

GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION

ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING, SERVICE, AND CITIZENSHIP

PROGRAM ELEMENTS, APPROVAL PROCESS, IMPLEMENTATION

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

- The **GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION** program is designed to engage students in the goals and selected aims of MSUM's Mission Statement in meaningful ways beyond the requirements of major programs of study and the general education program Dragon Core.
 - *Minnesota State University Moorhead develops knowledge, talent, and skills for a lifetime of learning, service, and citizenship.*
 - *Aim 2: To provide instruction at all levels that stimulates and promotes commitment to life-long learning and to open inquiry that promotes development of higher order thinking skills and of multicultural, global and international perspectives. Further, to provide instruction that encourages and empowers students to contribute as educated, compassionate, and responsible citizens in their communities, states, nations, and the world.*
 - *Aim 11: To provide students a range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities as well as opportunities related to community service and leadership as a means of developing social awareness and enhancing the quality of their lives and developing their potential to thrive in a changing world.*
- The decision to participate in the **GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION** program rests with departments, schools, colleges, or perhaps, collections of departments whose disciplines are similar.
- **GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION** can be selected by students in any participating major if they are in good academic standing and are making satisfactory progress toward degree completion. This program recognizes engaged and active students; it is not a program open only to those who present a GPA at a predetermined level or complete a selected set of courses.
- While the specific requirements students complete to **GRADUATE WITH DISTINCTION** can be different in different major programs of study, the overall framework and goals are shared among the departments, schools, collection of departments, or colleges that choose to participate.
- To **GRADUATE WITH DISTINCTION**, students must document (see implementation strategy below) significant engagement in each of the program's six categories, as well as write a self-reflective paper on the overall

DRAFT, **GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION** program, 11/15/2006

experience and prepare and present a professional résumé that includes a section on **GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION** program engagement activities. The six program categories are,

Engagement in learning within the major.
Engagement in learning beyond the major.

Engagement in service within the University.
Engagement in service beyond the University.

Engagement in citizenship within the region.
Engagement in citizenship beyond the region.

- Students must complete one engagement activity in each of the program's six categories and one of the engagement activities must involve working as part of a team.
- Students will be responsible for collecting and providing to the chairperson appropriate documentation that the six categories have been completed, as well as the final reflective paper and professional résumé.
- All of the requirements for **GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION** must be completed and approved by the chairperson no later than the date students submit all materials for graduation from MSUM. The chairperson indicates on the request for graduation forms that all requirements for **GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION** have been met.
- **GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION IN THE DEPARTMENT, SCHOOL, COLLEGE OR DEPARTMENTAL GROUPING** will appear on the students' official transcripts and in the graduation program.
- *Discussion: Should transfer students be permitted to transfer in (to a specific program) any engagement activities, with appropriate documentation?*

APPROVAL PROCESS

- Departments, schools, colleges, or collections of disciplinarily similar departments prepare a proposal that delineates what will be required of students who desire to **GRADUATE WITH DISTINCTION IN THE DEPARTMENT, SCHOOL, COLLEGE, OR DEPARTMENTAL GROUPING (THE FINE ARTS, for example)**. The proposal will include not only a description of the activity required in each category, but also a statement in each of the six categories that indicates the learning outcomes students will make progress towards by engaging in each activity.
- Chairperson(s) will sign off on the proposal and forward it to the College Dean for approval.

DRAFT, **GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION** program, 11/15/2006

- The College Dean submits the proposal to a new University Committee, the **GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION** committee, described below,

Purpose: To review proposals for requirements or changes in requirements for **GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION IN THE DEPARTMENT, SCHOOL, COLLEGE, OR DEPARTMENTAL GROUPING**. Once proposals are reviewed, and perhaps revised by the proposal developer(s) in consultation with this committee, the committee chairperson returns the proposal to the developer(s) for sign off on any revisions and subsequent forwarding to the Dean for approval. The Dean submits the proposal to Academic Affairs for placement on an APAC agenda.

Membership: 2 faculty members from each college, distributed as follows: Arts and Humanities (1 from the fine arts, 1 from the humanities); Business and Industry (1 from the School of Business, 1 from the other departments); Education and Human Services (1 from the School of Teaching and Learning, 1 from human services); Social and Natural Sciences (1 from social sciences, 1 from natural sciences); 2 students, at least one of whom is a member of the Student Senate; 2 from Student Affairs; 1 from Records Office; 1 Dean. (14 members)

Reports to: The Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs and Student Affairs

IMPLEMENTATION

- Students will work with their academic advisors to develop plans for what will be accomplished in each of the six categories of the **GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION** program.
- After each of the engagement activities is accomplished, students complete a form on which they indicate which category has been completed; describe briefly the engagement activity and what they did; share what they learned, what life-long benefit(s) they believe they gained, and what they value about the experience; and obtain the signature of the person(s) who supervised the engagement activity or, perhaps, taught the course. (If the engagement is completed through participation in a series of events, students will be responsible for providing the advisor with documentation of participation.) Students provide copies of each of the six completed forms to the advisor for inclusion in the advising file and students also retain copies for themselves. Advisors maintain a **GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION** check off sheet, on which progress towards completion of this program is recorded.
- When the six engagement activities have been completed, students write a final self-reflective essay about what the program means to them, how it contributes to preparing them to make the transition from the University to the next phase of their lives, and what effect it will most likely have on engagement in learning, service and citizenship to their lifetimes. Moreover, at this time as well, students prepare professional résumés, which include a section on the six engagement activities accomplished in the **GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION** program.

DRAFT, GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION program, 11/15/2006

- Students submit to the chairperson, at the time the chairperson signs off on the request for graduation, the **GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION** file, which consists of nine items:
 - Copies of the six completed engagement activity forms, one for each of the categories in the **GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION** program.
 - Copy of the self-reflective essay.
 - Copy of the professional résumé.
 - Copy of the check off sheet.
- Chairpersons might request written permission from students to use selected excerpts from these files in recruitment efforts or promotional materials. In any event, the chairperson should retain copies of **GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION** files for appropriate use in departmental assessment of student learning efforts.

Forms to prepare/revise:

1. Prepare check off sheet.
2. Prepare engagement activity reporting form.
3. Revise the application for graduation form to include a check off for **GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION IN THE DEPARTMENT, SCHOOL, COLLEGE, OR DEPARTMENTAL GROUPING.**

Additional work to do:

We need to create a website for the **GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION** program that includes examples of engagement activities (such as those provided on the following three pages), approved **GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION** departmental, school, college, or departmental grouping proposals, provides convenient access to program all forms, and serves as a clearinghouse for internal and external constituents with interest in becoming involved with the **GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION** program. The latter is envisioned as a “Job Shop” for engagement activity opportunities.