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# Why has there been an unacceptable level of failure of communication this summer between the Graduate College and applicants to graduate school?

Submitted by: Annette Laing

9/3/2003

## **Senate Response:**

The SEC received one agenda item request (which is on the current agenda) and three information requests. He referred the first information request to Dean Charles Hardy of the Graduate College.

(Secretary's Note: an information request was submitted from Annette Laing (CLASS) concerning delays on the part of the College of Graduate Studies in responding to applications for admission to our graduate programs; the inquiry Dr. Hardy refers to is this.)

Charles Hardy (Acting Dean, College of Graduate Studies) thanked Cyr for the invitation to report on the progress of the reorganization of the College of Graduate Studies, particularly improvements in the enrollment services area. This was a concern expressed to him by many when he accepted the position. At that time, there were 15,000 files that either needed to be acted upon or archived. As a means to prevent such a massive task from recurring, he proposed a new model that partnered the College of Graduate Studies with the Office of Admissions. Dr. Teresa Thompson assumed responsibilities as Director of Graduate Admissions. This was a challenging transition, and while they have had a lot of positive feedback recently, this was not always the case. Communication delays may have resulted in students opting to attend other institutions. There was a diligent effort to identify existing problems and act appropriately. He believes they have turned the corner in this respect and is optimistic in light of the improved communication between program directors and applicants.

Addressing the inquiry, Dean Hardy stated that there were 1,441 applicants for Fall '03 admission, the highest number ever. Graduate enrollment was also high in the summer term.

There are 1,955 graduate students, just short of the 2,000 goal set as part of the strategic plan to make 20% of the campus population graduate students. Comparison of

the Fall '03 data with that from Fall 1998-2002 saw an increase of 27% in the number of applications processed. The acceptance rate increased 21%, and the enrollment ratio was 74% (compared to the five-year enrollment ratio of 70%.) Dean Hardy proposed that while there were problems in the transition, he does not believe it negatively impacted the overall graduate program. They are taking steps to ensure no reoccurrence of those problems. Increased involvement of technology in the admissions process leads him to believe that it will be entirely electronic by Spring 2004. Dean Hardy reiterated that they are having success in improving the admissions process, and it remains their highest priority. He requested constant input from everyone involved so they may respond immediately to guarantee that not one student is lost.

Annette Laing (CLASS) asked for Dean Hardy's personal pledge that we will not be remiss in getting admission letters out in the future, which she received.