mission of the Graduate School.

Dr. Allen stated that bullet 4 of Level 1 has nothing to do with knowledge of policy. Dr. Srinivasan declared that the document would lead to abuse of graduate students and was asked by Dr. Juan Silva to give some examples where such abuse could occur. Dr. Srinivasan stated that requiring co-chairs puts an unjust burden on graduate students. Dr. Hart Bailey responded that collegiality is valued and that co-chairing should be seen as a positive step in the academic career. Dr. Millea pointed out that bullet 4 of Level 1 has nothing to do with co-chairing. Co-chairing is mentioned under Level 2 and therefore, is an irrelevant argument.

Dr. Allen stated that bullet 4 of Level 1 limits the hiring of assistant professors straight out of graduate school. Dr. Gilbert noted that bullet 3 of Level 1 pertains to that issue and would
allow new assistant professors straight out of graduate school with appropriate qualifications to serve as Level 1 graduate faculty.

Dr. Wise asked for a vote on the amendment motion to strike bullet 4 under Level 1. Eight Graduate Council members opposed and voted nay, three Graduate Council members voted yea, and one Graduate Council member abstained. The amendment motion to strike bullet 4 under Level 1 did not pass.

Dr. Ratnasingham Shivaji motioned to include the word “research” in bullet 4 under Level 1 to read “and have demonstrated experience directing graduate research and independent study, thesis, or dissertation.” Dr. Kathy Dooley seconded the motion. Graduate Council members voted on the amendment motion without discussion. Twelve Graduate Council members voted yea and one Graduate Council member abstained. The motion to include the word “research” was approved for inclusion in the original motion to approve the proposed document.

Dr. Wise called for further discussion of the proposed document as amended. Dr. Bailey asked whether a faculty member who has associate level can serve as a co-chair for a doctoral student. Are USDA employees considered faculty? Dr. D’Abramo responded that unless they are full-time employees of MSU, they cannot chair a committee.

Dr. D’Abramo stated that as the Graduate Dean, he trusts both the department head and the academic dean in their judgment and participates by upholding policy. Any grievances in terms of faculty appointment should ultimately go through the Provost Office.

Dr. Allen noted that the document states that departments establish procedures for initial appeal by the faculty member regarding appointment by the college Dean and Department Head. The Provost is the last instance for appeal.

Dr. D’Abramo stated that the document currently before the Graduate Council will supersede any other documents. The document will be in effect as soon as possible, if the Provost approves it. However, as stated in the last meeting, current appointments will remain until expiration. All renewals and new appointments will be subject to the new policy at an assigned effective date, if the new policy, as recommended by the Graduate Council, is approved by the Provost.

Dr. Wise called for a vote of the motion to approve the amended document. Twelve Graduate Council members voted yea and one Graduate Council member voted nay. The amended Graduate Faculty document was approved by Graduate Council.

On behalf of the Graduate Council, Dr. Wise thanked the subcommittee consisting of Drs. Bailey (chair), Millea, Chamblee, Hamil and Silva for their extraordinary effort to complete their charge and for their countless hours spent in creating this policy.

- Part Time Students/Time Limit (Handout)
Dr. Wise asked for a motion to revise standing policy for time limits. Dr. Lewis made a motion to revise the time limit policy. The motion was seconded by Dr. Allen.

After a short discussion, Dr. Wise called for a vote. The Graduate Council voted to accept the revision to the time limit policy by acclamation. Dean D’Abramo will present the document to the Deans Council and Associate Deans Council for review and comments.

Dr. Wise called for a motion regarding the December 11, 2009 Graduate Council meeting. Dr. Adebiyi made a motion to cancel the December Graduate Council meeting. Dr. Kathy Dooley seconded the motion. The December meeting was canceled by a vote of acclamation.

Meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

The date for the next Graduate Council meeting has been set for Friday, January 22, 2010, at 1:30 p.m. in 611 Allen Hall.
THE GRADUATE FACULTY

Within Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools’ Commission on Colleges, the following statement concerning faculty appears:

The institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline. The institution also considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty. (Comprehensive Standard 3.7.1, December 2008).

With the approval of the dean of the college, each department with graduate programs will determine procedures for handling recommendations or appeals concerning Graduate Faculty appointments, reappointments, or changes in level of membership status. The department and/or the college criteria and procedures must be consistent with the qualifications and responsibilities outlined in this document but may be more restrictive.

Level 1 Qualifications and Responsibilities

An individual appointed to Level 1 Graduate Faculty must
- have an earned terminal degree (highest degree awarded in the discipline) in or related to the faculty member’s area of graduate responsibility;
- be a full-time employee of Mississippi State University, holding the rank of assistant professor or assistant research professor or assistant extension professor or assistant clinical professor or higher without any qualifying designations such as “visiting” or “adjunct”;
- have demonstrated and maintained noteworthy accomplishments in research and/or creative achievement, as defined in the Faculty Handbook (6.1.2);
- and have demonstrated experience directing independent study, thesis, or dissertation.

An individual appointed to Level 1 Graduate Faculty may
- teach graduate-level courses in each field of specialization based upon formal advanced study or demonstrated competence through independent scholarly activity;
- serve as a member of master’s non-thesis, master’s thesis, specialist non-thesis, or specialist thesis committee within Department of appointment or outside Department;
- serve as a chair of master’s non-thesis, master’s thesis, specialist non-thesis, or specialist thesis committee within the faculty member’s area of graduate responsibility;
- serve as a member of doctoral committees and doctoral dissertations within Department of appointment or outside Department;
- serve as a chair of doctoral committees and/or director of doctoral dissertations within the faculty member’s area of graduate responsibility.

A Level 1 term of service is five years and is approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. The appointment is renewed at the discretion of the department head and dean of the college.

Level 2 Qualifications and Responsibilities

An individual appointed to Level 2 Graduate Faculty must
- have an earned terminal degree (highest degree awarded in discipline) in or related to the faculty member’s area of graduate responsibility;
- be a full-time employee of Mississippi State University, holding the rank of assistant professor or assistant research professor or assistant extension professor or assistant clinical professor or higher without any qualifying designations such as “visiting” or “adjunct”;

and have demonstrated and maintained a record in research and/or creative achievement, as defined in the Faculty Handbook (6.1.2).

An individual appointed to Level 2 Graduate Faculty may
- teach graduate-level courses in each field of specialization based upon formal advanced study or demonstrated competence through independent scholarly activity;
- serve as a member of master’s non-thesis, master’s thesis, specialist non-thesis, or specialist thesis committee within Department of appointment or outside Department;
- serve as a chair of master’s non-thesis, master’s thesis, specialist non-thesis, or specialist thesis committee within the faculty member’s area of graduate responsibility;
- serve as a member of doctoral committees and doctoral dissertations within Department of appointment or outside Department;
- serve as a co-chair of doctoral committees and/or director of doctoral dissertations with a co-director, who has Level 1 Graduate Faculty status, within the faculty member’s area of graduate responsibility.

A Level 2 term of service is five years and is approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. The appointment is renewed at the discretion of the department head and dean of the college. A Level 2 Graduate Faculty member may apply to have his/her appointment status changed to a Level 1 Graduate Faculty status when the conditions for Level 1 status have been met. A status change from Level 2 to Level 1 requires the support of the department head and dean of the college and will be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Associate Level Qualifications and Responsibilities

An individual appointed to Associate Graduate Faculty must
- have a terminal degree (highest degree awarded in the discipline) in or related to the faculty member’s area of graduate responsibility;
- be a full-time employee of Mississippi State University holding the rank of assistant professor or assistant research professor or assistant extension professor or assistant clinical professor and may include the qualifying designation of Visiting Faculty (as defined in AOP 13.22);
- and have a record of research and/or creative achievement as described in the Faculty Handbook (6.1.2) or the ability to conduct research.

An individual appointed to Associate Level Graduate Faculty may
- teach graduate-level courses in each field of specialization for which formal advanced study or demonstrated competence is documented;
- serve as a member of master’s non-thesis, master’s thesis, specialist non-thesis, or specialist thesis committees within Department of appointment or outside Department;
- serve as a member of doctoral and dissertation committees within Department of appointment or outside Department.

An Associate Level term of service is five years and is approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. The appointment is renewed at the discretion of the department head and dean of the college.

PARTICIPANT APPOINTMENTS FOR GRADUATE STUDIES

Participant appointments can be granted to individuals to enable them to participate either through graduate teaching or graduate committee participation. Individuals who receive participant appointments do not fall under the criteria of Level 1, Level 2, or Associate categories and therefore are not members of the graduate faculty.

Graduate Teaching Participant Status

An individual appointed Graduate Teaching Participant status must
- be an instructor with terminal degree in the discipline of graduate teaching responsibility;
- or have commensurate experience in or closely related to the discipline of graduate teaching responsibility.
Commensurate expertise must be in or related to the area of graduate responsibility, such as professional certification, licensure, or record of professional practice. Applicants relying on commensurate expertise must be approved by the department head, academic dean, and approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

An individual appointed Graduate Teaching Participant status may
• teach a graduate course

A Graduate Teaching Participant's term of service is two years. The appointment is initially requested and renewed at the discretion of the department head and dean of the college and is approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Graduate Committee Participant Status

An individual appointed Graduate Committee Participant status must
• hold a terminal degree and have research experience or commensurate expertise in the discipline of graduate research responsibility and
• be either
  o a research associate (including postdoctoral investigators);
  o a fully retired faculty member, including emeriti appointments, from MSU or another university;
  o a member of the Graduate Faculty who departed the University in good standing (this enables a committee member or chair to continue participation as a committee member after departure. This type of appointment is at the discretion of the student's graduate committee and the department head);
  o a faculty member at another university whose expertise contributes to the research product of the student;
  o or an individual whose expertise contributes to the research product of the student.

Commensurate expertise must be in or closely related to the area of the research discipline. Applicants relying on commensurate expertise must be approved by the department head, academic dean, and approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

No more than two individuals who have been granted participant appointments can serve on a dissertation or doctoral committee. No more than one individual who has been granted a participant appointment can serve on a master's non-thesis, master's thesis, specialist non-thesis or specialist thesis committee.

A Graduate Committee Participant term of service is three years. The appointment is renewed at the discretion of the department head and dean of the college and is approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

APPPOINTMENT/REAPPOINTMENT/CHANGE IN LEVEL OF MEMBERSHIP PROCESS

Forms for appointments and reappointments are available at the Office of the Graduate School website (www.grad.msstate.edu). All Graduate Faculty appointments (Level 1, Level 2, and Associate Level) and participant appointments for graduate studies must be on record with the Graduate School. The Dean of the Graduate School approves the appointments and can require review of an appointment by a committee of the Graduate Faculty of the appointing department.

Procedures for Initial Appointment

1. The initial appointment of individuals to the Graduate Faculty and the determination of Graduate Faculty membership level (Level 1, Level 2, and Associate) and of individuals to the participant appointment must be in accordance with the corresponding criteria and approved by the academic dean based upon recommendation from the department head and approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

2. University administrators (individuals holding the rank of Assistant Dean or higher) seeking initial appointment to the Graduate Faculty must be held to the qualifications outlined above, but their
applications go directly to the Dean of the Graduate School who makes a recommendation to the Provost. These appointments are approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

3. Recommendations for initial appointments to the Graduate Faculty, determination of membership levels, and participant appointments may be made at any time during the calendar year. It is the responsibility of the department head, dean, and applicant to provide documentation to support an applicant’s qualifications for appointment.

4. The applicant may withdraw the request for appointment at any time.

**Procedures for Reappointment or Change in Level of Membership**

1. The Office of the Graduate School will request department heads to submit an updated list of current Graduate Faculty members with corresponding membership levels (Level 1, Level 2, or Associate Level) in early spring for publication in the annual Bulletin of the Graduate School. The Office of the Graduate School will notify academic deans of faculty members or participants whose graduate appointment statuses are expiring within the next fiscal year.

2. University administrators (individuals holding the rank of Assistant Dean or higher) seeking reappointment, to the Graduate Faculty will be held to the qualifications outlined above, but their applications go directly to the Dean of the Graduate School who makes a recommendation to the Provost. These appointments are approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

3. Recommendations for change in level of membership in Graduate Faculty status may be made at any time during the calendar year. It is the responsibility of the department head, dean, and applicant to provide documentation to support the applicant’s qualifications for appointment.

4. The applicant may withdraw the request for reappointment at any time.

5. The department must notify the Graduate School when an individual holding graduate faculty status (Level 1, Level 2, or Associate Level) or graduate participant status is no longer eligible for the status appointment. For example if a faculty member resigns, retires, or is no longer holding the status that initially made the individual eligible for the appointment, the department must notify the graduate school. This information can be submitted at anytime during the calendar year.
## Graduate Faculty Summary Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grad. Faculty Level: Responsibilities</th>
<th>Level I</th>
<th>Level II</th>
<th>Associate</th>
<th>Participant Graduate Teaching</th>
<th>Participant Graduate Committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teach grad. courses</td>
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<tr>
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<td>X* (co-Chair)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissertation Director</td>
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<td>X* (need co-Director)</td>
<td>X* (or expertise)</td>
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### Qualifications

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Level I</th>
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<th>Participant Graduate Committee</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Terminal degree</td>
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<td>Full-time MSU employee</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X* (or expertise)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrate accomplishments (F.H. 6.1.2)</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrate experience directing thesis/diss.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Appointment time (years)</td>
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<td>5</td>
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### Rank

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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Participant Graduate Teaching</th>
<th>Participant Graduate Committee</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asst./Assoc/Full Professor, Research Prof., Extension Prof., Clinical Prof.</td>
<td>Asst./Assoc/Full Professor, Research Prof., Extension Prof., Clinical Prof.</td>
<td>Asst./Assoc/Fu ll Professor, Research Prof., Extension Prof., Clinical Prof., Visiting/adjunct Prof.</td>
<td>Instructor, Graduate teaching resp.</td>
<td>Res. Assoc., Post-Doc, retired faculty, departed faculty in good stand, other Univ. faculty, other individual</td>
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### Approval

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<th>Level I</th>
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<th>Participant Graduate Committee</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Dept. Head* (consult grad faculty)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Dean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate School Dean</td>
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Proposed Revision to Policy on Time Limits for Graduate Degrees

By Graduate Council Subcommittee: Juan Silva, Doug Goodman, Edward Allen
11/19/09

Current Policy and Motivation for Change

Current policy places time limits on graduate degrees.

- “The time limit for fulfilling the requirements for a master’s degree is six years.” (p.59 BGS)
- “A student must complete the educational specialist program within six years.” (p.62 BGS)
- “After the student begins the [Ph.D.] doctoral program, he/she must complete the program within a period of eight years.” (p.65 BGS)
- “After the student begins the [D.Ed.] doctoral program he/she must complete the program within a period of eight years.” (p.69 BGS)

Non-traditional students sometimes have difficulty meeting these deadlines. Non-traditional students often are employed full-time, and thus, enroll as part-time students for part or all of their studies. Considering the University’s expansion of distance-education opportunities and recruiting of non-traditional students in general, we anticipate that exceeding time limits will be a growing issue. A brief report from the OGS indicated that many students that asked for an extension of their time limit were distance education/non-traditional students.

Overview of Proposed Change

We propose the following replacements to the time limit rules stated above.

- “The time limit for fulfilling the requirements for a master’s degree is eight years.” (p.59 BGS)
- “A student must complete the educational specialist program within eight years.” (p.62 BGS)
- “After the student begins the [Ph.D.] doctoral program, he/she must complete the program within a period of five years after passing the Preliminary/Comprehensive Examination.” (p.65 BGS)
- “After the student begins the [D.Ed.] doctoral program he/she must complete the program within a period of five years after passing the Preliminary/Comprehensive Examination.” (p.69 BGS)

Without further change in policy, we also propose below editorial changes to the Bulletin of the Graduate School to localize these requirements to their primary paragraphs by
removing redundant language, and to remove language that presumes a student is full-time.

Individual departments or programs or colleges could have tighter rules than these.

**Discussion**

**Rationale**

We believe that time limits serve a useful purpose in discouraging abuse of graduate programs by non-performing students. Our proposals seek to balance this concern with the need to accommodate the following reasons for extended completion times.

- Part-time enrollment
- Delays in dissertation research
- Hiatus in studies for personal reasons
- Hiatus in studies due to non-availability of appropriate courses

Under current policy, a student who enrolls in one course per Fall/Spring semester requires almost the entire 6 year period to complete a non-thesis master’s degree (11 courses). Almost all distance-education students enroll part-time. All students who are full-time University employees enroll part-time, and similarly, employees in local industry. Therefore, we recommend increasing the time limit for master’s degrees and education specialist degrees.

We have observed that extensions for doctoral students are often due to delays in dissertation research rather than overly extended course work. Therefore, we recommend starting the time-limit period when the student passes the Preliminary/Comprehensive Examination.

Students sometimes interrupt enrollment due to career or family issues, such as pregnancy, care-giving responsibilities, expected business travel, business workload, and change of job or location.

Course offerings do not always fit the needs of students for prompt graduation.

The subcommittee also considered the following concerns.

- We found no regulatory constraints.
- The current scale of extension beyond time limits is significant.
- The policies of peer institutions are similar to current MSU policy.
- Course material and thesis/dissertation topics should be academically current.
- Time limits are sometimes an indirect mechanism for dismissal of non-performing students.
- There is a temptation to exploit research assistants as “cheap labor” for an extended period of time.
We believe that existing policies and procedures have appropriate mechanisms for assuring that degree content is current, for dismissal of non-performing students, and for protection against exploitation of students.

Moreover, graduate degree programs have the prerogative to impose more restrictive time limits.

**Regulatory Constraints**

SACS does not require degree time limits (per a review by Dr. Tim Chamblee).

The IHL Board does not require degree time limits (per a review of the IHL Web site).

We concluded there are no regulatory constraints to revising the time-limit policies.

**Number of Extensions of Time Limits 2008-2009**

The following extensions were logged by the Graduate School, August 2008-August 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Doctoral</th>
<th>Master’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forest Resources</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<td>Agriculture and Life Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
Other colleges had no extensions for graduate degrees.
There were no extensions for Specialist degrees.
6 of 11 master’s extensions were for distance students.

We concluded that extension of time limits is a significant issue.

**Policies of Peer Institutions**

A survey of peer institutions by this subcommittee found that most have time limits that are similar to current MSU policy. One peer institution is considering a change to 6 years after the completion of doctoral exams.
Related Policies

The following policies are not proposed to change. They address some related concerns.

- “Once enrolled in graduate study a student who subsequently fails to enroll for three consecutive semesters (excluding summer) must complete an Application for readmission to register again. … Academic departments may set higher standards for readmission to specific programs.” (p.46 BGS)

This implies that the degree program has the opportunity to evaluate whether or not to readmit the student, or to require a revised program of study. This mechanism can be useful when a student has a large hiatus.

- “Continuous enrollment in the University or in a specific graduate program is dependent upon satisfactory academic performance and progress toward the completion of a specific degree program. … Individual programs have the right to establish their own criteria that define academic performance and progress toward completion of a degree.” (p.53 BGS)

This policy gives programs the ability to prevent abuse by non-performing students in a manner that is customized for the nature of the program.

- Policies and procedures for granting extensions to time limits.

The student’s committee is responsible for assuring that the program of study and thesis or dissertation content is current and appropriate for the degree.

- “The student must establish, in conjunction with his/her graduate committee, a program of study consisting of all courses required for degree completion, according to the University-approved requirements.” (p.56 BGS)
- “A [master’s or Education Specialist] thesis committee … will judge the content and style of the completed thesis.” (p.60, 64 BGS)
- “The [Ph.D. or D.Ed.] student’s graduate committee must approve the dissertation topic, the outline, and the final submission of the dissertation.” (p.67, 70 BGS)

Proposed Changes to the Bulletin of the Graduate School (Details)

The following are proposed changes to the Bulletin of the Graduate School in addition to the basic proposal above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BGS page</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>Proposed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>“Normally it is expected that a student will remove his/her provisional admission status”</td>
<td>Omit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>It is expected that a student will fulfill this requirement during the initial semester of enrollment.”</td>
<td>Omit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59, 63</td>
<td>“The hours must be current (no more than six years old) at the time the degree is awarded.”</td>
<td>“The hours must be current at the time the degree is awarded.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60, 63</td>
<td>“Transfer credit must be within the six-year time limit for the current program at the completion of the degree.”</td>
<td>“Transfer credit must be within the time limit for the current program at the completion of the degree.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66, 69</td>
<td>“The hours must be current (no more than eight years old) at the time the degree is awarded.”</td>
<td>“Course work on the program of study must be approved by the student’s committee as current in the discipline at the time the degree is awarded.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66, 69</td>
<td>“Transfer credit must be within the eight-year time limit for the current program at completion of the degree.”</td>
<td>Omit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>