July 2, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO:       Dr. Cliff Fedler
FROM:     Norm Hopper
RE:       College Response to Graduate Program Review of the Masters of Agricultural Programs

In general, the Graduate Program Review of the Masters of Agricultural Program is descriptive; however, certain comments are in order.

The only major concern relative to the program expressed by the committee several times in the review was the low number of enrolled students during the review period. While this is true, it should be noted that historically, this program has been larger. Part of the reason for this more recent decline in enrollment is due to competition from other relatively new (initiated during the last few years) and promoted non-thesis programs offered by most departments in the College. Since most potential graduate students work with departmental advisors, they are now typically encouraged to participate in the departmental programs as opposed to the college program. This is a practice that we do not discourage. As a result, to make the college program more appealing, we are “redefining” it such that it will fill a niche market. Three strategies are being utilized. First, we feel the greatest demand in the future for this program will come in the distance learning arena as opposed to the residence program. As a result we are actively expanding the distance learning component (i.e. developing more courses for distance delivery). The second strategy involves the development of unique offerings within the program. These include offering the degree program in conjunction with 1) the Principle Professional Certification (upon successful completion, students have a Masters degree

Box 42123 | Lubbock, Texas 79409-2123 | T 806.742.2808 | F 806.742.2836
An EEO/Affirmative Action Institution
and are certified to be an administrator) and 2) the Masters International Program with
the Peace Corps (upon successful completion students have a Masters degree and a 27
month completed assignment with the Peace Corps). The third strategy is that we are
initiating a more aggressive marketing strategy. Now that we have the above new
offerings (programs and courses), we can market the uniqueness of this program.

It should be noted that this is a “low cost” program in that it “piggy backs” on the
departmental programs and courses. Faculty involvement and course offerings are at the
departmental level and students in the college program are just enrolled with their
students. These additional students in their classes often help the classes to “make” and
also provides for semester credit hour generation—all at essentially no extra cost.
I was somewhat disappointed that the report scarcely acknowledged the contributions
made to the departmental programs (course offerings, SCH generation, etc.) as well as the
quality of students in the program. I will acknowledge, however, that only minimal data
were provided since this information is credited at the departmental level.

In conclusion, we feel that the program is a quality program that is, and will continue to
be, one that fills a niche at little or no cost. At the same time that it may be “competing”
with other non-thesis programs for students it is also complementary in supporting the
offering of classes and generating SCH.

I would like to express appreciation to the committee for their time and efforts in
conducting an in-depth review of the program and providing a report. Appreciation is
expressed to those in the Graduate School who facilitated the review and provided much
of the data. Several in the Dean’s Office helped in the preparation of the
documentation—for this I am grateful. Special appreciation is expressed to Dean Cepica,
Dean Borelli, Provost Marcy and others for their kind and complementary comments
about the program during the review session.

NWH:lb