Dr. John Boyle called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. in room 611 Allen Hall.

Dr. Boyle presented the minutes for the Graduate Council meeting held on October 27, 2000. Dr. Lynn Reinschmiedt informed the Council that the page numbers are incorrect in item number six of the minutes for the October meeting in which proposals were approved as follows:

“The Ph.D. residency policy stated on page 47 of the Graduate Bulletin would be replaced with “Ph.D. students will be required to complete one-half of required course work and all dissertation credits from Mississippi State University.”

“It would also be advisable to change the Ph.D. transfer credit statement on page 49 of the Graduate Bulletin to: “With the approval of the student’s Graduate committee, graduate course work done elsewhere may be accepted toward fulfilling requirements for this degree. This must be approved by the degree-granting department. In cases of this kind, however, dissertation credits must be taken from Mississippi State University.”

The page numbers in these statements should be replaced with 49 and 51 respectively.

Dr. Boyle informed the Council that he sent a letter to the Provost indicating the Council’s recommendations concerning residency requirements. The Provost sent a letter to the academic department heads and graduate coordinators requesting comments about the recommendations by November 17, 2000. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the corrected minutes of the Graduate Council meeting held on October 27, 2000.
3. Dr. Boyle presented the report from the University Committee on Courses and Curricula. Dr. Boyle announced that the changes included in the report for Landscape Architecture and General Business Administration are undergraduate programs and do not require Graduate Council consideration. Included for Council consideration were two proposals from the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering to establish Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Biomedical Engineering.

Dr. Richard Harkess asked if a Bachelor’s degree would be required for admission to the program. Dr. Jerry Gilbert, Head of the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, stated that in the last paragraph on page nine of the proposal and on the following page it is stated that early admission status would indicate that a student would be admitted into the master’s program after the submission of GRE scores and the completion of the B.S. degree from the student’s undergraduate institution with a grade point average of 3.0 or greater. Dr. Gilbert stated that this would be an early identification status rather than early admission. A student would be required to meet all requirements before being granted admission. Dr. Tom Hosie asked if the chart on page 14 included the faculty for both degree programs or for each individual program. Dr. Gilbert stated that the faculty listed would cover both degree programs. He also stated that the department is not requesting additional faculty; this would be a reallocation of effort within existing faculty positions. Dr. Boyle asked if a student could be accepted to the Ph.D. program without a master’s degree. Dr. Gilbert said that a student must hold a master’s degree to be accepted. Dr. Boyle stated that it is emphasized in the proposal that the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMC) is in support of this program; however, the only letter of support included is from the Dental School. Dr. Gilbert stated that the Dean of the Graduate School at UMC suggested that since we already have a faculty member who holds a joint appointment with the Dental School that we should continue to work through that association. Therefore the letter of support is from the Dental School. Dr. Gilbert also stated that the sentiment from UMC is that this should be a joint program in which degrees could be awarded from UMC and MSU; however, at this time that is not possible. Dr. Reinschmidt asked if it is the expectation of the department that this be a joint program in the future. Dr. Gilbert responded that he would not rule that out; however, he did not want to compromise anything from the College of Engineering in order to obtain UMC’s participation. Dr. Gilbert feels that there is a significant interest around the state in Biomedical Engineering. It is his opinion that if MSU does not establish this program that another institution with lesser qualifications, background, and expertise will establish a degree program within a year or two. Dr. Boyle stated that he believes there needs to be a letter from UMC in order to obtain board approval for this program.

Dr. Gilbert stated that permission has been obtained to use chief academic officer rather than chief financial officer in the proposal. Dr. Gilbert informed the Council that the proposal has not been submitted to the Board of Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL). IHL will not consider degree proposals until February.
Dr. Gilbert said that the Biological Engineering program would be retained. The department would like to change the CIP classification on the Biological Engineering program to Agricultural Engineering if the program in Biomedical Engineering is accepted.

Dr. Duane Gill stated that Biomedical Engineering is something that has profound human impacts. He expressed concern because there is nothing in the proposal about human ethics, philosophy, or the direction that Biomedical Engineering is taking. There were no ethics or philosophy courses that presented some of the ethical situations that people face. He was concerned about not training students with how to address ethical issues.

Dr. Gilbert stated there is no genetic engineering or molecular biology component to the program at this time; however one may be established in the future. He said it did have potential ethical questions related to the extension of life, but nothing to do with genetics. Dr. Boyle stated that at this time there are no funds available to hire a faculty member to teach bio-ethical issues. Right now the best that can be done is to send someone to a workshop.

Dr. Stephen Schoenholtz asked if it would not be realistic to consider expanding the FTE’s and hire additional faculty members as the number of students increased in this program. Dr. Gilbert said they would rely on the additional FTE’s to come from other departments within the College of Engineering. Dr. Gilbert said the program was designed so that additional faculty would not be required. He said that once the program begins to grow they hope to be able to go outside of the university to find support for additional faculty.

Dr. Ted Kohers asked if it would be necessary to maintain good ties with UMC in order to have a successful program. Dr. Gilbert said that most of the research done in biomedical engineering is not done at the clinical level, but at the basic science and animal level. A researcher who was here a year ago felt that MSU would have a distinct advantage by having a veterinary school attached to the program rather than a medical school. Dr. Gilbert does not feel that the absence of a medical school at MSU will be a disadvantage. Dr. Boyle called for a motion. A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to approve the proposals to establish a Master of Science degree and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Biomedical Engineering.

4. Dr. Robert Taylor, Associate Dean of the College of Engineering, distributed copies of the guidelines for establishing certificate programs in the College of Engineering. He said the purpose of the program was to allow the college to have a concentration of study that is cross-disciplinary but identifiable. The purpose of the program is to provide this educational experience to current students at either the undergraduate or the graduate level. The two certificate programs currently available in the College of Engineering are in the areas of Materials Engineering and Software Engineering. In order to participate in the Software Engineering program the student must have completed a bachelor’s degree. After a discussion concerning minimum grades and
hourly requirements, Dr. Boyle thanked Dr. Taylor for presenting the College of Engineering’s requirements to the Council. Dr. Boyle informed the Council that he would draft a proposal for the Council’s consideration of certificate programs at a later meeting.

5. Dr. William Person reported that the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) is advertising to fill a position for an Administrative Assistant I, time limited. This person will work with the Alliance for Graduate Education in Mississippi (AGEM) program and perform duties within the OGS.

Dr. Person also reported that he has been working with the departments of Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry to put together three separate proposals for the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need Fellowship program beginning next year. They are asking for four fellowships within each academic area. The total value of each fellowship is approximately $25,000.00. The proposals must be submitted to the Department of Education by December 15, 2000.

Dr. Person announced that Dr. Boyle had assisted him in the review of the recruitment assistance grant proposals. Letters are being sent to the 24 award recipients. Dr. Person distributed copies of the first AGEM newsletter. The annual AGEM conference is planned for January 25-27, 2001, at the Eagle Ridge Conference Center in Raymond, MS.

6. Mr. Michael Rybolt reported that the Graduate Student Association (GSA) has held two meetings with approximately 30 people in attendance at each meeting. He reported that they are working with the Student Association to organize a campus clean-up. They are also working on two community projects, Stuffing Stockings for Santa and Angel Tree. Mr. Rybolt announced that Ms. Carrie Weaver, GSA President, requested that he thank the Council members for encouraging attendance at GSA meetings.

7. Dr. George Rent had an addition to the agenda concerning graduate unclassified students. He informed the council that Ms. Diane Wolfe had inquired as to whether or not the TOEFL requirement applies to unclassified students. The Graduate Bulletin states that all international students must have an acceptable TOEFL score. After a lengthy discussion a motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to require international students to submit an appropriate TOEFL score for admission as an unclassified student.

8. Dr. Boyle stated that compliance issues would be considered at the next Council meeting. There was a general consensus to not hold a Council meeting in December 2000.

9. The meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.