

EDITOR'S CORNER

Target: 100 M.S. and Ph.D. Graduate Degrees

Many readers of this journal without a doubt have gone through either an M.S. or a Ph.D. defense or both. Those moments are truly unforgettable in one's academic life. All those who went through the ordeal will remember the preparation, the practices, the actual presentation, the question and answer period with the general audience, the dreaded closed-door defense with the committee members grilling you on things related to your topic matters and even those not related to your discipline, and the feeling of nervousness in pacing the floor outside the examination room waiting for the committee to call you in to tell you the result of the ballot. Wow, such forever-lasting memories.

Recently, in a span of a few days, I completed my 94th (an M.S.), 95th (a Ph.D.) and 96th (an M.S.) students as the major professor. It was quite a hectic time to have so many students defending their theses in such a short period. Fortunately, all of them passed and will graduate this coming graduation ceremony.

Among the pleasures included in these defense meetings are the food and drinks provided by the candidates. I gained a couple of pounds just munching the food in these 2-h defense sessions. Word spread that the better the food, the easier the defense and so the students tried to outdo each other, especially the foreign ones. In a couple of cases, it was like a banquet during the defense, with many leftovers kept for the department secretaries.

There is no word to describe the joy beaming from a successful candidate after a successful defense. What a relief, pride, satisfaction, exhilaration and a sense of accomplishment for each successful candidate. The candidate will call his/her mother, father, husband/wife, significant other, children, relatives and benefactors as soon as possible to announce one of the greatest achievements of his/her life!

For that reason, I have NEVER sent a candidate for defense whom I think has a chance of failure. I work with each student steadily throughout their graduate career and especially during the preparation of the thesis and practices for the defense. My mission is to correct and return a manuscript to the student after I have received it for correction in 24 h. In my long career, many sleepless nights were dedicated to correcting these masterpieces. I have a book in which I have every name logged, every degree received and every successful defense numbered since 1972.

Because I still have about 10 graduate students in my group, I think I will complete 100 graduate students as the major professor by 2006. I will buy 100 T-shirts and number them from 1 to 100 and have a great party for everyone involved!

I wonder who the 100th student might be. The students are currently jockeying for the 100th position. Even I do not know, but I will let them guess until the announcement of the 100th defense!

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