Graduate Council

Number: 8
Date: April 23, 2004


Special Guests: Dr. Colin G. Scanes, Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies

1. Dr. Tom Hosie, Chair of the Graduate Council, called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. in Room 611 Allen.

2. On a motion by Dr. John Boyle and seconded by Dr. Larry Barrow, the Council approved the March 26, 2004 minutes.

3. Report from University Committee on Courses and Curricula (UCCC)

   Master of Landscape Architecture (Program Modification)

   There was no representation from the department of landscape architecture for the program modification.

   Master of Landscape Architecture proposed changes: Evaluation of the program since its inception indicates the need for a more focused research sequence. The proposed curriculum replaced two courses intended to provide a research base with a new course in research methods specific to Landscape Architecture and a graduate level statistics course.

   Dr. Hosie made the motion to accept the program modification for the Master of Landscape Architecture, Dr. Ratnasingham Shivaji seconded the motion; there was no discussion, motion carried.

4. Report from Graduate Studies.

   a. Dr. Jerry Gilbert, along with Dr. William Person introduced Dr. Colin Scanes, newly appointed Vice President for Research, to the Council. Dr. Scanes addressed the Council, announcing his title change to Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies. Dr. Scanes stated the Offices of Research and Graduate Studies will work together because graduate education is critically important to the University and to the research enterprise of the University. Dr. Scanes would like to see the graduate program expand: he noted the current number of Ph.D graduates of 100 is too low. Dr. Scanes invited questions from the Council. Dr. Hosie gave Dr. Scanes an overview of the Council’s purpose, stating the
Council makes recommendations relative to graduate programs, not courses, to the Office of the Provost that relate to curricula, rules, and regulations. The Council is made up of representatives from each college, along with ad-hoc members, to provide information to the Council. The individual Council members introduced themselves to Dr. Scanes.

Dr. Boyle asked what the new chain of command would be. Discussion followed. Dr. Steve Turner inquired if this move was a centralization of graduate affairs versus the responsibility currently held by each Dean. Dr. Scanes did not agree with the notion of centralization. Dr. Gilbert stated this change is to further advocacy for graduate students and graduate student research. There are resources in the Office of Research not available in the Office of the Provost which can be used to assist graduate student research. Discussion followed.

b. Dr. William Person announced that two MSU students received NSF Fellowships. They are Mr. John Ball, Electrical Engineering, and Ms. Frances Carter of Physics. The NSF fellowship is a three-year program for doctoral study. Mr. Ball plans to remain at MSU to pursue his doctorate in Electrical Engineering; Ms. Carter will pursue her doctoral studies at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

c. OGS has received additional office space from the Office of the Provost that will enable the unit to establish an official office for the Graduate Student Association.

d. The newly established Teaching Assistant Workshop Advisory Council held its first meeting Wednesday, April 21, 2004. Except for two members, those not in attendance sent representatives. Dr. Person stated that it was a very positive meeting, with good dialogue; suggestions were made that will be implemented in upcoming workshops. There was some concern about the certification of students enrolled in the workshops. Dr. Person asked for the graduate faculty’s assistance with the evaluation process of the student’s “short lesson” presentations. Revision will be made in the WEB-CT course. The TAWAC is reviewing the General TA workshop for students who do not pass with a 70% task completion rate. The alternative for International students is participation in the ESL course taught by Molly Watkins.

e. OGS has received tentative approval to move Ms. Cathy Sides to the Accounting Assistant position vacated by Ms. Sherry Jobe. The position description of Graduate Program Assistant is currently being modified for advertisement of this position.

f. Three hundred forty-five (345) students have applied for graduation: 285 at the Master’s level; 19 at the Education Specialist level; and 40 at the doctoral level. We will not make the 100 doctoral graduates required this academic year; to date, we have 52 who have completed their degrees for the 2003-2004 academic year.

5. Report from the Graduate Student Association.

a. Dr. Person gave the GSA Report. The GSA Research Symposium, as well as the GSA Banquet, went very well. There were more than 80 abstracts submitted for the research symposium. Dr. Person thanked the Council for their support in screening the nominations
for the Graduate Teaching Assistant, Graduate Research Assistant, and Graduate Service Assistant Awards. The GSA Banquet was well attended. Dr. Steve Taylor, College of Business and Industry, was the guest speaker. Dr. Hosie complimented Dr. Person in his choice of speaker for the GSA banquet.

6. Old Business.

a. Dr. Hosie gave the report on Academic Misconduct Policy for Graduate Students, referring to a handout regarding the amended academic misconduct policy proposal. Dr. Ruth Prescott has reviewed the policy; Dr. Boyle has received input from the academic deans, as well as Dean of Students, Mr. Mike White.

The graduate policy is now more consistent with the undergraduate policy. Procedures in the undergraduate policy have been incorporated into the graduate policy. Dr. Hosie noted on page 2, paragraph 1, last sentence of the handout, “A student found guilty of a second offence of academic dishonesty in a course will receive a grade of F for the course and may be permanently dismissed from the university.”

Mr. White urged the committee to consider whether a student has been found guilty of a previous graduate offense. This procedure was not included in the previous submission. The current wording states that there be an inquiry to the Dean of Students as to whether there was a prior offense; this information becomes part of the history (case). Previous undergraduate conduct would not be part of the ruling in the procedure; this has not changed.

Dr. Susan Bridges asked for clarification regarding the Graduate Academic Misconduct Review Committee (GAMRC). It was noted that a GAMRC committee would need to be established by each program/department/unit.

Dr. Dwight Hare asked who would take the action of handling of a second offense. Dr. Hosie referred to page 2, last paragraph, “when a second offense is indicated, the case then goes immediately to the department graduate committee.” Discussion followed. Dr. Hare asked who would find the student guilty of the first offense. Dr. Hosie responded that the process begins with the instructor, then can move through the appeals process. The department committee is informed, with action taken, if the department chooses. The appeal process then moves to the dean’s level, then to the graduate division level committee. Discussion followed. The Dean of Students will be the first point of contact to provide information. The office of the Dean of Students will also serve as the Secretary of the Graduate Appeals Committee, as well as, an ad-hoc, non-voting member. The Dean of Students is a valuable source of information, based on prior history with undergraduate students.

Dr. Hosie directed the Council to page 4 –Decision of the GAHC. The academic misconduct policy originally called for Alternative A:

“The GAHC makes a case determination which is forwarded to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Office for a final decision.
After discussion with Mr. White, who recommended the committee should make this decision and allow an appeal to the Provost and Vice President, but only under certain circumstances that brought the committee to Alternative B:

"The Chair of the GAHC informs the accused of (a) the decision, (b) if guilty, the sanction imposed, (c) his/her right to appeal to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs for one of the following criteria:

- Procedures for academic misconduct were not followed
- Sanction was arbitrarily harsh or capricious
- New evidence became available

The student must file written appeal with the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs within 10 official working days following the decision rendered by the GAHC. This written appeal must describe the specific basis for the appeal. Simply restating any criteria for the appeal without further explanation is not sufficient."

Dr. Boyle visited with University Attorney, Johnny Haley, who preferred Alternative A, with the Provost making the final decision. The final appeal would be made to the GAHC, this committee making the determination would then forward it to the Provost for a final decision. Discussion followed. Dr. Bridges moved to accept Alternative B. Discussion followed. Dr. Gilbert asked that the proposal be submitted to his office for consideration by the Associate Dean’s Council, Wednesday, April 28, 2004. Dr. Hosie called for a vote of approval of policy/procedure for graduate academic misconduct. Dr. Boyle made the motion to accept Alternative B; Dr. Steve Turner seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Motion carried.

b. College of Engineering’s proposal to require 15 semester credit hours at the 8000 level on a 33-semester credit hour master’s program of study.

The Council proposes requiring at least 15 hours of 8000 level coursework for a non-thesis master’s program or 50% of coursework at 8000 level for a thesis master’s program. Dr. Boyle made the motion to accept, Dr. Ed Milam seconded motion. Discussion followed. Dr. Hosie called for a vote with a show of hands. Yes (5), No (2), (1) Abstention. Motion carried.

c. Modification to the Graduate Bulletin Committee (Dr. John Boyle, Ms. Rita Burrell, Dr. Barbara Spencer).

Dr. Boyle gave the report on the Modification to the Graduate Bulletin. Dr. Hosie asked the committee to report on the “action” items. The first issue the committee addressed related to the granting of exceptions for the following:

- Allowing an undergraduate who has a 2.70 GPA to take graduate courses.
- Use of 25 – 30 year old courses for transfer credit.
- Ignoring 8000 level requirement for Master’s degrees.
- Granting three extensions on a time limit for a degree.
- Ignoring the requirement for Ph.D. Programs of Study to be on file.
- Changing grades two-three years after receiving an Incomplete.

The committee recommended charging a $50 exception fee for every exception granted. Discussion followed. Dr. Gilbert requested all exceptions be routed for approval to the Associate Provost level. Discussion followed. Dr. Hosie encouraged the Council to review the
document regarding Modification to the Graduate Bulletin and ‘Graduate Not Good Standing’ proposals for discussion at the May 14, 2004, meeting.

New Business

a. Nominations for Council Chair and Vice Chair for the 2004-2005 academic year were requested by Dr. Hosie. Dr. Boyle nominated Dr. Hosie for Chair; Dr. Bridges seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Motion carried. Dr. R. Shavaji nominated Dr. Barbara Spencer for Vice Chair; Dr. Ed Milam seconded the nomination. There was no discussion. Motion carried. It was agreed that the electronic voting process would be used to allow each of the 15 voting members of the Council to participate in the election for Chair and Vice-Chair.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.