

May 6, 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: Karen Butler-Purry
Associate Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies

FROM: Christodoulos A. Floudas
Director, Texas A&M Energy Institute

SUBJECT: Exception request for non-thesis option in the Master of Science in Energy

*Handwritten signature and date: 05/06/16
Grad Council Chair*

The new Master of Science in Energy at Texas A&M University is a unique and truly interdisciplinary degree program. Through a 10-month long program, featuring thesis and non-thesis options, the Master of Science in Energy aims to expose students and professionals to (a) important energy challenges and opportunities, and (b) advances in theory, methods, technologies, and applications delivered by energy leaders from academia, industry, and government, through a module-based structure and a distinguished seminar series.

The non-thesis option requires 23 modules, as well as attendance at seminars, and results in 36.5 student credit hours. This option has been approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for delivery to students or professionals in residence or online via distance learning. Each module will be 1.5 weeks long and will have 5 teaching days, including a total of 22 hours of lecture/lab material (22 contact hours) with 4.4 hours of lectures per teaching day. All modules require final exams at the conclusion of the instruction period.

By design, the inherent breadth of the Master of Science in Energy program lends itself well to smaller examinations of the specialized topics that each module covers. A truly comprehensive final exam would, therefore, require input from 23 or more faculty members from across the university and would contain content that has already been tested in each module. The value of having a final exam to reexamine course content is not commensurate with the faculty effort – effort that is thought to be applied better to the evaluation of thesis option research exams. **The Texas A&M Energy Institute, therefore, seeks approval to allow an exemption to the final exam requirement for Master of Science in Energy non-thesis option students.**

Coupled with this examination waiver is a proposed centralization of the student advisory committee. With the coursework only option available to non-thesis students, along with the lack of a final exam, the need for a three-member advisory committee is unnecessary. **We seek approval to adopt a committee of fewer than three members for Master of Science in Energy non-thesis option students, specifically a single graduate committee faculty advisor that will serve in the capacity of an advisory committee.**

Please let me know if there is additional information that we might provide.

