

## **Deans' Council Minutes August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2004**

Graduate assistants and the new Fair Labor Standards Act: Terry Pankratz and Elton Stetson discussed the implications of recent changes in the Fair Labor Standards Act, which represent the first major changes since 1949. Teachers, GTA's and GRA's are exempt from the provisions, but GANT's do not meet the salary or duties tests. As a result, we will have to keep time sheets on GANTs and pay overtime when a department uses the student for more than the approved time. A full-time GANT should work no more than 20 hours per week. Overtime payments will be drawn from departmental budgets. It is important that supervisors monitor work hours carefully and report them accurately (full time GANT = 20 hours per week).

FY 05 Projects list: Terry Pankratz indicated that Texas A&M University-Commerce has about \$1.2 million set aside for deferred maintenance in FY 05, including \$600,000 for fire and life safety issues. He would like to solicit small projects at the \$15,000 level or above by September 15, set priorities and move forward with construction this fall as well. For self-funded projects, approval of the item is still required from President's Advisory Council (PAC) but then the project may proceed more quickly.

PAC tailgate party for home games: The group discussed the use of a university-sponsored tailgate party to raise funds for the university. Deans will be encouraged to host benefactors and other contributors to the picnic and game. Tailgate parties will begin 2 hours before game time and feature "picnic" food and soft drinks.

Graduate Program Review: Elton Stetson gave a final reading to Procedure A11.10, and the Deans Council approved the recommended changes unanimously. The revised version will be sent to the Graduate Council in October for final review and then on to the President. Program reviews will be conducted this year on at least two departments.

Enrollment Report: Thad Anglin reviewed enrollment numbers which currently show a 9% increase over the same time-frame as Fall 03. Indicators are generally good, but 12% of fall 2003 freshmen are on academic suspension and 24% are on academic probation. This needs a close review. Deans requested enrollment data by college and program.

- a. Lone Star Education Coalition—recruiting in Mexico: Deans expressed interest in considering this as a source for graduate students.
- b. "My Majors" Website has been developed by staff in Academic Affairs and needs to be linked to each department, Career Services, Alumni Association and other sites.

Federal Initiatives: Elton Stetson and Joyce Scott reviewed notice from the System for proposals that government relations staff can use in seeking congressional and/or agency funding for campus initiatives. A&M-Commerce proposals will be gathered by the Office of Graduate Studies and Research and forwarded to the Vice Chancellor's Office by October 1, 2004. Two proposals from last year, one in Industrial Engineering and one in Special Education are still under consideration and will be re-submitted. Others are solicited. Contact in Graduate Studies/Research Office is Natalie Henderson (x 5161).

Pathways to the Doctorate: Elton Stetson briefed Deans on the program as an avenue for sending excellent students on to doctoral study. Directions of likely growth for the Pathways program include: implementation of a TAMU System Graduate Faculty; increased enrollment in graduate programs across the system; increased fellowship funding to send regional master's students to College Station for the doctorate; and initiatives to grow-your-own faculty in high demand areas such as the sciences.

Pathways Research Symposium for Students: The conference is scheduled in Corpus Christi for October 10-12. Proposal deadline is September 15<sup>th</sup>.

Undergraduate/Graduate Credit and Degrees Generated: Joyce Scott distributed data prepared by the Office of Institutional Research showing student credit hours generated and number of graduates per program for the past five years. These data will be shared and used in program review as well as in assessment of areas of strength and weakness for planning purposes.

Fall Conference on Ethics: Elton Stetson reported on plans for the Northeast Texas Federation meeting on the Commerce Campus October 22. In addition, Graduate Studies will host the two nationally recognized speakers for a campus workshop on October 21. Deans suggested using the Faculty Development Committee to plan the program content and format and urged inclusion of student input.

Reduced Teaching Loads for Doctoral Studies: Elton Stetson proposed a revision for Procedure A12.02 Faculty Workload, to provide that doctoral advisors garner release time for a certain number of theses or dissertations under two methods. The Deans endorsed the concept unanimously and will refer it to Graduate Council for review and final recommendation.

Two Year Timeline for the Curriculum Change Process: Deans discussed the problems created by the once-a-year curriculum change process. They requested that this be referred to the Faculty Senate with their recommendations. Recommendations/observations include:

- a. Curriculum and program revision is a continuous process and could be facilitated by a continuous approval process.
- b. Review and change processes could be expedited by an online service to propose, convey and approve course and program changes.
- c. Departments should get feedback about the status of their proposed changes at each stage of the review process.
- d. Such a system of continuous review and revision could be implemented progressively, giving an opportunity to refine the process in stages.
- e. Changes could be implemented and published online with effective dates so students and advisors would know when new requirements came into being.

Deans noted that the university is in the process of going to every-other-year publishing for its catalog as a result of budget cuts. In these circumstances, it is more important to have a timely and flexible method of making and announcing course and program changes.

Quality Guidelines for Master's Theses. Graduate Studies has established guidelines to assist master's students and advisors in developing proposals and theses. These are available from the Office of Graduate Studies.