

**GRADUATE COUNCIL  
MINUTES  
April 5, 2006**

**Present:** Muehsam, Ashorn, Creighton, Mullings, Plishker, Plugge, Price, and Tayebi

**I. Approval of February 15, 2006 minutes**

The minutes of the February 15, 2006 meeting were approved.

**II. IELTS**

Dr. Muehsam distributed an IELTS (International English Language Testing System) handbook and provided a brief overview and context regarding the test. The IELTS is the universally accepted entrance exam in Europe on which a student's English language is examined. With the implementation of the Bologna Agreement in Europe, competition between the US and Europe to attract international students from Asia and Africa, as well as those from Europe, has heightened. SHSU should consider whether or not the IELTS should be accepted in addition to the TOEFL for admission consideration at SHSU. As many students may be applying to universities in both countries, consideration should be given to the student's willingness/ability to take a second exam evaluating their English language abilities.

Should individual departments choose to accept the IELTS in the interim, a waiver for the TOEFL should be requested from the Dean of Graduate Studies. Committee members were asked to review the handout and be prepared to discuss the issue at the next meeting. With the exception of Dr. Ashorn, the Committee members signaled they had no former experiences with the exam.

**III. Forms**

▪ **Scholarships**

Dr. Muehsam distributed the proposed Office of Graduate Studies Recruitment Scholarship Form for the Committee's review and comments. The Committee agreed that the form should be available to students online. The Committee discussed that the form was to be used for recruiting purposes, for incoming students only. Minor modifications were suggested, which upon implementation, will allow the form to be placed online.

▪ **Student Travel**

Dr. Muehsam distributed the proposed Graduate Student Travel Funds Request form for the Committee's review and comments. The Committee discussed the value of providing funds for student travel in relation to recruitment and retention. The Committee proposed that the instructions be modified to include a statement directing student employees to the appropriate form. A discussion followed addressing the maximum amount of \$1000 stated on the form. To allow the programs to place more restrictive limits without catching the wrath of their students, it was decided that Dr. Muehsam would develop more vague wording to inform students of the amount of reimbursement they may expect to receive.

The issue was raised as to whether students could receive registration expenses in advance of the travel. The Committee discussed the advantages and disadvantages to the idea, pointing out that students may choose not to travel after receiving the funds, creating a collection problem for the university.

- **Admission Exam Waiver**

Dr. Muehsam informed the Committee that he had been approached with the idea that a form be created to request a waiver for the required admission exam within the Graduate Admissions Maintenance Program. The current system calls for an e-mail to be sent to the Dean of Graduate Studies with a justification for the waiver to be granted. The proposed form will be available on the web and would allow an advisor to request multiple waivers at once. The Committee agreed that this was a good idea. Upon the creation of the form, it will be posted to the web.

#### **IV. Self-Study**

Tabled for future discussion.

#### **V. Graduate Faculty Status**

Dr. Muehsam informed the Committee that the Doctoral Advisory Committee had discussed a modification to the Graduate Faculty Status policy whereby classifications of graduate faculty would identify those members eligible to teach graduate classes or serve as chair on thesis/dissertation committees. The current Graduate Faculty Status policy is vague in its descriptions of the various levels/classifications of membership.

The issue was raised as to what constitutes a member being qualified to teach graduate courses. The Committee agreed that the faculty member must be current within their field. While making presentations might qualify the faculty member to teach, a more active research record should be required for those chairing thesis/dissertation committees. The Committee raised the question of whether experience in serving on thesis/dissertation committees should play a role in determining who is qualified to chair a thesis/dissertation committee. The possibility exists that certain changes to the policy could lead to non-tenured faculty members chairing committees.

The Committee discussed the timeline on which the policy should be rewritten and taken to the CAD for consideration. Dr. Muehsam would like to take something to the Faculty Senate before the end of the year. A goal was set to have something written within the next two weeks to bring back to the Committee. Members Tayebi and Creighton volunteered to assist Dr. Muehsam in the writing of this draft policy. It was suggested that a transition period be provided. It was pointed out that all University policies should serve as minimum standards, with departments enforcing stricter guidelines, when appropriate.

#### **VI. Miscellaneous**

Muehsam provided an update to the Committee relating to the campus-wide awareness effort of graduate programs. The cost for printing posters will be

minimal. Posters can be varied, with some being generic and some being specific to discipline. Members should think about what programs could be logically grouped together and where these posters should be displayed. It was suggested that a generic poster be posted at The University Center.

Dr. Muehsam announced that although the Spring 2006 numbers had been down, the Fall and Summer numbers were significantly up.

Debra Price informed the Committee that the Doctoral visiting teams for the proposed doctorate in Reading were on campus.

Kandi Tayebi raised the question of whether the online application status check for graduate students had been modified to include the terminology “unofficial status notification.” Dr. Muehsam responded by letting the Committee know that the website was being modified.