Dr. John Boyle called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. in 611 Allen Hall and asked those present to introduce themselves.

Minutes.

The minutes of the September meeting were presented. A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to adopt the minutes.

University Committee on Courses and Curricula Report.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the modification of graduate courses submitted by the University Committee on Courses and Curricula (UCCC). Proposed curricula modification was in the Master of Science in Agronomy (thesis and non-thesis), Master of Science in Horticulture (thesis and non-thesis), Doctor of Business Administration/Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Business Administration, and Master of Science Degree in Secondary Education. Motion was approved unanimously.

Report from Graduate Studies.

Dr. Person gave a report on the renewal of graduate faculty status.

Dr. Person reported on the status of the grant from the National Science Foundation through the Mississippi Research Consortium. The purpose of the project is to attract outstanding doctoral students in Math, Science, and Engineering programs, where minority students are underrepresented. Dr. Person distributed an abstract of the NSF MGE Proposal, with an introduction and statement of purpose.

Applications have been received for the staff assistant position in the Office of Graduate Studies, and the staff is in the process of reviewing applications.

Dr. Person discussed a report sent recently to the Office of the Provost summarizing data for 1998-99. One of the interesting things found is that out of the students accepted to graduate school during Fall1998 semester, seven out of ten matriculated. This is an increase from less than 50% from Fall1997 semester to 70% for Fall1998 semester.
Dale Welch reported on graduation figures. There are 359 graduates on the list. There are 87 doctoral applicants, 8 educational specialists, and 274 master’s applicants for December graduation. There were 75 doctoral applicants in December 1998, and 63 in December 1997.

Report from Graduate Student Association.

Matthew Burnham reported for the Graduate Student Association. The GSA will be sponsoring a booth at this year’s Halloween Carnival. The next meeting of the association will be held November 2. Invitations to the annual banquet will be distributed at that meeting. Speakers from the MSU Police Department and Student Housing will be present to talk about parking issues and housing for single graduate students. November 5 is the date for the GSA barbecue; invitations were distributed to the Council. Mr. Burnham distributed a breakdown of activity fees and a proposal for redistribution of graduate student activity fees.

Old Business.

Dr. Boyle discussed Graduate Council voting procedures and distributed a modification of the Library Committee voting procedures. Discussion of the procedures followed. Motion was made and seconded that the procedures be accepted with a modification that on matters to be considered non-routine four members (voting or non-voting) [rather than two members] present at the meeting request this option. Votes on routine matters of the Graduate Council will be by a show of hands of those present at the meeting in which the motion is presented. The motion will carry if a majority of voting members of the Council or their proxies who are present are in favor. Matters will be considered non-routine if four members (voting or non-voting) present at this meeting request this option.

Votes on non-routine matters of the Graduate Council will take place at the meeting after the one in which the motion is made. Minutes summarizing discussion will be distributed by mail and e-mail to all Council members at least one week prior to the next meeting. Members who cannot be present at the meeting at which the vote will be taken may submit their vote via e-mail to the chair of the Council prior to the meeting or they may designate a proxy to attend the meeting. A vote of those present at the meeting will be taken by a show of hands. The total votes counted will be those cast by voting members or proxies present at the meeting and those cast by e-mail prior to the meeting. A motion on a topic designated non-routine will pass if approved by a simple majority of those voting as designated above.

Dale Welch discussed programs of study for master’s and Ph.D. students. The program will be developed after the first semester of enrollment by the student in conjunction with a major professor and other faculty serving on the student’s program committee (as directed by department policy). All individuals including the student must sign the program. Master’s and educational specialist programs of study are to be filed in the department until the student applies for graduation. The original program with all corrections made to it will be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies during the semester in which the student applies for graduation.

Doctoral programs should be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies during the second semester of full-time enrollment or upon completion of at least 12 hours of course work. Changes in the
programs should only be made with the concurrence of the major professor and the graduate coordinator. The changed programs need to be retained only in the department and should not be transmitted to the Office of Graduate Studies. Changes will be made in the department. Doctoral committee changes should be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies. The completed, formal program of study will be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies during the semester in which the student applies for graduation. The degree audit will be completed, and approval for graduation will be confirmed. If a discrepancy is found, the department will have to file an appeal with the dean of the college.

The question was raised whether this proposal should be submitted as an AOP and through the approval process. Discussion followed regarding the approval process for AOPs and whether the Graduate Council represents the graduate faculty.

Motion was made and seconded to approve the proposal and to submit as academic operating policy.

New Business.

Diane Wolfe discussed admissions fees. It is proposed that application fees for international students be increased to $50. Several of our sister schools have a different rate of application fees for internationals as opposed to domestic students. Of new graduate applicants, 26.8% enrolled were domestic students. Of the 59% of those who applied, only 9% of the international applicants actually enrolled. Of the 1,756 international students who applied for admission last year, only 158 actually enrolled.

At MSU this fee is a one-time fee. The University of Kentucky charges $30 for domestic students and $35 for international. Vanderbilt charges $40 across the board. The University of Arkansas charges $40 and $50. The University of Southern Mississippi charges $25 and $25. LSU, the University of Alabama and the University of Mississippi charge $25 and $25. Under current policy, if the fee has been paid once, the student does not have to pay it again, regardless of the time lapse in attendance. It was suggested that each time a student applies for graduate admission, a fee should be assessed. The College of Engineering is considering the self-managed application process. The main justification for seeking an increase in application fees is the low percentage of applicants actually enrolled.

Diane Wolfe discussed a cut-off date for application for admissions. For international applications only, a July 1 deadline is proposed. Anything received after July 1 would not be processed for the following fall semester. A November 1 deadline is proposed for the spring semester. For summer school, proposed deadlines are April 1 for first term and May 1 for second term. Deadlines for undergraduate students are posted on the MSU web page. Consensus is that deadlines for graduate admission should also be posted.

Diane Wolfe presented a proposal for transcript evaluation for graduate admissions. It was discovered that graduate admissions transcripts are evaluated differently than undergraduate. Recommendation was made to use the undergraduate method of evaluation as the graduate admissions method. This method is also used by the Registrar’s staff for other University matters. Adoption of this recommendation should not be construed as infringing on an academic department’s right to use other criteria in making admission decisions. The undergraduate method
currently in use holds undergraduate applicants to a higher standard of admission than that to which graduate applicants are held. Having one unified transcript evaluation method would simplify internal admissions operations. This does not eliminate the departments’ responsibility for evaluating related qualitative and quantitative information presented in the candidate’s application. Discussion followed.

New Business to be carried forward to next meeting will be
- Teaching and research assistants’ stipends and tuition waivers
- Graduate student fees
- Updated criteria for graduate faculty

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.