Dr. Dwayne Wise welcomed a number of visitors in the room and asked for introductions.

Dr. Wise asked for any revisions to the minutes (January 30, 2009).

Dr. Wise pointed out the misspelling of the word *yea* on page 2 and asked that the spelling be corrected.

Motion was made by Dr. Larry Barrow and seconded by Dr. Daniel Reynolds to accept the minutes with the noted amendment above.

Minutes were approved by acclamation.

3. University Committee on Courses and Curricula (UCCC)

Three degree modifications and one new degree program will be presented to Graduate Council:
- Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Science, new program
- Master of Science in Civil Engineering, AOCE Approval
- PhD in Engineering (Civil Engineering), AOCE Approval
- Master of Science in Secondary Education, modification

4. Report from the Office of the Graduate School (OGS) (Handout)

Dr. Louis D’Abramo was not present. In his absence, Dr. Wise distributed a written report submitted by Dr. D’Abramo with the following information:

- Graduate enrollment for Spring 2009 is 3251; Graduate Assistantships for Spring 2009 are 1085, consisting of 334 Graduate Teaching Assistants, 604 Graduate Research Assistants, and 147 Graduate Service Assistants.
- In comparison to last year, total number of applications for fall of 2009 is up 5.7% and total admitted is down about 3.1%.

- A special thanks is extended to Drs. Lynne Cossman, George Adebiyi and Burnette Hamil for their timely report on an appeal of academic status.

- The Graduate Ambassador program has been initiated with a request of Department Heads to provide names of graduate students (domestic and international) in their respective departments who are willing to be contacted by prospective students to learn more about MSU and specific graduate programs. We currently have 14 ambassadors and hope that more Department Heads will assist the Office of the Graduate School.

- The 7th Annual Graduate Student Association (GSA) Research Symposium will be held April 3, 2009 beginning at 8:30 am, in the Colvard Student Union and will consist of both a poster and an oral session for each of three categories: Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Social Sciences. Another symposium will be scheduled for the fall semester and thereafter all future symposia will occur in the fall semester. The change is based upon the many conflicts that arise with scheduling late in the spring semester. The Symposium is sponsored by the GSA.

- A Graduate Coordinator workshop will be held on Friday, March 13, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm. The workshop is designed to inform graduate coordinators about graduate policy and proper protocol, and review the OGS forms. For those who cannot attend, another workshop will be held and the date will probably be April 17.

- The OGS is awaiting approval for the hiring of a new Admissions Assistant. The request for an additional admissions assistant is founded upon the desire of the Office of the Graduate School to effectively engage the increasing workload without relinquishing its commitment to dedicated and quality service to graduate education at Mississippi State University.

- The College of Education recently completed training in the Workflow and Xtender process. We are planning to initiate Workflow and Xtender banner production in the Colleges of Forest Resources and Engineering around mid-March. When completed, 50% of our colleges will be in production. Workflow and Xtender training is being planned for the College of Arts and Sciences.

- The OGS is developing forms for use in the assignment of positions in the graduate faculty. These forms will be distributed later during this meeting and I request your review and comment at the next meeting. Some additional modifications may be needed specifically to address the contents of a report from a subcommittee of the Council and the comments of other members of the Graduate Council.

- In collaboration with the Office of the Vice President of Research and Development, the Graduate School and the Alliance for Graduate Education in Mississippi (AGEM) will
host a special workshop for graduate students focusing on their preparation of proposals for external funding to support their thesis and dissertation research projects. The date has not been finalized for this activity; however, it is anticipated that it will be scheduled around the end of March or the first of April.

- The AGEM Super Recruitment Weekend has been scheduled for April 3-4, 2009, for approximately 50 juniors and seniors in the STEM areas from Mississippi institutions and selected institutions from its contiguous states. There will be an opportunity in the program for the potential students to visit academic departments on Friday afternoon, April 3rd from 1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. The Graduate Council will be invited to the special informal reception to meet the potential students on Friday evening at the Hilton Garden Inn at 7:00 p.m.

- Our AGEM First Friday’s Networking Luncheon will be on Friday, March 6, 2009. The presenter for this luncheon will be sharing information on “The International Epidemic of Autism” with a focus on Dubai (United Arab Emirates).

- The Graduate School collaborated with ITS to develop a proposal to SunGard Higher Education Solutions for a $10,000 scholarship award to support graduate students at MSU. The winning proposal will be determined in early March and announced at the annual SunGard Higher Education Summit in late March, 2009.

5. Report from Graduate Student Association (GSA)

Mr. Terrance West, GSA President, presented the following report:

This month’s GSA was held on Tuesday, February 24, 2009, and we had 25 students in attendance. We again featured speakers at the meeting; Dr. Deborah Lee from the Library spoke about opportunities for graduate students and Dr. Janae Taylor from the Student Counseling Center spoke about the various services offered by her department.

6. Old Business

- Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Sciences (MAIS), new program

Dr. Wise stated that Graduate Council had already discussed this new degree program at some length but no decision for approval could be reached. The proposal was tabled at the January 30th meeting. Dr. Wise called for a motion to untable the MAIS program.

Dr. Meghan Millea made a motion to untable MAIS program, seconded by Dr. Reynolds. Graduate Council voted to untable the motion.

Dr. Wise referred to a list of questions regarding the MAIS program that was distributed via email. Dr. Mark Binkley and Dr. Gary Meyers answered the questions and their responses were also distributed via email.
Dr. Binkley gave a brief summary of the issue at hand. Discussion ensued.

A compromise was proposed for leaving the prefix as is to minimize BANNER problems but make changes in course titles to designate them as MAIS courses. Dr. Wise asked for objections to this proposed compromise and the Department of Physics voiced objections. Dr. Jerry Gilbert suggested adding “TC” to the prefixes, such as CHTC, MATC and PHTC.

Dr. Burnette Hamil stated that restricting subject courses to MAIS students would be a hardship for currently enrolled education graduate students who already have a difficult time finding content courses for a master’s degree. She reiterated that students in her program are teachers and should be allowed to take these courses. Dr. Wise pointed out that Dr. Hamil’s concern is an availability issue which is separate from the MAIS program approval issue.

Dr. Wise restated that the issue for Graduate Council to decide is whether the MAIS degree program is worthy of approval if the prefixes were changed. He called for an amended motion.

Dr. Millea made an motion to amend the MAIS degree program proposal to include the prefixes CHTC, MATC, PHTC, GG and BIO and the addition of “for Teachers” in the course description title. Dr. Reynolds seconded the motion.

Graduate Council voted to approve the motion for the amendment of the MAIS degree program proposal. Dr. Hamil voted nay.

Dr. Wise asked for a vote on the original motion as amended (in the January 30, 2009, meeting, Dr. Batchelor made a motion to approve the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Sciences and the motion was seconded by Dr. Younan).

Dr. Millea asked for a closed paper ballot. Paper strips were distributed and graduate council members voted in writing. Nine graduate council members voted yea and three members voted nay.

The Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Sciences (MAIS) was approved.

- Master of Science in Civil Engineering and PhD in Engineering (Civil Engineering), AOCE Approval

Graduate Council members had both degree program modifications distributed to them in advance via email. Dr. Wise called for a motion.

Mr. Terrance West made a motion to approve the AOCE modifications for the Master of Science in Civil Engineering and the Doctor of Philosophy in Engineering with a concentration in Civil Engineering. Dr. Nick Younan seconded the motion.
Discussion followed. It was pointed out that the word *remedial* should be removed from the wording in the Doctor of Philosophy proposal which would only be a grammatical change that can be implemented without additional approval.

Dr. Millea made a motion to amend the Doctor of Philosophy in Engineering with a concentration in Civil Engineering to remove the word *remedial* from the proposal. Dr. Reynolds seconded the motion.

Graduate Council voted and the amendment to the Doctor of Philosophy in Engineering was approved by acclamation.

Then Graduate Council voted again and approved both programs (the Ph.D. with the noted amendment) by acclamation.

- **Academic Fresh Start for Graduate Students (D’Abramo – Handout)**

A new policy draft had been distributed by Dean D’Abramo prior to the meeting. Graduate Council members are asked to provide feedback via email regarding this Academic Amnesty Proposal for Graduate Students. The proposal will be discussed during the next meeting.

- **Review of Criteria for Graduate Faculty Membership (Subcommittee Report: Handout - Bailey)**

Dr. Bailey had distributed a report with the findings of the subcommittee prior to the meeting. He summarized this report and stated that the language in the Graduate Bulletin should be matched to the language used for the appointment forms. In addition, Dr. Bailey pointed out that the language in publications from the Graduate School should now incorporate Dean of the Graduate School since a dean is now in place.

Dr. Wise thanked the subcommittee consisting of Drs. Hamil, Barrow, Millea and Bailey for their time and effort in examining this issue.

Dr. Gilbert pointed out that not having a terminal degree should not preclude someone from serving on a graduate committee.

Dr. Wise pointed out that the Dean of the Graduate School may conduct an audit from time to time to catch any discrepancies or errors with graduate faculty appointments.

7. **New Business**

- **Master of Science in Secondary Education, modification**

Dr. Hamil made a motion to approve the modification to the Master of Science in Secondary Education. Dr. Barrow seconded the motion.
Discussion followed. Dr. Hamil explained that the modification is necessary due to restructuring within the College of Education. The Department of Curriculum and Instruction wanted to make the course requirements for the degree more relevant for each individual student while providing more flexibility to meet student needs.

Graduate Council members voted and the motion was approved by acclamation. Dr. Donald Jackson voted nay.

- Graduate Faculty Appointment Forms (Sullivan)

Dr. Wise asked Ms. Pam Sullivan to speak regarding the Graduate Faculty Appointment forms. She explained that Dr. D’Abramo drafted new forms after he received the subcommittee report from Dr. Bailey. The new forms are more straight forward, with an Appointment/Reappointment form for Level 1, Appointment/Reappointment form for Level 2, Appointment/Reappointment of Associate (new category which includes visiting professors and adjuncts) and a replacement for the Special Appointment form which is called Graduate Program Participation form. She pointed out that the new forms state that a terminal degree is required.

Ms. Sullivan stated that the new forms are much better because they list qualifications, responsibilities and time of service for each level. She asked Graduate Council members to review the form drafts and to email her the comments. After compiling the input, a final draft of the forms will be presented at the next Graduate Council meeting.

Discussion followed. Dr. Gilbert pointed out that a person who is not a member of the faculty here or anywhere else but instead is a leader in his/her business field is no longer able to serve on an individual student’s committee with the new form. Ms. Sullivan stated that the forms are all still in draft level and that Graduate Council input is highly valued and will definitely be considered. She stated that the clarifications are necessary to prevent unauthorized committee members serving, sometimes even chairing a student’s committee.

Dr. Wise pointed out that no action is required from Graduate Council today regarding this issue. He asked that Graduate Council provide Ms. Sullivan with feedback.

Meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

The date for the next Graduate Council meeting has been set for March 27, 2009, at 1:30 p.m. in 611 Allen Hall.
January 28, 2009

Dr. Timothy N. Chamblee  
Chair, University Core and Curriculum Committee  
Mississippi State University

Dear Dr. Chamblee:

This letter concerns the decision of the Department of Physics and Astronomy to withdraw its emphasis from the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Sciences (MAIS) degree program. Over the last few years the faculty of the Department of Physics and Astronomy has debated quite extensively our inclusion in the MAIS program. Although the faculty believe in the goal of MAIS program to increase the knowledge of science among elementary and secondary educators within the state of Mississippi, we have a number of concerns about the program. Our primary concerns include the level of the content within the courses and the logistics of the program. In terms of course content, the freshman academic level of the courses does not meet the standards for courses at the graduate physics level. Although we included some courses in the program, two of these are just reworked courses which we currently attempt to offer each summer for in-service teachers. In recent years it has been difficult filling these courses. There is even some contention amongst the faculty over the level of these courses and whether we should continue to offer them. Furthermore, we do not currently plan to offer any of the physics courses included in the MAIS degree program. In terms of logistics, we are uncertain as to how homework and exams can be administered to assure that individuals taking the courses do not receive outside help. We are also concerned that the degree may be misrepresented as a masters degree in physics in trying to secure a job. Since the student's transcript will indicate courses in physics, an employer could interpret these as being legitimate graduate level physics courses. This could lead to an embarrassing situation for Mississippi State when an unqualified individual obtains employment. Although the Department had originally decided to go forward with the program, after further discussion we voted to not include an emphasis in physics. We do expect to reconsider the program in the future if our concerns can be satisfied. A number of these concerns could be met if the courses were classified as physics education or science education with a designation other than PH. The logistical problems may be answered as other departments work through the details of the program. We hope this letter satisfactorily explains our decision to withdraw from the MAIS program. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me.

The content of this letter was approved by a 15–0 vote of the faculty of the Department of Physics and Astronomy on January 28, 2009.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Jeff Allen Winger  
Acting Head, Department of Physics and Astronomy  
Mississippi State University

cc  Dr. Louis R. D'Abramo, Dean of the Graduate School  
    Dr. Dwayne A. Wise, Chair, Graduate Council
Proposed Academic Amnesty for Graduate Students

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Academic Operating Policy and Procedure (AOP) is to provide graduate students with a fair and accurate representation of current academic performance after having been readmitted into a different graduate program after no less than five years.

REVIEW

This AOP will be reviewed every five years or whenever circumstances require an earlier review by the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs (APAA) with recommendations for revision presented to the Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs.

POLICY / PROCEDURE

Academic Amnesty is designed to provide those graduate students previously enrolled at Mississippi State University the opportunity to have up to 9 hours of previously completed graduate courses eliminated from the computation of his or her grade point average upon successful readmission.

To be eligible for the program, an individual may not have been enrolled as a graduate student at Mississippi State University for at least five years. Academic amnesty may be requested of the Dean of the Graduate School through the student’s academic dean’s office after readmission to a graduate program different from that in which the student was originally enrolled. Request may be made upon successful completion of at least 12 credit hours after readmission to Mississippi State University until the end of the semester preceding that in which the student graduates.

With notification from the Dean of the Graduate School, the Registrar’s Office will segment the student’s academic record showing all courses and grades to be included in academic amnesty and recalculate the graduate GPA accordingly. Academic amnesty will be applied to the student’s record only once, and the new grade point average will be noted on the transcript at the end of the semester during which the request was approved.

All courses and grades will remain a part of the student’s academic record. A notation will appear on the transcript indicating the student was approved for academic amnesty. Those courses approved for academic amnesty and then granted cannot be revalidated or count toward the completion of a graduate degree.

Students who exercise the academic amnesty policy must complete current curriculum requirements in residency to earn a degree. This policy pertains only to Mississippi State University and students must be advised that it may not be honored at other institutions of higher learning.
NOTE: This form is a cover sheet that must accompany the degree program change proposal. The actual proposal should be prepared in accordance with format requirements provided in the Guide and Format for Curriculum Proposals published by the UCCC. Both cover sheet and proposal should be submitted, along with all required copies, to UCCC, Butler-Williams Building, Suite B, 100 Walker Road, Mail Stop 9699 (325-6831).

College or School: Engineering  Department: Civil & Environmental Eng
Contact Person: Dennis Truax  Phone: 5-3050  E-mail: truax@cee.msstate.edu
Nature of Change: AOCE Approval  Date Initiated: 01 Apr 08  Effective Date: Fall 08
Current Degree Program Name: PhD in Engineering, Civil Engineering Speciality
Major: Engineering  Concentration: Civil Engineering

Summary of Proposed Changes:

The change is to offer a PhD in Engineering with a concentration in Civil Engineering areas to students through the university's distance education program.

Approved:  
Department Head  
Chair, College or School Curriculum Committee  
Dean of College or School  
Chair, University Committee on Courses and Curricula  
Chair, Graduate Council (if applicable)  
Chair, Deans Council  

Date:  
30 Sep 08  
September 30, 2008  
9/30/08  
10/31/08
APPENDIX 8: DECLARATION OF INTENT TO OFFER A DEGREE PROGRAM BY DISTANCE LEARNING

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Institution:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of Initial Program Approval:</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 1, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Title as Appears on Academic Program Inventory, Diploma, and Transcript:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy in Engineer - Civil Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Degree(s) to be Awarded:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Program Completed by Distance Learning:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will students be allowed to mix on-campus and distance learning courses within this program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will this program require separate admission from those offered on-campus?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will this program have different fees or tuition rates from those offered on-campus?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible Academic Unit(s):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil &amp; Environmental Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students Expected to Enroll in First Six Years:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year Two</td>
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<td>Year Five</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year Six</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total 53</td>
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Program Summary:
The PhD in Engineering with a concentration in one of the technical fields of Civil Engineering will be delivered primarily via distance and is geared toward working professionals who have undergraduate degrees in engineering. Often these students reside in rural areas or small towns where the opportunity to pursue a graduate degree in Civil Engineering is unavailable; therefore, a web-based course delivery system is highly desirable.
XIV. DEGREE APPROVAL FOR CAMPUS 5 (AOCE)

A. PROPOSAL FORMAT

The proposal for approval of an existing degree program to be offered through AOCE should include:

1. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

List the full catalog description of the degree program identical to that on the degree approval form and MSU Bulletin. Additional fee requirements should be addressed in the AOCE degree description.

2. CURRICULUM OUTLINE

Provide a complete curricula list. Indicate the extent of the degree that is offered through Campus 5 (AOCE). Likewise, explain any on campus requirements, including but not limited to lectures, seminars, laboratories, or internships.

3. JUSTIFICATION FOR AOCE OFFERING

Present detailed reasons for the proposed AOCE degree offering. In particular, address the need and benefit for the degree to be offered through AOCE.

4. LEARNING OUTCOMES

A detailed list or description of expected Learning Outcomes for the degree must be included in the proposal. Learning Outcomes should be the same for both Campus 1 and Campus 5 degree programs.

5. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

AOCE degree approval proposals must be accompanied by all AOCE course approval proposals and IHL’s Declaration of Intent to Offer a Degree Program by Distance Learning (appendix 8) form.

6. EFFECTIVE DATE

Beginning with the Spring 2008 semester, all courses and degrees (new or existing) must be approved as an AOCE course or degree, as outlined in the UCCC's Guide and Format, to be offered through AOCE. Courses or degrees not approved by the UCCC and Provost will not be listed through Campus 5 (AOCE).

NOTE: New degree programs should following the guidelines outlined in Section VIII. New Degree Program Addition.
7. CONTACT PERSON

A contact person and telephone number should be listed for all proposals.

8. MASTER SCHEDULE

Academic units should submit proposals at least four months prior to the deadline for inclusion in the Master Schedule for the effective semester. Course and Curricula proposals must pass through several time consuming steps to gain final administrative approval. **It is imperative that an academic unit allow sufficient time for the proposal to be reviewed at each level.** The development of proposals should start early in the academic year, and the proposal should be submitted as soon as possible to insure that approval can be acquired prior to the desired date of offering.

The minimum time to be expected in gaining final approval after the proposal has been submitted at the college level is approximately three months (excluding the summer months).
AOCE Degree Approval (Existing Program)
Ph.D. in Engineering
Civil Engineering Concentration

1. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Mississippi State University's Bagley College of Engineering offers the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree in Engineering. This degree offering has several educational foci covering technical areas of specialization supported by a number of departmental units in the college. One of these departments is Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE). Students further specialize in primary technical areas supported by the instruction and research of CEE when pursuing a Ph.D. in Engineering with a concentration in Civil Engineering. Specific areas of technical specialization offered towards this degree in this department are:

- Construction Materials Engineering
- Environmental Engineering
- Geotechnical Engineering
- Structural Engineering
- Transportation Engineering
- Water Resources Engineering

The basic requirements for graduate study and award of the degree are established by Mississippi State University and are found in the Graduate Bulletin. Additional requirements and procedures are established and monitored by the CEE Faculty, subject to the university's requirements and restrictions for all Ph.D. programs.

2. CURRICULUM OUTLINE

Students pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy in Engineering in one of the CEE specializations must satisfactorily complete a minimum of 45 credit hours of beyond the Master of Science (MS) Degree or 75 hours beyond the Bachelor of Science (BS) degree. Specifically:

- The minimum of 45 hours beyond the MS shall include a minimum of 18 hours of coursework and 20 hours of dissertation research, and
- The minimum 75 hours beyond the BS shall include a minimum of 42 hours of coursework and 20 hours of dissertation research.
- Up to six hours of CE 7000 may be used to satisfy the full graduate level (8000 or 9000) coursework requirement.
- If in the student's previous MS coursework they failed to fulfill CEE's core graduate course requirements for an MS, these core course requirements must be fulfilled in completing the coursework for the Ph.D. However, these "remedial" classes may count toward the 18 hour minimum course hours required for the Ph.D. degree, subject to the approval of the student's
Graduate Committee, who may require additional courses beyond the minimum. The core requirement for the program consists of courses from Engineering Mechanics and Operations, Mathematics and Statistics, and the Sciences which relate to the graduate field of study and deemed consistent with the requirements of an accredited undergraduate engineering program.

➢ The Committee may approve transfer credit, but at least ½ of the coursework and all dissertation credit requirements must be taken at Mississippi State University.

➢ Students who do not maintain adequate coursework performance may be dropped from the Ph.D. program. Inadequate coursework performance includes: having a grade point average (GPA) that is less than 3.0; receiving a grade of “U”, “D”, or “F” in any course taken towards the approved Program of Study (POS), or receiving more than two grades below “B”. No grade of “C” or less in any course offered by CEE will be accepted for use to complete the graduate coursework on the POS.

3. JUSTIFICATION FOR AOCE OFFERING

The Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering has been offering graduate classes and degrees via distance learning delivery for about thirty years. These offerings were originally through the Waterways Experiment Station (now called the Engineer Research and Development Center, or ERDC) of the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Jackson Graduate Engineering Education Center. The latter center was administratively closed to Mississippi State in the late 1980s but activities at ERDC continued. Since then, students from around the US have taken classes and pursued degrees through the CEE distance educational offerings.

We are herewith proposing to continue offering the Ph.D. in Engineering with the Civil Engineering concentration through the Campus 1 and Campus 5 programs. The degree requirements for Campus 1 and Campus 5 students are identical. The graduate faculty providing program coordination and student advising are the same for both programs.

The primary objective of this program is to allow working professionals in the state and throughout the US to have the same opportunity to pursue a Mississippi State University Ph.D. degree in Engineering as Campus 1 students. In the global context of education, providing working engineers access to graduate education via distance learning is becoming increasingly important; particularly as licensure requirements become more difficult and the need for technical and professional experts in the various CEE technical fields increases at the global level.

Historically, enrollment has been achieved passively as the demand for Ph.D.s in the state has been primarily limited to ERDC. Previously, consulting firms and industry in Mississippi did not see a value to the terminal degree when conducting business. Furthermore, at ERDC the general consensus has been one of having
students complete a Master of Science through the Mississippi State University distance education program and, if qualified, pursue a Ph.D. at a different university. In this way, the historic success of our M.S. distance program has been a hindrance to developing the pool of Ph.D. candidates in our program.

The table below shows fall enrollments in the Ph.D. program over the past five years. These data indicate a definite upward trend in enrollment total enrollment in both Campus 1 and Campus 5 students. There have been a total of three graduates during this period with four additional students having completed all of their course requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ph.D. Program Fall Enrollment</th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Campus 5</td>
<td>Campus 1</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The trend in Ph.D. enrollment on and off campus is the result of several factors. For example, the Bagley College of Engineering is promoting both an expanded distance learning program and a program that directly admits individuals to the Ph.D. program. Further, a change in the workforce at ERDC and throughout the state is increasing the interest in a Ph.D. program at Mississippi State University. Also, Mississippi State is looked upon as a value in terms of the quality of education provided when compared to the cost of attending.

Programs and agreements are in place, or are being negotiated, that will expand the regional and international attractiveness of our distance offerings and graduate program. Further, a graduate program management strategy is in place within the department that will facilitate increases in off-campus class offerings in the areas of structures and transportation; two areas historically underrepresented in the Campus 5 population. Finally, engineers working in the civil and environmental engineer fields, more than any other, are aware of the move towards requiring graduate education in order to secure, or maintain, professional licensure. In light of these conditions, current projections are for the number of Campus 5 graduate students to increase by between 15 and twenty percent over the next five years. The expected result of the various factors outlined above will be an increase in overall graduate enrollment. As success is realized in enlarging the on-campus graduate enrollment in the department, similar gains will be realized off campus.

The Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering has consistently demonstrated its commitment to distance education and will continue to do so. The consistent offering of distance courses through the department is one indication of that commitment. Following is a summary of the number of courses offered via distance learning since 1998:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACADMEIC YEAR</th>
<th>CEE DISTANCE COURSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>11†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>10†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>8†</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>11†</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† Estimated due to changes in records of offered classes

Students in the Ph.D. distance program have been able to rely on CEE to offer a variety of courses sufficient for them to complete their degree programs in a reasonable time. These are provided by a combination of campus-based graduate faculty and ERDC-based adjunct faculty. Adjunct faculty members are required to provide annual productivity reports and summaries of scholarly work in a manner similar to on-campus faculty. All of the faculty members supporting this program are required to support the Mississippi State University teaching and course evaluation system. In this way, CEE makes every effort to insure the quality of instruction and research advising.

Courses in this program will typically be taught for Campus 5 live via a variety of delivery methods. Synchronous instruction of students via IVN rooms is currently the preferred delivery mechanism with this approach augmented with asynchronous delivery of streaming video recordings. This interactive, internet-based system provides high quality interaction between the instructor and students. However, other mechanisms (e.g., Horizon Wimba) may be used as content and student population merit. In all cases, the lectures will be developed and presented simultaneously with the live Campus 1 course presentations. Each distance student must have an approved proctor who administers exams. Communication between the students and faculty is facilitated by phone, fax, email, and personal visits; as appropriate.

Doctoral research requires close contact among the student, major advisor, and other committee members. The graduate programs in CEE utilize a variety of ways to ensure that this is achieved for our distance students. In a manner similar to classes, the student and their major advisor routinely exchange email and fax and utilize the US Postal Service and express mail careers, as appropriate and required. The department maintains two conference rooms each equipped to facilitate a faculty committee teleconference with off-campus students. Finally, the major advisor and the student will exchange personal visits when face-to-face interaction is warranted.
Similarly, the major advisor will make trips to the research laboratory utilized by the student to ensure that facilities are appropriate and reasonable to support the investigation of the student’s subject. When appropriate, a certification of the lab’s facility is also provided by an independent certifying agency. Further, there may be occasions when the student will need to visit the Mississippi State University campus to do library research in Mitchell Memorial Library. However, our experience has shown that the need for such visits is generally minimal for the majority of distance education students either because they have a research library nearby or they have remote access to electronic resources via the MSU libraries.

Lastly, the student’s presence on the main campus is generally required for specific activities; e.g., qualifying exams, project proposal presentations, dissertation defenses. When ever practicable, the major advisor, graduate committee, and the student may find alternative venues to meet. Also, they may utilize teleconferences and internet-based communication systems to facilitate interactions. In short, efforts will be made to diminish the hardship on off-campus students and the committee. Oral exams via teleconference have been used successfully, and videoconferencing might also be considered in the future. Giving written examinations is another option that is utilized when appropriate.

4. LEARNING OUTCOMES

All Ph.D. students in Civil Engineering are expected to demonstrate a high level of professionalism and technical competence in their technical areas and with regard to their research focus. An assessment strategy is devised as part of the graduate committee’s activities in working with the student to develop a graduate program. This strategy is used to gauge the candidate’s technical and professional development and is outlined with the student once the Program of Study (POS) has been finalized.

Similarly, the program assessment involves several strategies to help the department insure the quality of the education being provided. The methods used for this purpose include each of the following to varying degrees:

- Monitoring of program enrollment and numbers of degrees awarded,
- Monitoring of program retention, including:
  - average time spent in the program and
  - program graduation rates
- Monitoring of placement of program graduates in industrial, government, and academic institutions,
- Measuring student participation in scholarly activities including:
  - number of students participating in funded research projects
  - number of students co-authoring journal articles
- number of students co-authoring conference presentations
- numbers of students attending professional conferences

> Obtaining feedback directly from candidates during their course of study and upon completion of their degree requirements. This feedback will be collected through informal interactions between faculty and students and through application of formal assessment tools such as course evaluations.

The Department's Graduate Program Committee meets regularly to develop strategies for improving the graduate programs based on input from students, alumni, faculty members, the departmental industrial advisory council, and other stakeholder groups. The committee is chaired by the CEE Graduate Coordinator. Committee members are tenure-track faculty representing each of the technical areas supported by the department's graduate education programs and one representative from the CEE Advisory Board who has a background in continuing education and graduate-level research.

5. EFFECTIVE DATE

Fall, 2008

6. CONTACT

Dennis D. Truax, Ph.D., P.E., DEE, F.ASCE
James T. White Chair, Head, and Professor
Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
Mail Stop -- 9546
Phone -- 662.325.7187
Email -- Truax@CEE.MsState.Edu
DEGREE PROGRAMS

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

NOTE: This form is a cover sheet that must accompany the degree program change proposal. The actual proposal should be prepared in accordance with format requirements provided in the Guide and Format for Curriculum Proposals published by the UCCC. Both cover sheet and proposal should be submitted, along with all required copies, to UCCC, Lloyd-Ricks Annex (north end), Mail Stop 9699 (325-0831).

College or School: Education
Contact Person: Dana Franz
Nature of Change: Modification

Department: Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education
Phone: 325-7117
E-mail: df76@colled.msstate.edu
Date Initiated: 3/28/06
Effective Date: Upon approval.

New or Current Degree Program Name: Master of Science in Secondary Education

Summary of Proposed Changes:

It is proposed that the following requirements be removed from the required program of study:
- Remove EDF 8323 Comparative Education
- Remove EDF 8353 Curriculum Development
- Remove EDS 8633 Problems in Secondary Education
- Remove Required Education Elective to be selected from the following:
  - EDS 6xx3 Methods of Teaching xxx
  - EDS 8103 Advanced Methodologies in Secondary Education
  - EDF 8383 Issues in Education
  - EDF 8393 History of Education in the United States
  - Other

It is proposed that the following become program requirements:
- Require EDS 8243 Advanced Planning and Managing Learning
- Require EDS 8663 Improving Instruction in Secondary Schools (new)
- Require EDS 8653 Issues of Accountability in Secondary Schools (new)
- Require Education Electives to be selected from the following:
  - EDS 8103 – Advanced Methodologies in Secondary Education
  - EDS 8633 – Problems in Secondary Education
  - EDS 8623 – Principles of Effective Instruction in Secondary Schools (new)
  - EDS 8683 – Dispositions and Reflective Practice in Teaching (new)
  - RDG 8593 – Issues and Innovations in Reading
  - Other EDS, EDX, EDF, or education-related course (as approved by advisor)

Approved: [Signature]
Department Head
[Signature]
Chair, College or School Curriculum Committee

Approved: [Signature]
Dean of College or School

Approved: [Signature]
Chair, University Committee on Courses and Curricula

Approved: [Signature]
Chair, Graduate Council (if applicable)

Approved: [Signature]
Chair, Deans Council

Date: 11-5-08
12/18/08
12/12/08
2/4/09

RECEIVED
GRADUATE SCHOOL
DEGREE PROGRAM MODIFICATION

1. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Current: **MASTER OF SCIENCE IN SECONDARY EDUCATION**
The Master of Science degree in Secondary Education requires a minimum of 36 semester hours of course work beyond the bachelor’s degree including EDF 8353 and EDF 8363 and a choice of a comprehensive exam or research project.

Proposed: **MASTER OF SCIENCE IN SECONDARY EDUCATION**
The Master of Science degree in Secondary Education requires a minimum of 36 semester hours of course work beyond the bachelor’s degree and a choice of a written comprehensive exam or research project. The focus of the program is on secondary education with supporting coursework from related fields and the teaching discipline.

2. CURRICULUM OUTLINE

It is proposed that the following be removed as requirements of the Master of Science in Secondary Education degree program:

Remove EDF 8323 Comparative Education
Remove EDF 8353 Curriculum Development
Remove EDS 8633 Problems in Secondary Education
Remove Required Education Elective to be selected from the following:
   - EDS 6xx3 Methods of Teaching xxx
   - EDS 8103 Advanced Methodologies in Secondary Education
   - EDF 8383 Issues in Education
   - EDF 8393 History of Education in the United States
   - Other

It is proposed that the following become requirements of the Master of Science in Secondary Education degree program:

Require EDS 8243 Advanced Planning and Managing Learning
Require EDS 8663 Improving Instruction in Secondary Schools (new)
Require EDS 8653 Issues of Accountability in Secondary Schools (new)
Require Required Education Elective to be selected from the following:
   - EDF 8323 — Comparative Education
   - EDF 8393 — History of Education in the U. S.
   - EDS 8103 — Advanced Methodologies in Secondary Education
   - EDS 8363 — Problems in Secondary Education
   - EDS 8623 — Principles of Effective Instruction in Secondary Schools (new)
   - EDS 8683 — Dispositions and Reflective Practice in Teaching (new)
   - Other education courses (as approved by advisor course)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MASTER OF SCIENCE IN SECONDARY EDUCATION</th>
<th>MASTER OF SCIENCE IN SECONDARY EDUCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Program</strong></td>
<td><strong>Proposed Program</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required EDS Courses (6 hours):</td>
<td>Required EDS Courses (12 hours):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDS 8613 – Middle &amp; Secondary Curriculum</td>
<td>EDS 8243 – Advanced Planning and Managing Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDS 8633 – Problems in Secondary Education</td>
<td>EDS 8613 – Middle &amp; Secondary Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDS 8663 – Improving Instruction in Secondary Schools (new)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDS 8653 – Issues of Accountability in Secondary Schools (new)</td>
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<td>Required EDF Courses (9 hours):</td>
<td>Required EDF Courses (3 hours):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDF 8323 – Comparative Education</td>
<td>EDF 8363 – Research in Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDF 8353 – Curriculum Development</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDF 8363 – Research in Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Education Elective (3 hours):</td>
<td>Required Education Electives (3-12 hours):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDS 6xx3 – Methods Course</td>
<td>EDS, EDX, EDF, RDG, or other education electives (as approved by advisor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDS 8103 – Advanced Methodologies in Secondary Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDF 8383 – Issues in Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDF 8393 – History of Education in the United States</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Content Courses (18 hours):</td>
<td>Required Content Courses (9-18 hours):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be selected with approval of advisor.</td>
<td>To be selected with approval of advisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 TOTAL HOURS</td>
<td>36 TOTAL HOURS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. JUSTIFICATION

Name and Description Changes:

No name change is being proposed. The proposed change in description better reflects the course requirements of the program of study.

Curriculum Changes:

1. Beginning in the fall of 2002, secondary faculty entered into deliberation concerning the few number of EDS graduate course offerings made available to students at the master's, specialist's, and doctoral levels. For the next two years, individual faculty surveyed EDS course offerings and graduate program requirements at peer institutions and discussed possibilities for revising the EDS programs. In February of 2005, secondary faculty reached consensus on the development of new EDS courses and modifications of the secondary master's program. These recommendations were taken to the Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education faculty for review. The recommendations were perceived to be positive changes, and the proposals for the new courses and the program modification were unanimously approved.

2. Currently, students seeking a Master of Science in Secondary Education degree are required to complete only 6 semester hours in secondary education coursework. It is proposed that the number of EDS hours required of students be increased from 6 to 12 hours. This will result in at least one-third of the total degree hours being in the major area of study of the students, a more appropriate percentage than what is now required. To this end, the decision was made to no longer require students to take EDS 823, Comparative Education, and EDS 8353, Curriculum Development, and to instead require students to take EDS 8663, Improving Instruction, and EDS 8653, Issues in Accountability. It was also decided that students would benefit more from taking EDS 8243, Advanced Planning and Managing Learning, than from EDS 8633, Problems in Secondary Education. This resulted in EDS 8633 becoming an elective rather than a required course.

3. The current scope of study in secondary education-specific courses for the Master's of Science in Secondary Education students is exceedingly narrow. It is proposed that the focus on secondary education topics be expanded to include study in planning and managing secondary classrooms, improving instruction in secondary schools, examining issues of accountability for secondary schools, and reflective practice. Providing opportunities for study in these four additional areas will strengthen the secondary education Master's program by allowing for a more holistic and balanced academic experience for students. For these reasons, four new courses were written: EDS 8663, Improving Instruction in Secondary Schools; EDS 8653, Issues of Accountability in Secondary Schools; EDS 8623, Principles of Effective Instruction in Secondary Schools; and EDS 8683, Dispositions and Reflective Practice in Teaching. If approved, EDS 8663 and EDS 8653 will become program requirements and EDS 8623 and 8683 will become electives.

4. Currently, all students in the Master of Science in Secondary Education degree program are required to take 18 hours in education coursework and 18 hours in the teaching discipline. It is proposed that students be given flexibility in designing their programs of
study to meet their individual academic and professional needs and goals. To achieve this, it is recommended through the advisement process, students be informed that if their career interests include the possibility of teaching at the collegiate level, their program of study should include 18 semester hours in education coursework and 18 semester hours in cognate area courses. This will provide them the minimum number of hours in content required (as specified by SACS) to teach at a two-year college. Students whose career interests include remaining in the secondary educational setting, however, will be advised that they have the choice of taking up to 9 fewer hours in content, resulting in a program of study that requires 18 semester hours in education coursework, 9 hours in the teaching disciplines, and 9 hours in education and/or the teaching discipline courses. This will allow students and their advisors to customize programs of study to meet individual academic and professional needs and goals.

5. It is the belief of the secondary faculty that if approved, this program modification will better meet the local, state, regional, and national educational needs of educators by offering a more individualized approach to program planning and a more balanced approach to programmatic requirements. It is, therefore, likely that these changes will result in an increased and more diverse enrollment in the program thereby providing more educators with more opportunities for professional growth and accomplishment.

4. SUPPORT

Tenure track secondary faculty have the expertise to direct the program as outlined above and to provide instruction for the new courses that are included in the modification. No additional support will be required from outside the Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education to implement the modifications proposed herein.

5. PROPOSED 4-LETTER ABBREVIATION

SEED (no change)

6. EFFECTIVE DATE

Effective upon approval.
TO: Box Council and UCCC Committee Members

FROM: Dana Pomykal Franz

RE: Support of Proposed Curricular Changes for the Master of Science in Secondary Education

DATE: 10/30/08

This letter of support is offered by the Secondary Faculty of Curriculum, Instruction and Special Education faculty for the proposed modification to the Master of Science in Secondary Education, the addition of courses, and the modification of RDG. As indicated by the signatures below, a majority of the program area faculty (five) of the voting members of Secondary Education have approved the proposals as written for submission to the Box Council and the UCCC.

Program Area Faculty

[Dr. Susie Burroughs] 11-5-08

[Dr. Dana Pomykal Franz] 11-5-08

[Dr. Burnette Hamil] 11-4-08

[Dr. Peggy Hopper] 11-4-08

[Dr. William Persons] [Date]
APPROVAL FORM FOR

DEGREE PROGRAMS

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

NOTE: This form is a cover sheet that must accompany the degree program change proposal. The actual proposal should be prepared in accordance with format requirements provided in the Guide and Format for Curriculum Proposals published by the UCCC. Both cover sheet and proposal should be submitted, along with all required copies, to UCCC, Butler-Williams Building, Suite B, 100 Walker Road, Mall Stop 9699 (325-0831).

College or School: Engineering
Contact Person: Dennis D. Truax
Nature of Change: AOCE Approval

Department: Civil & Environmental Eng
Phone: 5-3050   E-mail: truax@cee.msstate.edu
Date Initiated: 4/1/07   Effective Date: 1/1/09

Current Degree Program Name: Master of Science in Civil Engineering
Major: Civil Engineering
Concentration: None

Summary of Proposed Changes: Deliver MS in CE via AOCE

Approved: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________

Department Head

Chair, College or School Curriculum Committee

Dean of College or School

Chair, University Committee on Courses and Curricula

Chair, Graduate Council (if applicable)

Chair, Deans Council

RECEIVED
9.30.08

GRADUATE SCHOOL

RECEIVED
NOV 04 2008
**APPENDIX 8: DECLARATION OF INTENT TO OFFER A DEGREE PROGRAM BY DISTANCE LEARNING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution:</th>
<th>Date of Initial Program Approval:</th>
<th>Date of Implementation:</th>
<th>Cost of Implementation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January 1, 2009</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Program Title as Appears on Academic Program Inventory, Diploma, and Transcript:**
Master of Science in Civil Engineering

**Six Digit CIP Code:**

**Degree(s) to be Awarded:**
Master of Science in Civil Engineering

**Credit Hour Requirements:**
33 hours (non-thesis); 30 hours (thesis)

**Percentage of Program Completed by Distance Learning:**
100%

**Percentage of Program Requiring Campus Visit:**
0%

Will students be allowed to mix on-campus and distance learning courses within this program? Yes

Will this program require separate admission from those offered on-campus? Yes

Will this program have different fees or tuition rates from those offered on-campus? Yes

**Responsible Academic Unit(s):**
Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering

**Institutional Contact:**
Dr. Dennis Truax, Professor and Head

**Number of Students Expected to Enroll in First Six Years:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>Five</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Number of Graduates Expected in First Six Years:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>One</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Four</td>
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<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Program Summary:**
The Master of Science in Civil Engineering will be delivered primarily via distance and is geared toward working professionals who have undergraduate degrees in engineering. Often these students reside in rural areas or small towns where the opportunity to pursue a graduate degree in Civil Engineering is unavailable; therefore, a web-based course delivery system is highly desirable.

**Institutional Executive Officer Signature**

**Date**
XIV. DEGREE APPROVAL FOR CAMPUS 5 (AOCE)

A. PROPOSAL FORMAT

The proposal for approval of an existing degree program to be offered through AOCE should include:

1. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

List the full catalog description of the degree program identical to that on the degree approval form and MSU Bulletin. Additional fee requirements should be addressed in the AOCE degree description.

2. CURRICULUM OUTLINE

Provide a complete curricula list. Indicate the extent of the degree that is offered through Campus 5 (AOCE). Likewise, explain any on campus requirements, including but not limited to lectures, seminars, laboratories, or internships.

3. JUSTIFICATION FOR AOCE OFFERING

Present detailed reasons for the proposed AOCE degree offering. In particular, address the need and benefit for the degree to be offered through AOCE.

4. LEARNING OUTCOMES

A detailed list or description of expected Learning Outcomes for the degree must be included in the proposal. Learning Outcomes should be the same for both Campus 1 and Campus 5 degree programs.

5. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

AOCE degree approval proposals must be accompanied by all AOCE course approval proposals and IHL’s Declaration of Intent to Offer a Degree Program by Distance Learning (appendix 8) form.

6. EFFECTIVE DATE

Beginning with the Spring 2008 semester, all courses and degrees (new or existing) must be approved as an AOCE course or degree, as outlined in the UCCC's Guide and Format, to be offered through AOCE. Courses or degrees not approved by the UCCC and Provost will not be listed through Campus 5 (AOCE).

NOTE: New degree programs should following the guidelines outlined in Section VIII. New Degree Program Addition.
7. CONTACT PERSON

A contact person and telephone number should be listed for all proposals.

8. MASTER SCHEDULE

Academic units should submit proposals at least four months prior to the deadline for inclusion in the Master Schedule for the effective semester. Course and Curricula proposals must pass through several time consuming steps to gain final administrative approval. It is imperative that an academic unit allow sufficient time for the proposal to be reviewed at each level. The development of proposals should start early in the academic year, and the proposal should be submitted as soon as possible to insure that approval can be acquired prior to the desired date of offering.

The minimum time to be expected in gaining final approval after the proposal has been submitted at the college level is approximately three months (excluding the summer months).
AOCE Degree Approval (Existing Program)
Master of Science
Department of Civil and Engineering

1. Catalog Description

The thesis-option Master of Science offered through the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering requires at least 24 credit hours of course work above the baccalaureate degree with at least one-half of the course work, exclusive of research, at the 8000 level or above. Six credit hours related to the research, preparation and defense of a thesis are required. A thesis and an oral, comprehensive exit examination defense of the thesis are required. The non-thesis Master of Science in Civil Engineering requires at least 33 credit hours of course work above the baccalaureate degree. A final comprehensive exit examination is also required and will consist of a written and oral review on course work taken. At least 15 credit hours for the non-thesis option must be from 8000-level courses or above.

2. Curriculum Outline

Major areas of interest in Civil Engineering include structural engineering, geotechnical engineering, water resources engineering, transportation engineering, construction materials engineering, and environmental engineering. The specific courses required depend upon the student’s area of concentration.

3. Justification for AOCE Offering

It is proposed to continue offering the Master of Science degree to both Campus 1 and Campus 5 students. Degree program requirements will be the same for Campus 1 and Campus 5 students. The primary objective of offering the Master of Science in Civil Engineering via distance is to provide working professional engineers throughout the state and region, who do not have access to advanced degrees via traditional delivery, the opportunity to pursue the MS degree. Opportunity for advanced degrees is vital to Mississippi’s role in a global environment and will provide citizens of the state opportunity to enhance their standard of living and achieve educational goals.

The Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering has been offering the Master of Science in Civil and Environmental Engineering through a variety of distance delivery approaches since the early 1980s. During this time, the number of students has fluctuated, but the demand for off campus classes and degrees and always been substantial. Significant numbers have enrolled and notable numbers of graduate degrees have been awarded.
To illustrate this, the following table indicates Campus 5 enrollment and annual number of Campus 5 graduates since 1998. As the table indicates, a total of 30 students have received the Master of Science in Civil Engineering during this period. There have been approximately 45 Master of Civil Engineering degrees awarded through Campus 1 for this same period of time. Therefore, Campus 5 graduates represent approximately 40% of the total number of graduate in the Master of Science in Civil and Environmental Engineering program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrolled at Campus</th>
<th>Graduated at Campus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>2001</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Currently, 18 students are enrolled in the Master of Science program through the distance program and additional students have made application to the program and are being processed. Programs and agreements are in place, or are being negotiated, that will expand the regional attractiveness of our distance offerings and graduate program. Further, a graduate program management strategy is in place within the department that will facilitate increases in off-campus class offerings in the areas of structures and transportation; two areas historically underrepresented in the Campus 5 population. Finally, engineers working in the civil and environmental engineer fields, more than any other, are aware of the move towards requiring graduate education in order to secure, or maintain, professional licensure. In light of these conditions, current projections are for the number of Campus 5 graduate students to increase by between 15 and twenty percent over the next five years. The expected result of the various factors outlined above will be an increase in overall graduate enrollment.

The Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering has consistently demonstrated its commitment to distance education and will continue to do so. The consistent offering of distance courses through the department is one indication of that commitment. Following is a summary of the number of courses offered via distance learning since 1998:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>CEE Distance Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
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<td>2005-2006</td>
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<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>17 *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Estimated due to changes in records of offered classes

As noted above, Campus 5 students have been able to depend on the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering to offer a good number and mix of courses which are sufficient for those students to complete their degrees in a reasonable timeframe. The newly approved Master of Engineering will utilize Civil and Environmental Engineering courses as well, which will enhance course enrollment, making course cancellations rare.

Courses will typically be taught for Campus 5 students and Campus 1 students simultaneously. Currently, Horizon Wimba is being used to provide the delivery platform with video streamed to the course WebCT page for students who are unable to participate in a real-time sense when taking the distance course. To augment this approach, selected classes are also being conducted in AOCE's IVN rooms with allow greater "eye contact" between off-campus students and the instructor as long as the student is in a room at the instructional center supported by the US Corps of Engineers at the Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC).

Homework is submitted electronically, via facsimile, or by mail. Class assignments are performed with the same expectations of students subscribing to honor code requirements and restrictions on collaboration. These expectations are clearly communicated at the beginning of the semester and routinely reinforced during the classes.

Examinations are administered in a secure manor. Each distance student must have an approved proctor who administers examinations and the exams remain sealed until the time of administration. Every effort is made to see that on-campus and off-campus examinations are given at the same time. However, if there is concern about the security of examinations, different examinations are prepared for the Campus 1 and Campus 5 students.
When classes are taught by adjunct faculty, particularly those located off-campus, the instruction provided the students will be monitored through a variety of mechanisms by the department's contact person for that class, the department's Graduate Program Committee, and the Department Head. Monitoring will be conducted by sitting in on classes or surreptitious reviewing archived presentations, interviewing students enrolled in the class, reviewing homework and examinations, and discussions with the instructor.

For those students involved in thesis research, close contact will be maintained between the major professor, as representative of the graduate committee, and the student. Other committee members will have input as part of the approval of a research prospectus and periodic review of progress. For those students located off-campus, a variety of means to ensure that satisfactory progress will be used. These include, but are not limited to, teleconferences between the student and the major advisor, email and facsimile exchanges of data and analysis results with USPS or other ground mail used as needed, student visits to campus, and faculty visits with the student at their research facility. If research laboratories are required, these will be visited by the major advisor before the beginning of research to insure facilities are sufficient to conduct the research in a safe and technically accurate manner. The frequency and duration of the above exchanges between student and advisor is not prescribed by the department as numerous factors come to play. For example, the student's visits to main campus might be necessitated by needs to access research equipment, search campus library resources, or collaborate with the graduate committee.

For students enrolled in the non-thesis option of Master of Science in Civil Engineering, the exit examination will be a comprehensive review of all graduate class work listed on the program of study. The examination will be in two parts. First a written examination will be developed by the graduate committee and administered by the major professor. This examination will be primarily problematic, though some narrative and literature research problems may be presented. The student will be informed of the outcome of this exam with special attention given to identifying errors and omission in the solutions to this exam.

The second examination will have an oral presentation format. It will provide a forum for the graduate committee to review the errors and omission of the written exam, review additional topics more appropriately reviewed in an oral format, and inquire as to the student's perspective of the graduate education process in which the student participated. This latter component will be used to collect data on the Campus 5 program, the instruction that supports it, and the administrative process to which the student was subjected.

Degree candidates enrolled in the thesis-option of Master of Science in Civil Engineering will be given an oral exit examination. While this examination will focus on a defense of the research conducted and subsequent thesis proposed,
it will be conducted in a way as to provide a comprehensive review of the course work as related to the thesis. The exam will include a presentation of the thesis and a session of questions and answers. It is also possible that problematic questions will be presented to the candidates. The conclusion of the exam will also include an inquiry as to the student’s perspective of the graduate education program in which they participated with the expectation of gathering information about the efficiency and effectiveness of the Campus 5 program.

Historically, oral examinations have been conducted on campus. This expectation has been expressed routinely as students enroll. However, as the distance between the main campus and Campus 5 students increase in coming years, alternative mechanisms for conduction this exam will be employed. Oral exams via teleconference have been used successfully in other departments and might be adapted for this program. Also, videoconferencing might be an alternative to consider in the future.

4. Learning Outcomes

All graduate students in Civil and Environmental Engineering are expected to demonstrate a high level of professional competence and research skill. A significant majority of those receiving a Master of Science from this department in the past have used the thesis option. This is due to the nature of their work and the opportunities to use work assignments as the basis of a thesis. The professional component is demonstrated in the homework submissions, examinations, and other interactions between the student and the instructor. For those students choosing the non-thesis option, a number we expect to increase in the coming years, graduate courses in the department generally include some research elements; e.g., research project work, literature reviews, and open-ended homework assignments. They are exposed to the same level of professional development, if not more so by virtue of the increased number of classes they will be required to complete.

The assessment strategy for the Master of Science in the Civil Engineering program reflects this two-fold emphasis on general professional and research competence. Assessment methods will include, but not be limited to, the following:

(a) Monitoring enrollment and number of degrees awarded
(b) Monitoring retention, including
   (1) average time spent in the program, and
   (2) graduation rates
(c) Monitoring of placement of graduate in Civil and Environmental Engineering graduates in industrial, government, and academic institutions
(d) Measurements of student participation in research activities, including
(1) Numbers of students participating in funded research projects
(2) Numbers of students co-authoring journal articles
(3) Numbers of students co-authoring conference presentations, and
(4) Numbers of students attending professional conferences

(e) Obtaining feedback directly from graduate students, both in informal interactions between faculty and students and via formal assessment tools such as course evaluations, exit examinations, etc.

(f) Obtaining feedback directly from employers and supervisors during and after completion of the grade work.

The Graduate Program Committee in the Department of Civil Engineering meets regularly to review applications, facilitate the award of assistantships, and review student progress. As part of their charge, they also develop strategies for improving and expanding the graduate program based on input from students, alumni, faculty, administration, departmental advisory council, and other stakeholder groups. It compiles and reviews input from students and employers as developed through the assessment mechanisms summarized above.

5. Effective Date

January 2009

6. Contact

Dennis Truax, 325-3050, truax@cee.msstate.edu
NOTE: This form is a cover sheet that must accompany the degree program change proposal. The actual proposal should be prepared in accordance with format requirements provided in the Guide and Format for Curriculum Proposals published by the UCCC. Both cover sheet and proposal should be submitted, along with all required copies, to UCCC, Butler-Williams Building, Suite B, 100 Walker Road, (Mail Stop 9699).

College or School: Arts & Sciences  Department: Arts & Sciences
Contact Person: Gary Myers  Phone: 5-2646  E-mail: gmyers@deanas.msstate.edu
Nature of Change: Add  Date Initiated: 6/19/07  Effective Date: Fall 2008

New or Current Degree Program Name:
Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Sciences

Summary of Proposed Changes:
Establish a distance education Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Sciences degree program.

Approved:

Date:

6/28/07

6/28/07

1/7/09
Degree Proposal Approval: Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Sciences

This proposal seeks formal authorization to create an online distance Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Sciences (MAIS) degree. This program will target practicing K-12 teachers from throughout the nation who need science content and/or endorsement in one or more specific scientific disciplines (Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Geosciences, or Mathematics & Statistics).

Role and Mission

1. *Does this program further the mission of your institution?*

   Yes

2. *How does the proposed program help meet the priorities/goals of your strategic plan?*

   The program helps in meeting the priorities/goals of the University by (a) growing our graduate student base on a national scale in the fields of Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Geosciences, and Mathematics & Statistics, (b) addressing the national concern regarding the shortage of well-qualified and prepared teachers in our K-12 school systems, (c) providing students who are unable to obtain an education through traditional means access to a rigorous educational experience online via distance learning, and (d) enhancing the alumni base of the College of Arts & Sciences and of the institution on a national scale.

3. *Will this proposal require an addition or change to your institution's strategic plan?*

   No

Administration

1. *Describe how the program will be administered.*

   The program will be administered by the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences in cooperation with Department Heads from Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Geosciences, and Mathematics & Statistics at Mississippi State University.

2. *Indicate name and title of person(s) who will be responsible for curriculum development and program supervision.*

   Dr. Gary Myers, Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, is responsible for program supervision and review. Curriculum development is the responsibility of the department heads, Dr. Nancy Reichert, Department of Biological Sciences; Dr. Edwin Lewis, Department of Chemistry; Dr. Darrel Schmitz, Department of Geosciences; and Dr. Mohsen Razzaghi, Department of Mathematics & Statistics.

3. *If the program will be administered by more than one administrative unit, what factors will make this desirable?*
The program will be administered solely by the College of Arts & Sciences.

4. If non-academic administrative units (e.g., "institutes" or "centers") will be involved in administering the program, describe the relationship.

Not applicable.

Educational Objectives

1. Describe the educational objectives of the program.

Graduates of this program will have:
- a detailed understanding of one of the four disciplines offered and a general understanding of all four disciplines, or
- a detailed understanding of two of the four disciplines offered; and,
- a concept of the interrelationships between the four disciplines.

The primary objectives of the program are to:
- provide K-12 teachers from across the state and nation the opportunity to pursue a graduate, interdisciplinary degree experience that enhances their knowledge base of multiple science disciplines
- improve the quality of the educational experience and college preparation for K-12 students
- allow the students to obtain this education in a flexible, web-based format.

2. If the program design includes multiple curricula (e.g., concentrations, emphases, options, specializations, tracks, etc.), describe the educational objectives of each.

Not applicable. While the students must declare an emphasis area (one of the four sciences), the educational objectives are the same for each.

Admission Requirements

1. Provide admission requirements for the program. If there are different categories of admission (e.g., unconditional or probationary), describe each.

Classified Admission Requirements

Applicants for the MAIS Program should hold a bachelor’s degree from a fully recognized four-year institution of higher learning. Admission is based primarily on the student’s grade point average over the last 60 semester hours of baccalaureate work, letters of reference, and work experience. First priority will be given to people actively engaged in K-12 teaching. The statement of purpose, professional goals and interests will be used to screen applicants to identify those who could benefit from this degree program and identify those who may have misunderstood the stated goals of this program.

The criterion for regular admission to the program is a minimum 2.75 Grade Point Average (GPA) on a 4-point scale in their last 60 hours of the undergraduate degree. The
Graduate Coordinators from the four departments will determine the potential success of each admissions candidate.

**Unclassified Admission Requirements**

Unclassified admission is available for those desiring graduate-level study for purposes other than an advanced degree or those who have not completed their official admission packet by the deadline. A student may begin taking classes as an unclassified student and may take up to nine graduate hours, which may be transferred into the program.

2. *If transfer students will be admitted to the program, list articulation agreements completed, negotiated, or planned.*

Transfer credit will not be accepted into this program.

**Professional Accreditation**

1. *Do all programs offered by the university within this discipline have professional accreditation (if available)?*

Programs in the College of Arts & Sciences are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

2. *Have all programs offered by the university within this discipline met the minimum standards of productivity?*

Yes

3. *Will professional accreditation be sought for this program (if available)? Where applicable, identify accrediting agencies and show how the program meets the criteria of these agencies. Append standards and criteria to the proposal.*

No, please see question #1 above.

4. *Is it likely that a SACS visit for substantive change will be necessary?*

No

**Credit Hours and Curriculum**

1. *How many credit hours will be required for graduation? If this is a request for an undergraduate program requiring more than 124 credit hours, please justify.*

Thirty-six credit hours will be required for this program.

2. *Will the curriculum for this program be consistent with the curricula of similar programs in this discipline?*

The curriculum will be more flexible than similar programs since the students can choose one of the four disciplines as the emphasis area and then choose from the other three disciplines to complete their program of study.
3. *Will the curriculum for this program meet any licensing or certification needs?*

The curriculum will satisfy the State Department of Education requirement in most states (including Mississippi) for an endorsement in a specific science area (the area of emphasis as chosen by the student) and will assist and/or allow the students to meet the No Child Left Behind Act stipulations.

4. *List the entire course of study required and recommended to complete the program. Clearly differentiate which courses presently exist and which will be developed. Append course descriptions for all courses (existing and new courses). When describing required or elective courses, list all course prerequisites.*

**Program Requirements**

- 36 credit hours are required
- Transfer credit hours from another university will not be accepted toward fulfilling requirements for this program
- A minimum of 15 credit hours must be at the 8000 level
- Each student must designate one of the four sciences as his/her primary area. The student must then complete 21 hours in this field (with advisor approval), including the Research Methods and Capstone courses.
- The student can then elect to take whatever courses he/she chooses (with advisor approval) to complete the degree.
- The time limit for fulfilling the requirements for the program is 6 years.
- A written comprehensive examination is required of all degree candidates and will be administered at the beginning of the final term. The candidate's graduate committee will administer the exam based on his/her coursework. The candidate must be enrolled at MSU during the semester the examination is administered, must have a GPA of 3.0 on all coursework after being admitted to the program (i.e., program and non-program courses), and must be within the last 6 hours of his/her program of study. All candidates will be eligible to take the examination twice only after a minimum of 4 months time has elapsed from when the first examination was taken. Two failures of the examination result in the student being dropped as a master degree candidate.

**Coursework**

As stated above, each student must choose one area of emphasis and complete 21 hours in this area. Therefore, each of the four science departments will offer a minimum of 7 courses with each course consisting of 3 credit hours. All course descriptions are attached.

**Department of Biological Sciences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIO 6013</td>
<td>Genetics &amp; Molecular Biology</td>
<td>New course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIO 6023</td>
<td>Principles of Evolutionary Biology</td>
<td>New course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIO 8023</td>
<td>Modern Microbiology</td>
<td>New course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BIO 8033    Advanced Cell Biology
            New course
BIO 8043    Ecology & the Environment
            New course
BIO 8073    Research Methods in Biological Sciences for Interdisciplinary Sciences
            New course
BIO 8083    Capstone in Interdisciplinary Sciences with an Emphasis on Biological Sciences
            New course

Department of Chemistry
CH 6263    Industrial and Consumer Chemistry
            New course
CH 6363    Chemistry of the Environment
            New course
CH 8073    Research Methods in Chemistry for Interdisciplinary Sciences
            New course
CH 8083    Capstone in Interdisciplinary Sciences with an Emphasis on Chemistry
            New course
CH 8363    Analytical Methods in Forensics
            New course
CH 8463    Chemistry of Energy
            New course
CH 8473    Chemical Structure and Bonding
            New course
CH 8563    Organic Molecules and Polymeric Materials
            New course

Department of Geosciences
GG 8073    Research Methods in Geosciences for Interdisciplinary Sciences
            New course
GG 8083    Capstone in Interdisciplinary Sciences with an Emphasis on Geosciences
            New course
GG 8113    Geology I: Processes and Products
            Existing course
GG 8123    Geology II: Earth, Time and Life
            Existing course
GG 8203    Ocean Science
            Existing course
GG 8233    Environmental Geosciences
            Existing course
GG 8613    Hydrology
            Existing course
GR 6603    Climatology
            Existing course
GR 8113    Meteorology I: Observations
            Existing course
5. Identify and describe special requirements for the program, e.g., clinical, field experience, community service, internships, practicum, a thesis, etc. When internships or field experiences are required as part of the program, provide information documenting internship availability as well as how student will be assigned and supervised.

This is a non-thesis M.S. program. All but one course from each department will be delivered online. The face-to-face course, Capstone in Interdisciplinary Sciences with an Emphasis on ____ (specific discipline), is the capstone course for the degree. Each student will be required to complete this course during their last semester of study (summer, year 2). Faculty from the student’s primary department (Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Geosciences, or Mathematics & Statistics) will meet face-to-face with students in an intensive 10-day period in order to participate in planned, hands-on and field-based activities. This capstone course could be taught at the MSU campus, at a regional or national laboratory, or at a remote location for field work.
6. *Indicate whether courses in a proposed masters program are cross-listed as undergraduate courses and, if so, what safeguards are employed to ensure that courses taken as undergraduates are not repeated or that requirements are significantly different for graduate students and undergraduates enrolled in the same course.*

Some of the courses listed are 4000/6000 and are utilized in other programs of study. This particular degree program is only available to graduate level, distance students. On-campus students (graduate and undergraduate) and undergraduate students (main campus and distance) are not allowed to enroll in this program of study.

7. *Provide documentation that all courses in the proposed curriculum have met all institutional requirements for approval*

The College of Arts & Sciences Committee on Courses and Curriculum, the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, the University Committee on Courses and Curriculum, the Graduate Council, and the Provost have all approved this proposal. Once the degree is approved by IHL, any new course proposals will be reviewed and approved by these same entities.

**Supporting Fields**

1. *Identify and describe the relationship of existing programs and supporting fields that will complement the proposed program.*

Not applicable

**Faculty**

1. *For each faculty member, give the following data:*
   a. *Name, rank, academic discipline, institutions attended, degrees earned;*
   b. *Current workload for typical semester, including specific courses usually taught; explain how workload will be impacted with the addition of proposed program;*
   c. *Scholarship and publication record for past five years;*
   d. *Professional activity; and*
   e. *Expected responsibilities in this program.*

All faculty members in the Departments of Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Geosciences, and Mathematics & Statistics who have graduate faculty status potentially could teach a course in the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Sciences program. While the four departments already have heavy teaching loads for on-campus students, this program is being structured to prevent an additional burden on the faculty. The maximum number of online courses taught in this proposed degree program in any given semester would only be four (two for first year students and two for second year students). The new courses would contain much scientific content currently being delivered in a variety of existing courses. The content would be amended and tailored to fit this degree program, then “packaged” for delivery online. The courses themselves will be developed in the summer months which will not affect the faculty workload or normal course offerings within the department. The courses will then be offered during the academic year by a faculty member working in conjunction with an instructor, lecturer or graduate assistant who will be responsible for facilitating the course. The faculty have committed to expend the additional energy and time it will take to run these courses because we believe the
The benefits of offering this Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Sciences degree program outweigh potential detriments.

The following comprehensive list of faculty members may participate in this program. Curriculum vitae are attached.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acad. Disc.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Institutions Attended</th>
<th>Degrees Earned</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIO</td>
<td>Reichert, Nancy</td>
<td>Prof, Interim Head</td>
<td>New Mexico State University</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
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<td>BIO</td>
<td>Brooks, Christopher</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>University of North Carolina</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Professor</td>
<td>University of California-Davis</td>
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<td>Chevalier, David</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>University of Zurich (Switzerland)</td>
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<td>Associate Professor</td>
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<td>Associate Professor</td>
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<td>GEO</td>
<td>Schmitz, Darrel</td>
<td>Professor &amp; Head</td>
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<td>GEO</td>
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2. *If it will be necessary to add faculty in order to begin the program, give the desired qualifications of the persons to be added, with a timetable for adding new faculty and plan for funding new positions.*

No new faculty will be required to begin this program.

**State Needs**

1. *Will this program meet local, state, regional, and national educational and cultural needs? Please describe.*

In the global context of education, it is imperative that Mississippi State University reach across traditional geographic boundaries and create a graduate degree program that will attract a local, state and national student audience. The online delivery of this program has the ability to help promote science education of K-12 teachers across Mississippi, the region, and the nation that do not have access to traditional degree granting programs at the graduate level. In addition, this is a highly innovative program in terms of being interdisciplinary between 5 science departments, in terms of being designed for K-12 teachers, and in terms of being offered online. Teachers could also enroll in individual courses to count toward continuing education units (CEUs) needed to retain certification.

According to the Mississippi Department of Education, there are 10,591 K-12 science teachers in the state. Among this number, only 3,210 (30%) have Masters degrees. At the primary level, there are 9,459 science teachers in the state and 2,789 (29%) have Masters degrees. While there is no data to support this claim, the majority of the Masters degrees are probably in education, not in science. Therefore, the pool of existing teachers in Mississippi that could benefit from this proposed degree program is enormous, plus this program could serve new teachers that enter school systems state-wide.

2. *Indicate the student demand for the program. What evidence exists of this demand?*

The demand for qualified science teachers across the state and nation has increased dramatically over the past 5 years due to the new “No Child Left Behind” Act initiated by President George W. Bush in January 2002. In working to increase the ranks and qualifications of teachers of math and science, the No Child Left Behind Act requires states to fill the nation’s classrooms with teachers who are knowledgeable and experienced in these subject areas. Numerous practicing teachers from across the nation are being forced to take additional college courses in the subjects they teach in order to be qualified teachers. This program will be one of the few in the nation that will enable K-12 teachers to obtain the endorsements needed without having to leave their jobs and return to the college campus.
Enrollment in this program should be similar, if not greater, than that in the Master of Science in Geoscience degree which is also a distance program for K-12 teachers. That program typically admits 150 new students each year.

3. *Give any additional reasons that make the program desirable (for example, exceptional qualifications of the faculty, special facilities, etc.*). *Include reports of advisory committees and consultants, if available. For doctoral programs, the institution should involve at least three authorities in the field (outside of the institution) as consultants, and should include their reports as a part of the proposal.*

This program will be highly desirable due to:
- the needs of the K-12 teachers for these content courses
- the interdisciplinary nature of the program that allows flexibility in meeting the academic needs of a diverse, national student population in that programs of study will include a variety of courses from four academic departments
- the online method of program delivery will allow teachers the ability to continue to work full-time, share and discuss innovative teaching techniques with teachers from across the nation, and obtain a graduate degree without the limitations of time or location.

4. *Will this program be unnecessarily duplicative of other programs within the System? List all public and private institutions in the state offering similar programs. Also, for doctoral programs, list at least five institutions in other southeastern states that are offering similar programs. If no such programs exist, so indicate.*

This program will be unique in the state of Mississippi.

5. *Will this program advance student diversity within the discipline?*

By allowing students who are educators the opportunity to take this program via online delivery, teachers from across the nation will be able to advance their careers and their teaching ability/style without having to disrupt their career paths; therefore, the potential graduate student population for this program will be highly diverse in terms of gender, race, age, and geographic location.

6. *Will this program promote economic development within the State?*

This program will support economic development in that the continued education of the teachers in the state will increase the educational advantages of the students being taught, and the school districts that employ these individuals. With a more qualified and well-rounded teaching force comes an increased quality educational experience and the increased potential economic impact from new business and industry in the State.

**Program Potential**

1. *Estimate the cumulative headcount and full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment for each of the first six years (explain assumptions used in making these estimates).*
The predicted enrollment in the proposed Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Sciences degree program starting in FY09:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year of Program</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Yearly Total</th>
<th>Cumulative Total</th>
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<td>FY14</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>186</td>
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Ultimate enrollment in this proposed degree program should be greater than that for the Master of Science in Geosciences degree program which is also a distance program for K-12 teachers since this program will cover four disciplines. That program typically admits 150 new students each year. Based on their information, an estimate of 100 initial students is conservative, and a projected yearly growth rate of 20% (annual growth rate for online education) is feasible.

This will be a two year program of study to complete the degree. Distance students typically take 4-6 credit hours per semester, not the fulltime graduate 9-12 hours, and this program would encourage students to take 6 hours per semester (fall, spring and summer). The FTE formula for graduate students considers full time as 12 hours. We can predict FTE growth as follows:

- Year One: 50
- Year Two: 105
- Year Three: 126
- Year Four: 151
- Year Five: 181
- Year Six: 218

2. *Estimate the potential placement of graduates in Mississippi, the Southeast, and the United States.*

Since this program is a distance program for practicing K-12 teachers, virtually all the students will be in the workplace when they start the program.

3. *Estimate the potential salaries of graduates in Mississippi, the Southeast, and the United States.*

The average teacher salary for the state of Mississippi is $35,135.
The average teacher salary for the Southeast is $39,183.
The average teacher salary for the nation is $45,771.

**Resources**
1. Describe library holdings relevant to the proposed program, noting strengths and weaknesses. If there are guidelines for the discipline, do current holdings meet or exceed standards? Describe planned actions that will maintain strengths and/or remedy weaknesses.

Any necessary library resources are currently available online. The courses to be offered are standard science courses, but geared towards teachers, so the library holdings are adequate for the disciplines.

2. Describe cooperative library arrangements that will be available to students in this program.

Not applicable

3. Provide estimates of any new costs to the institution related to the proposed program, including cost per student, and provide information regarding sources of the funding that will defray those costs. Itemize expenditures projected during each of the first six years.

This distance education program will not receive a fiscal year allocation from the College of Arts & Sciences or from MSU for the academic year operating budget. The program must generate revenue to cover the expenses necessary to administer a distance program. Tuition revenue is distributed using the AOCE model, 20% gross tuition revenue to the General Fund, 4% to Academic Affairs, and 28% to AOCE. Expenses (marketing, recruiting, travel, instructors) are paid out of the remaining 48%; the net is distributed to the College of Arts & Sciences. The College will then provide funds to each department based in part on the percentage of student credit hours generated. The revenue from distance fees is split between the General Fund (20%) and the participating departments (80% - based in part on the percentage of student credit hours generated).

Distance revenues must cover all expenses of the program including any faculty salaries to develop and teach the courses, technology upgrades, marketing, travel, supplies and training.

Any enrolled student in the program will pay a distance fee of $25 per credit hour in addition to the normal, in-state MSU tuition rate. Distance fees are subject to change with the appropriate university-level approval if deemed necessary. Students will be encouraged to enroll in two courses per semester, three semesters per year. This will translate into an annual cost to the student of $5,004. The capstone course will have an additional charge depending on the location and materials needed. The full degree would cost a student approximately $11,000. Textbooks, required peripherals, software and materials fees are not included. Many students enrolled in the program will receive reimbursement of program cost from their employers due to the increased value of those individuals completing program requirements.

Students in this two-year program of study will be encouraged to take 6 credit hours per semester (fall, spring and summer). The anticipated budget for the next six fiscal years is presented below.

FY08 – preparation of program and courses
Expenses:
- Faculty salaries for the development of courses: $100,000
  (20 courses at an average of $5,000 each)
- Materials for course development: $20,000
  (20 courses at an average of $1,000 each)
- Production of courses: $40,000
  (20 courses at an average of $2,000 each)
- Marketing of program: $5,000
- Technology needs: $10,000

Total FY08 Expenditures $175,000

Revenue:
- All expenditures to be paid for by AOCE: $175,000

FY 09 – preparation and program onset: year 1 courses only

Expenses:
- Faculty salaries for the development of courses: $75,000
  (15 courses at an average of $5,000 each)
- Materials for course development: $15,000
  (15 courses at an average of $1,000 each)
- Production of courses: $30,000
  (15 courses at an average of $2,000 each)
- Salary of faculty teaching courses: $100,000
  (20 courses at an average of $5,000 each)
- Marketing of program: $10,000
- Technology needs: $10,000

Total FY09 Expenditures $240,000

Revenue:
- Tuition at 48% to Dean / Department: $219,000
  (Year 1 students: 20 courses, 3 credit hours each, 30 students per course, $253 per SCH)
- Difference between revenue and expenses will be covered by AOCE $21,000

FY10 – program continuation: year 1 and 2 courses

Expenses:
- Salary of faculty teaching courses: $200,000
  (40 courses at an average of $5,000 each)
- Marketing of program: $10,000
- Technology needs: $8,000

Total FY10 Expenditures $218,000
Revenue:
- Tuition at 48% to Dean / Department: $459,000
  (Year 1 students: 20 courses, 3 credit hours each, 36 students per course, $253 per SCH; Year 2 students: 20 courses, 3 credit hours each, 27 students per course, $253 per SCH)

FY11 – program continuation: year 1 and 2 courses

Expenses:
- Salary of faculty teaching courses: $200,000
  (40 courses at an average of $5,000 each)
- Marketing of program: $10,000
- Technology needs: $8,000

Total FY11 Expenditures $218,000

Revenue:
- Tuition at 48% to Dean / Department: $546,000
  (Year 1 students: 20 courses, 3 credit hours each, 43 students per course, $253 per SCH; Year 2 students: 20 courses, 3 credit hours each, 32 students per course, $253 per SCH)

FY12 – program continuation: year 1 and 2 courses

Expenses:
- Salary of faculty teaching courses: $200,000
  (40 courses at an average of $5,000 each)
- Marketing of program: $10,000
- Technology needs: $8,000

Total FY12 Expenditures $218,000

Revenue:
- Tuition at 48% to Dean / Department: $663,000
  (Year 1 students: 20 courses, 3 credit hours each, 52 students per course, $253 per SCH; Year 2 students: 20 courses, 3 credit hours each, 39 students per course, $253 per SCH)

FY13 – program continuation: year 1 and 2 courses

Expenses:
- Salary of faculty teaching courses: $200,000
  (40 courses at an average of $5,000 each)
- Marketing of program: $10,000
- Technology needs: $8,000

Total FY13 Expenditures $218,000

Revenue:
- Tuition at 48% to Dean / Department: $802,000
  (Year 1 students: 20 courses, 3 credit hours each, 62 students per course, $253 per SCH; Year 2 students: 20 courses, 3 credit hours each, 47 students per course, $253 per SCH)

FY14 – program continuation: year 1 and 2 courses

Expenses:
- Salary of faculty teaching courses: $200,000
  (40 courses at an average of $5,000 each)
- Marketing of program: $10,000
- Technology needs: $8,000

Total FY14 Expenditures $218,000

Revenue:
- Tuition at 48% to Dean / Department: $954,000
  (Year 1 students: 20 courses, 3 credit hours each, 75 students per course, $253 per SCH; Year 2 students: 20 courses, 3 credit hours each, 56 students per course, $253 per SCH)

At predicted levels of enrollment and faculty/staff, no additional costs are needed to maintain the distance program. As stated above, the Division of Academic Outreach & Continuing Education (AOCE) will provide the funding to initiate the program. After the 2nd year of the program, there should be enough tuition revenue generated to offset all costs.

4. Describe the availability and adequacy of existing facilities that will be used for the proposed program and planned alteration or renovation of existing facilities needed for the program.

No additional facilities will be needed for this program.

5. Describe any external funding that will be garnered as a result of the program.

No additional external funding is anticipated from this program.

Internal Assessment

1. Describe procedures for evaluation of the program and its effectiveness in the first six years of the program, including admission and retention rates, program outcome assessments, placement of graduates, changes in job market need/demand, ex-student/graduate surveys, or other procedures. How will assessment be completed?
An assessment of the program will be initiated once program approval is granted. Planned types of assessments include:

- Admission rates will be assessed the first six consecutive semesters (fall, spring, summer) to determine program growth potential and for budgeting revenue in order to meet student enrollment demands. Additional admission assessments will be conducted each fall semester over the next four years.

- All degree seeking distance education students will participate in an online survey evaluation at the end of each semester in order to assess the quality of courses and to provide suggested program/course improvements for the future.

- An assessment of teacher placement and promotion due to program completion will be compiled and reviewed on an annual basis to determine program effectiveness and student success rates.

- Program retention will be monitored by Graduate Coordinators within each department or within the College of Arts & Sciences, and students who are not making progress towards their degrees will be contacted to determine reasons for the lack of progress.
Catalog Descriptions for the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Sciences Degree

The Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Sciences is a 36-semester hour, web-based, non-thesis Master’s program geared towards students desiring a flexible graduate degree. The program is particularly designed for teachers at the K-12 level and who have an undergraduate degree in a specific science discipline, but desire the opportunity to pursue interdisciplinary graduate work. These students may reside throughout the country where the opportunity to obtain an interdisciplinary graduate degree in the sciences in minimal and a web-based course delivery system is necessary.

Course Descriptions for the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Sciences

**BIO 6013. Genetics & Molecular Biology.** (3) (Prerequisite: Consent of instructor). Three hours video and online. Analysis of the transmission of genetic information from molecular to organismal levels; examination of ways in which genotype determines phenotype. (Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.)

**BIO 6023. Principles of Evolutionary Biology.** (Prerequisite: Consent of instructor). Three hours video and online. Current concepts in genetic variation, natural selection, and adaptation of populations; speciation, extinction, and phylogenetics; patterns of human evolution. (Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.)

**BIO 8023. Modern Microbiology.** (3) (Prerequisite: Consent of instructor). Three hours video and online. Fundamental principles of microbiology, including microbial structure, replication, and diversity; role of microorganisms in human health and the environment. (Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.)

**BIO 8033. Advanced Cell Biology.** (3) (Prerequisite: Consent of instructor). Three hours video and online. Study of eucaryotic cellular and sub-cellular structure and function; integration of cellular processes to understand the cell as a whole. (Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.)

**BIO 8043. Ecology & the Environment.** (3) (Prerequisite: Consent of instructor). Three hours video and online. Investigation of biodiversity, ecological hierarchies, and interactions between biota and the environment. Includes an introduction to contemporary environmental science issues. (Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.)

**BIO 8073. Research Methods in Biological Sciences for Interdisciplinary Sciences.** (3) (Prerequisites: Fifteen hours of BIO graduate work and consent of instructor). Three hours video and online. Defining research problems and using analytical techniques in Biological Sciences. Exploring how research in Biological Sciences relates to other scientific fields. (Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.)

**BIO 8083. Capstone in Interdisciplinary Sciences with an Emphasis on Biological Sciences.** (3) (Prerequisites: Fifteen hours BIO graduate work and consent of instructor). Two hours lecture, three hours laboratory and observing. Provides field experience in the biological sciences through planned and supervised projects and field trips. (Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.)
CH 6263. Industrial and Consumer Chemistry. (3) (Prerequisite: Consent of instructor). Three hours video and online. A survey of the chemistry used in the manufacture of products and how some common consumer products function. Topics will include the chemistry associated with polymers, dyes/colors, metal production and recycling, cleaners/detergents, cosmetics, batteries, paints, fertilizers, heating and cooling. Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.

CH 6363. Chemistry of the Environment. (3) (Prerequisite: Consent of instructor). Three hours video and online. A survey of chemistry that naturally occurs in the environment. Chemical considerations of human impact upon the environment including agricultural chemistry; water, air and soil pollution; the ozone layer and global warming; and waste disposal and recycling. Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.

CH 8073. Research Methods in Chemistry for Interdisciplinary Sciences. (3) (Prerequisite: fifteen hours CH graduate work and consent of instructor). Three hours video and online. Defining research problems and using analytical techniques in Chemistry. Exploring how research in Chemistry relates to other scientific fields. Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.

CH 8083. Capstone in Interdisciplinary Sciences with an Emphasis on Chemistry. (3) (Prerequisite: fifteen hours CH graduate work and consent of instructor). Two hours lecture, three hours laboratory and observing. Provides field experience in chemistry through planned and supervised projects and field trips. Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.

CH 8363. Analytical Methods in Forensics. (3) (Prerequisite: Consent of instructor). Three hours video and online. A survey of analytical techniques used in forensic science. Both wet chemical and instrumental methods used in the investigation of criminal activity will be presented. Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.

CH 8463. Chemistry of Energy. (3) (Prerequisite: Consent of instructor). Three hours video and online. A survey of the chemistry associated with energy generation in modern society using thermochemical and kinetic principles. The chemistry of fossil fuels, bio-fuels, nuclear power, solar energy, batteries and fuel cells will be presented. Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.

CH 8473. Chemical Structure and Bonding. (3) (Prerequisite: Consent of instructor). Three hours video and online. A survey of the structures that atoms and molecules assume and the theory of bonding in molecules. Quantum chemistry, electron configurations of atoms, VSEPR, molecular
orbital theory and aromaticity will all be discussed. Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.

CH 8563. Organic Molecules and Polymeric Materials. (3) (Prerequisite: Consent of instructor). Three hours video and online. A survey of organic molecules and polymeric materials that have a profound influence on modern society. Topics will include medicinal compounds and their synthesis; polymerization reactions, polymer properties and the processing of the polymers; naturally-occurring compounds; and food chemistry. Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.

GG 8073. Research Methods in Geosciences for Interdisciplinary Sciences. (3) (Prerequisite: fifteen hours GG or GR graduate work and consent of instructor). Three hours video and online. Defining research problems and using analytical techniques in Geosciences. Exploring how research in Geosciences relates to other scientific fields. Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.

GG 8083. Capstone in Interdisciplinary Sciences with an Emphasis on Geosciences. (3) (Prerequisite: fifteen hours GG or GR graduate work and consent of instructor). Two hours lecture, three hours laboratory and observing. Provides field experience in geosciences through planned and supervised projects and laboratories and field trips. Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.

GG 8113. Geology I: Processes and Products. (3) (Prerequisite: Consent of instructor). Three hours video and online. Principles of physical geology with emphasis on earth materials and processes, rock and mineral identification, and landscape development. Primarily for K-12 teachers.

GG 8123. Geology II: Earth, Time and Life. (3) (Prerequisite: GG 8113 or consent of instructor). Three hours video and online. Principles of historical geology with an emphasis on geological time, earth history, fossils, evolution, and extinction. Primarily for K-12 science teachers.

GG 8203. Ocean Science. (3) (Prerequisite: GG 8113 or consent of instructor). Three hours video and online. Comprehensive examination of the ocean world, focusing on the topography, physics, chemistry, and circulation of the oceans. Primarily for K-12 science teachers.

GG 8233. Environmental Geosciences. (3) (Prerequisite: GG 8113 or consent of instructor). Three hours video and online. Study of current environmental problems associated with the earth science realms; atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, and lithosphere. Primarily for K-12 science teachers.

GG 8613. Hydrology. (3) (Prerequisite: GG 8113 or consent of instructor). Properties of Water; Principles of Surface and Ground Water Flow; Relationship between Surface Water and Aquifers; Flood Recurrence Intervals. Primarily for K-12 science teachers.

GR 6603. Climatology. (3) (Prerequisite: GR 1114 or GR 1123 or equivalent). Study of the elements and controls of weather and climate, distribution and characteristics of climatic regions, El Nino and climate change.

GR 8113. Meteorology I: Observations. (3) (Prerequisite: Consent of instructor). Three hours video and online. Principles of meteorology with emphasis on elements, controls, and forecasting of atmospheric
phenomena. Concentration on daily weather observations and the movement of weather systems. Primarily for K-12 science teachers.

**GR 8123. Meteorology II: Forecasting and Storms.** (3) (Prerequisite: GR 8113 or consent of instructor). Three hours video and online. Continuation of Meteorology I. Emphasis on the analysis of upper air forecast products, satellite and radar products, and numerical weather prediction to develop forecasts. Severe weather and tropical weather are also highlighted. Primarily for K-12 science teachers.

**MA 6013. Applied Mathematics for Interdisciplinary Sciences.** (3) (Prerequisite: MA 1313 or equivalent). Three hours video and online. A remedial course for students to take in the summer before they start the fall semester of the first year. Topics include algebra; special functions (including logarithmic, exponential, trigonometric, and hyperbolic functions); linear algebra (mainly matrices); introduction to derivatives and integrals; introduction to differential equations. Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.

**MA 6023. Theory of Equations for Interdisciplinary Sciences.** (3) (Prerequisite: MA 1313 or equivalent). Three hours video and online. Topics include complex numbers; polynomials and their properties; roots of algebraic equations; systems of linear equations, determinants and matrices. Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.

**MA 6033. Studies in Applied Probability and Statistics.** (3) (Prerequisite: MA 2113 (Same as ST 2113) or equivalent). Three hours video and online. Topics include graphical methods of presenting data; analysis of data; probability, binomial distribution, normal distribution; random sampling; linear regression and correlation. Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.

**MA 8033. Studies in Discrete Mathematics.** (3) (Prerequisite: MA 6023 or equivalent). Three hours video and online. Selected topics from algebra, number theory, combinatorics, and graph theory. Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.

**MA 8053. Applied Linear Algebra for Interdisciplinary Sciences.** (3) (Prerequisite: MA 6013 or equivalent). Three hours video and online. Topics will include applications to discrete dynamical systems and linear difference equations, stochastic matrices and Markov chains, linear models and curve fitting. Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.

**MA 8063. Differential Equations with Mathematical Modeling.** (3) (Prerequisite: MA 6013 or equivalent). Three hours video and online. The derivative as a rate of change will be emphasized to construct mathematical models from various disciplines. Topics will include the building of mathematical models, elementary solution techniques, graphical approaches to analysis, and the use of software to approximate solutions. The goal will be a conceptual understanding of modeling using differential equations and the variety of ways to analyze these models for deeper understanding. Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.

**MA 8073. Research Methods in Mathematics and Statistics for Interdisciplinary Sciences.** (3) (Prerequisite: fifteen hours MA graduate work and consent of instructor). Three hours video and online. Defining research problems and using analytical techniques in Mathematics. Exploring how research in Mathematics relates to other scientific fields. Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.
MA 8083. Capstone in Interdisciplinary Sciences with an Emphasis on Mathematics and Statistics. (3) (Prerequisite: fifteen hours MA graduate work and consent of instructor). Two hours lecture, three hours laboratory and observing. Provides field experience in mathematics through planned and supervised projects and field trips. Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.

PH 6033. Demonstration and Concepts for Physics Teachers I. (3) (Prerequisite: Consent of Instructor). Two hours lecture, three hours laboratory. Topics are those normally covered in first semester high school Physics. Equal emphasis on theory, problems, demonstrations, and laboratory.

PH 6043. Demonstration and Concepts for Physics Teachers II. (3) (Prerequisite: Consent of Instructor). Two hours lecture, three hours laboratory. Topics are those normally covered in second semester high school Physics. Equal emphasis on theory, problems, demonstrations, and laboratory.

PH 6053. Physical Science for Teachers. (3) (Prerequisite: Consent of Instructor). Three hours video and online. Topics are those normally covered in middle school physical science. Major emphasis on theory, demonstrations, and laboratory, and to a lesser degree on problem solving. (Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.)

PH 8003. Topics for Physics Teachers. (3) (Prerequisite: Consent of instructor; MA 6023 or equivalent). Three hours video and online. Topics are those required to enable students to effectively teach K-8 physics topics, and also for teachers who may teach physics in middle school or high school. Major emphasis on theory, demonstrations, and laboratory and to a lesser degree on problem solving. (Intended for K-12 science teachers. Course cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements in a non-distance degree program.)
Dr. Tim Chamblee, Chair
University Committee on Courses and Curricula
Mississippi State University

Dear Dr. Chamblee:

This letter is to accompany the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Sciences distance learning degree proposal.

As Head of the Department of Geosciences, I have been actively involved in the creation of this innovative degree. The faculty in my department fully support this degree program, our involvement in its creation, and how we will meet the student demand.

I am pleased to report that our faculty are solidly behind this initiative. They are looking forward to developing this program and meeting the needs of K-12 teachers throughout Mississippi, the region, and the country.

Sincerely,

Darrel Schmitz, Head
Department of Geosciences
June 7, 2007

Dr. Tim Chamblee, Chair  
University Committee on Courses and Curricula  
Mississippi State University

Dear Dr. Chamblee:

This letter is to accompany the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Sciences distance learning degree proposal.

As Interim Head of the Department of Biological Sciences, I have been heavily involved in the creation of this innovative degree. The faculty members in my department have met several times to discuss this degree program, our involvement in its creation, and how we will simultaneously meet the student demand for this campus 5 and our current campus 1 degree programs. The faculty voted to fully participate in this degree program and to also develop a Masters program specific to Biological Sciences.

The faculty members are solidly behind this initiative. They are looking forward to developing this program and meeting the immense needs with regard to physical science content of K-12 teachers throughout Mississippi, the region, and the country.

Sincerely,

Nancy A. Reichert
5 June 2007

Dr. Tim Chamblee, Chair
University Committee on Courses and Curricula
Mississippi State University

Dear Dr. Chamblee:

This letter is to accompany the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Sciences distance learning degree proposal.

As Head of the Department of Chemistry, I have been heavily involved in the creation of this innovative degree. The faculty in my department have met several times to discuss this degree program, our involvement in its creation, and how we will meet the student demand.

I am pleased to report that our faculty are solidly behind this initiative. They are looking forward to developing this program and meeting the needs of K-12 teachers throughout Mississippi, the region, and the country.

Sincerely,

Keith T. Mead
Professor and Head
June 5, 2007

Dr. Tim Chamblee, Chair
University Committee on Courses and Curricula
Mississippi State University

Dear Dr. Chamblee:

This letter is to accompany the Master in Interdisciplinary Science Distance Learning degree proposal.

As Interim Head of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, I have been heavily involved in the creation of this innovative on-line degree program. On November 2, 2006, Dr. Mark Binkley, Dr. Laura Crittenden, and Ms. Tammy Prather attended our departmental Faculty Meeting and gave a presentation on the Division of Academic Outreach and Continuing Education as well as a “Proposed Distance Program for the Physical Sciences and Mathematics.” As is our usual practice in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, I then met with the departmental Advisory Committee to discuss this degree program, our involvement in its creation, and how we will meet the student demand. On February 23, 2006, I emailed our faculty to include them in the process and made it clear that the process was “extremely flexible at this stage.” Please refer to the attached email.

I am pleased to report that our Advisory Committee is solidly behind this initiative. We are looking forward to developing this program and meeting the immense needs with regards to the mathematical science content of K-12 teachers throughout Mississippi, the region, and the country.

Best Regards,

Mohsen Razzaghi
Interim Head
Colleagues:

I would like to update you on the proposal for a Master in Interdisciplinary Science (MIS).

Dr. Mark Binkley, Dr. Laura Crittenden, and Ms. Tammy Prather attended our Faculty Meeting on November 2nd, and gave a presentation on the Division of Academic Outreach and Continuing Education as well as a "Proposed Distance Program for the Physical Sciences and Mathematics." Since that meeting, I have had several other meetings with other Department Heads and with Mark. I have also met with the Advisory Committee on two different occasions and asked for preliminary opinions on whether or not we should participate, and the outcome of these meetings was that we will participate in the program.

The next step, according to Mark, is to send only the title of five courses in each discipline and one for remedial classes for Physics and Chemistry. This degree is intended to satisfy the No Child Left Behind Act for K-8 teachers, and as far as I know, most of our participants would be middle school teachers.

I've attached a very tentative and preliminary draft for your review along with a proposed list of courses. Please note that the names of our courses and preliminary course descriptions have already been approved by the Advisory Committee.

The entire process is extremely flexible at this stage. Please note that we will submit ONLY the name of our courses at this time with no description. Finalized course descriptions will be submitted at a later time.

As we progress, I will form a task force that will be very active in helping with this course proposal. When that time comes, I will ask for willing participants.

Best Regards,
Mohsen
4 June 2007

Dr. Tim Chamblee, Chair
University Committee on Courses and Curricula
Mississippi State University

Dear Dr. Chamblee:

This letter is to accompany the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Sciences distance learning degree proposal.

As Head of the Department of Physics and Astronomy, I have been heavily involved in the creation of this innovative on-line degree program. The faculty members in my department have met several times to discuss this degree program, our involvement in its creation, and how we will simultaneously meet the student demand, the required high level of the material to be covered, and the self-sustaining financial model for this degree program. In fact, the Departmental faculty voted unanimously in a Feb. 21, 2007 meeting on each of the PH courses to be developed and included in the degree program. This unanimous vote included the 4 current face-to-face 6000-level classes for physics teachers that have been offered by the Departmental faculty during summer sessions, and would be revamped for on-line delivery under this degree.

I am pleased to report that our faculty members are solidly behind this initiative. They are looking forward to developing this program and meeting the immense needs with regards to physical science content of K-12 teachers throughout Mississippi, the region, and the country.

Sincerely

Mark A. Novotny, Head
Department of Physics and Astronomy
Fellow, American Physical Society
Graduate Faculty – Level 1
Appointment/Reappointment Request Form

Mississippi State University
Office of the Graduate School, P. O. Box G
Mississippi State, MS 39762

Qualifications: (Attach Current Curriculum Vitae)

- Must have an earned terminal degree (highest degree awarded in discipline) in or related to the faculty member's area of assigned graduate responsibility
- Must be a full-time employee at MSU, holding an academic rank of assistant professor or higher or assistant research professor/assistant extension professor/assistant clinical professor or higher without any qualifying designations such as “visiting” or “adjunct”
- Must have demonstrated excellent and current quality performance in scholarly/research/creative endeavors activities according to the criteria prescribed in the tenure and promotion policies document of the individuals department/school/college
- Must have experience directing independent study, thesis or dissertation

Responsibilities:

- May teach graduate-level courses in each field of specialization based upon formal advanced study or demonstrated competence through independent scholarly activity
- May serve as a chair/director or member of master's non thesis, master's thesis, specialist thesis or specialist non-thesis committees within Department of appointment or outside Department, as appropriate
- May serve as a chair/director or member of doctoral committees within Department of appointment or outside Department, as appropriate

Term: 5 years each; can be reappointed

Name_________________________ MSU ID#________________________

Highest Degree___________________ Institution________________________ Year______

Date of initial employment at MSU____________________

Current Academic Rank____________________

Department_________________________ Mail Stop________

College______________________________
Please check as appropriate:

_____ Initial Appointment

_____ Reappointment at same level (note: check initial appointment if individual had a previous appointment that was not renewed)

_____ Change from Level 2

_____ Change academic rank from __________________ to __________________

SIGNATURE:

[Signature]

Chair /Director Date College Dean Date
Graduate Faculty – Level 2
Appointment/Reappointment Request Form

Mississippi State University
Office of the Graduate School
P. O. Box G
Mississippi State, MS 39762

Qualifications: (Attach Current Curriculum Vitae)

- Must have an earned terminal degree (highest degree awarded in discipline) in or related to the faculty member's area of assigned graduate responsibility
- Must be a full-time employee at MSU, holding an academic rank of assistant professor or higher or assistant research professor/assistant extension professor/assistant clinical professor or higher without any qualifying designations such as "visiting" or "adjunct"
- Must have demonstrated satisfactory quality performance in scholarly/research/creative endeavors activities according to the criteria prescribed in the tenure and promotion policies document of the individuals department/school/college
- Must have experience directing independent study, thesis or dissertation

 Responsibilities:

- May teach graduate-level courses in each field of specialization based upon formal advanced study or demonstrated competence through independent scholarly activity
- May serve as a chair or member of master's non thesis, master's thesis, specialist thesis or specialist non-thesis committees within Department of appointment or outside Department, as appropriate
- May serve as a member of doctoral committees within Department of appointment or outside Department, as appropriate, but may not chair doctoral committees: however, may serve as a co-director of doctoral dissertations with a Level 1 member of the graduate faculty

Term: Monitored by the department

Name ______________________________ MSU ID# ______________________________

Highest Degree ______________ Year ______ Institution ____________________________

Appointment Academic Rank ________________________________________________

Department Making Appointment __________________________ Mail Stop ______

College ________________________________________________________________
Please check as appropriate:

______ Initial Appointment

______ Reappointment at same level (note: check initial appointment if individual had a previous appointment that was not renewed)

______ Change from Level 1

______ Change academic rank from __________________ to __________________

SIGNATURES:

Chair /Director Date College Dean Date
Graduate Faculty – Associate Level 1 or 2
Appointment/Reappointment Request Form

Mississippi State University
Office of the Graduate School
P.O. Box G
Mississippi State, MS 39762

Qualifications: (Attach current curriculum vitae and letter of justification explaining need for status)

- Is not employed by Mississippi State, or is employed by Mississippi State and holds the title of “visiting” or
  adjunct with the academic rank of, or equivalent to, at least assistant professor
- Must have an earned terminal degree (highest degree awarded in discipline) in or related to the faculty 
  member’s area of assigned graduate responsibility
- Must have demonstrated satisfactory (Associate Level 2) or excellent (Associate Level 1) quality 
  performance in scholarly/research/creative endeavors.

Permitted Assignments:

- May teach graduate-level courses in each field of specialization for which formal advanced study or 
  demonstrated competence through independent scholarly activity is apparent
- May serve as a member of, but not chair, master’s non thesis, master’s thesis, specialist thesis or specialist 
  non-thesis committees
- May serve as a member of, but not chair, a doctoral committee
- May only serve a limited term of graduate faculty status, as requested by the college dean; can be 
  reappointed

Term: Limited, as requested by the college dean; can be reappointed

Name __________________________        MSU ID# __________________________

Highest Degree____________________ Institution __________________________ Year _____

Academic Rank for Appointment __________________________

Department Making Appointment __________________________ Mail Stop _____

College __________________________
Please check as appropriate:

________ Initial Appointment

________ Reappointment to same level with same academic rank

________ Change to Associate Level from Level _______

________ Change academic rank from ______________________ to ______________________

SIGNATURE:

[Signature]

Chair /Director Date College Dean Date
Graduate Program Participation – Instructor Appointment/Reappointment Request Form

Mississippi State University
Office of the Graduate School, P. O. Box G
Mississippi State, MS 39762

A faculty special appointment may be granted in the following circumstances:
• A faculty member who has earned the terminal degree in his/her discipline
• A faculty member who holds the title of instructor

Permitted Assignments:
• May teach specified graduate-level courses in each field of specialization for which faculty member has formal advanced study or has demonstrated competence through independent scholarly activity
• May serve as a member, but not chair, of master’s non-thesis, master’s thesis, specialist non-thesis, and specialist thesis committees

Term: 3 years; can be reappointed

_A current vita and letter of rationale explaining the need for the appointment must be attached._

Name__________________________ MSU ID# __________________________

Highest Degree________________ Institution __________________________ Year_________

Academic Rank ____________________________

Department Making Appointment____________ Mail Stop _____________

College ____________________________

Please check one:

_____ Approved to teach designated graduate courses

_____ Approved to serve on a specific committee

Student’s name_________________________ Student’s degree _______________

_____ Renewal of prior special appointment

Date of previous appointment_________________________
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February 26, 2009

Graduate Council
Mississippi State Graduate Council
Mississippi State University

Dear Graduate Council Members:

I am writing to once again express my support for the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Sciences (MAIS). As you are aware, this new distance learning graduate degree program was approved by the IHL through their pre-approval process a couple of years ago. Since then the participating departments have worked diligently with AOCE to create appropriate graduate-level courses for those who will be seeking the degree, and I am referring to K-12 teachers.

As a new degree program both in its composition and method of delivery, questions have been raised throughout the approval process about the courses that comprise the MAIS degree and whether they are “equivalent” to the same graduate level courses offered on campus. Without a doubt we have come to understand over the past twenty years of offering distance learning courses through departments in the College of Arts & Sciences (most notably through Geosciences) that equivalency is a relative term due to the significant differences in subject areas and method of delivery. Distance learning courses are structured differently, emphasize content in ways that best utilize the available technology, and require different types of student participation. So are they different? Prima facie it might appear so, but it begs the question as to what differences exist among the same conventional courses as taught by different professors.

I would argue that no courses are taught the same way, nor do we monitor them to any great extent for quality once approved (except through course evaluations)—leaving our trust, instead, in the unique hands of each faculty member. Tenure, of course, confirms that trust. What is ironic, however, is when one assumes distance learning courses do not compare favorably with conventional courses (that they are different), then discovers that distance learning courses differ by creating an electronic record of all interchanges between teacher and students, thus establishing a record of course delivery and student participation—something most conventional courses do not do. Suddenly it becomes more difficult to claim that distance learning courses are less “rigorous” due to their method of deliver, or to whom they are being delivered, without creating a double standard based on a pre-disposed opinion.
The fact is all distance learning courses offered through our college have been scrutinized for content and method of delivery by several committees because otherwise they can not be effectively offered—technology essentially prevents it. Consider the conventional classroom when the teacher asks a question and one student provides an answer. Does the teacher press those students who did not respond for an answer? Typically no. On the other hand, in a distance learning class, everyone is required to answer. Since the students are not sitting in front of the teacher, it is necessary to get a response from everyone in order to keep the whole class engaged. The point is that technology “forces” a rigor into the course experience that is often absent in a conventional class. Moreover, the teacher of a distance learning class cannot avoid responding to her students without jeopardizing the course’s progress. The point is that distance learning courses instill a certain amount of rigor due to the method of delivery that can actually be more demanding than face-to-face courses, even when their content is deemed “not equivalent.”

But is the course content necessarily less than that of its campus equivalent. Different in its presentation: yes. Lesser in value: no. Content through distance learning is always presented differently due to the medium. Consider a conversation over the phone. Content is presented differently without gestures and body language, but is what’s being said of lesser value? Some phone conversations are even more meaningful than those in person, due to a lack of distractions. Indeed, similar circumstances make a degree like MAIS ideal for distance learning delivery because it requires constant participation, with little distraction, by non-traditional students in order to successfully complete the program. And by requiring a focused level of participation by all students, content proficiency can be achieved that otherwise might not be effectively measured. I bother you with these observations because it appears that in the course of the deliberations over this pre-approved degree program that these subtleties and distinctions about distance learning are either ignored or unknown.

Another area that seems to pass by without much notice is the fact that the MAIS degree is not a discipline specific degree (Master of Science in Chemistry or Master of Science in Mathematics, etc.); it is a Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Sciences. The degree was proposed and pre-approved based on its intended contribution to key subject areas for K-12 teachers, not to masquerade as anything else, and most everyone knows that by its title. Moreover, it is tailored for individuals who have either already taken a bachelors degree in a specific subject area and/or who have a certain number of years experience teaching which one can consider preparatory to the advanced studies the MAIS degree program offers. The point is rather straightforward. Teachers need content to be effective teachers; they also need a more advanced understanding of subject areas to be more effective teachers. If they are successful in their studies, the degree program will increase their knowledge base; therefore, they should be better equipped to engage
students in a meaningful way. Frankly, my concern is that we might have too significant a fail rate. I base my concern on the difficulties inherent with distance courses. In order to be successful one must be self-motivated; one must also follow the rigorous process demanded by course structure, response time, and required participation. Rather than be one of those students who choose not to answer a question, students must participate and engage in a rigorous learning process in order to be successful. That takes a commitment that might be beyond some.

As I make these statements, I am well aware that counter arguments can be waged. I also know that the perfect course or degree program does not exist. Experienced educators know that content and delivery under any method is challenging, and the results vary and are often unclear. The Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Sciences is an attempt to engage K-12 teachers in graduate studies in a meaningful way so they can advance their knowledge in key subject areas in which they need coverage in order to be more effective teachers.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Gary Myers
Professor and Dean
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OVERVIEW

The Commission on Colleges
MISSION

The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is the regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states. The Commission’s mission is (1) the enhancement of educational quality throughout the region and (2) the improvement of the effectiveness of institutions by ensuring that they meet standards established by the higher education community that address the needs of society and students. It serves as the common denominator of shared values and practices among the diverse institutions in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Latin America that award associate, baccalaureate, master’s, or doctoral degrees. The Commission also accepts applications from other international institutions of higher education.

Accreditation by the Commission on Colleges signifies that the institution (1) has a mission appropriate to higher education, (2) has resources, programs, and services sufficient to accomplish and sustain that mission, and (3) maintains clearly specified educational objectives that are consistent with its mission and appropriate to the degrees it offers, and that indicate whether it is successful in achieving its stated objectives.
Self-regulation through accreditation embodies a traditional U.S. philosophy that a free people can and ought to govern themselves through a representative, flexible, and responsive system. Accordingly, accreditation is best accomplished through a voluntary association of educational institutions.

Both a process and a product, accreditation relies on integrity, thoughtful and principled judgment, rigorous application of requirements, and a context of trust. The process provides an assessment of an institution’s effectiveness in the fulfillment of its mission, its compliance with the requirements of its accrediting association, and its continuing efforts to enhance the quality of student learning and its programs and services. Based upon reasoned judgment, the process stimulates evaluation and improvement, while providing a means of continuing accountability to constituents and the public.

The product of accreditation is a public statement of an institution’s continuing capacity to provide effective programs and services based on agreed-upon requirements. The statement of an institution’s accreditation status with the Commission on Colleges is also an affirmation of an institution’s continuing commitment to the Commission’s principles and philosophy of accreditation.

The Commission on Colleges expects institutions to dedicate themselves to enhancing the quality of their programs and services within the context of their resources and capacities and to create an environment in which teaching, public service, research, and learning occur, as appropriate to the mission.

At the heart of the Commission’s philosophy of accreditation, the concept of quality enhancement presumes each member institution to be engaged in an ongoing program of improvement and be able to demonstrate how well it fulfills its stated mission. Although evaluation of an institution’s educational quality and its effectiveness in achieving its mission is a difficult task requiring careful analysis and professional judgment, an institution is expected to document the quality and effectiveness of all its programs and services.

The Commission on Colleges supports the right of an institution to pursue its established educational mission; the right of faculty members to teach, investigate, and publish freely; and the right of students to access opportunities for learning and for the open exchange of ideas. However, the exercise of these rights should not interfere with the overriding obligation of an institution to offer its students a sound education.
The Commission on Colleges adheres to the following fundamental characteristics of accreditation:

- Participation in the accreditation process is voluntary and is an earned and renewable status.
- Member institutions develop, amend, and approve accreditation requirements.
- The process of accreditation is representative, responsive, and appropriate to the types of institutions accredited.
- Accreditation is a form of self-regulation.
- Accreditation requires institutional commitment and engagement.
- Accreditation is based upon a peer review process.
- Accreditation requires an institutional commitment to student learning and achievement.
- Accreditation acknowledges an institution’s prerogative to articulate its mission within the recognized context of higher education and its responsibility to show that it is accomplishing its mission.
- Accreditation requires institutional commitment to the concept of quality enhancement through continuous assessment and improvement.
- Accreditation expects an institution to develop a balanced governing structure designed to promote institutional integrity, autonomy, and flexibility of operation.
- Accreditation expects an institution to ensure that its programs are complemented by support structures and resources that allow for the total growth and development of its students.
The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is a private, nonprofit, voluntary organization founded in 1895 in Atlanta, Georgia. The Association is comprised of the Commission on Colleges, which accredits higher education degree-granting institutions, and the Council on Accreditation and School Improvement, which accredits elementary, middle, and secondary schools. The Commission and Council carry out their missions with considerable autonomy; they develop their own standards and procedures and govern themselves by a delegate assembly. Both operate under the Association’s Board of Trustees.

The College Delegate Assembly is comprised of one voting representative (the chief executive officer or the officer’s designee) from each member institution. Its responsibilities include electing the seventy seven-member Commission on Colleges and guiding the organization’s work, approving all revisions in accrediting standards as recommended by the Commission, approving the dues of candidate and member institutions as recommended by the Commission, electing an Appeals Committee to hear appeals of adverse accreditation decisions, and electing Commission representatives to the Association’s Board of Trustees.

The Commission on Colleges is responsible for recommending to the College Delegate Assembly standards for candidacy and membership, authorizing special visits, taking final action on the accreditation status of institutions, nominating to the College Delegate Assembly individuals for election to succeed outgoing members of the Commission, electing an Executive Council of the Commission that will act for the Commission while it is not in session, appointing *ad hoc* study committees as needed, and approving the policies and procedures of the Commission on Colleges.

The thirteen-member Executive Council is the executive arm of the Commission and functions on behalf of the Commission and the College Delegate Assembly between sessions. However, the actions of the Council are subject to the review and approval of the Commission. The Council interprets Commission policies and procedures, develops procedures for and supervises the work of *ad hoc* and standing committees of the Commission, approves goals and objectives of the Commission, reviews and approves the Commission’s budget, oversees and annually evaluates the work of its president, and initiates new programs, projects, and policy proposals.
The Council receives and acts on reports from all ad hoc and standing committees and submits them to the Commission. In the case of institutions applying for candidacy, membership, or reaffirmation of accreditation, the Executive Council receives recommendations from the Committees on Compliance and Reports, which are the standing evaluation committees of the Commission, and, in turn, submits its recommendations to the total Commission for final action.

THE PROCESS OF ACCREDITATION

The process for initial and continued accreditation involves a collective analysis and judgment by the institution’s internal constituencies, an informed review by peers external to the institution, and a reasoned decision by the elected members of the Commission on Colleges. Accredited institutions periodically conduct internal reviews involving their administrative officers, staffs, faculties, students, trustees, and others appropriate to the process. The internal review allows an institution to consider its effectiveness in achieving its stated mission, its compliance with the Commission’s accreditation requirements, its efforts in enhancing the quality of student learning and the quality of programs and services offered to its constituencies, and its success in accomplishing its mission. At the culmination of the internal review, peer evaluators representing the Commission apply their professional judgment through a preliminary assessment of the institution; elected Commissioners make the final determination of an institution’s compliance with the accreditation requirements.

Application of the Requirements

The Commission on Colleges bases its accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions and entities on requirements in the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement. These requirements apply to all institutional programs and services, wherever located or however delivered. The Commission on Colleges applies the requirements of its Principles to all applicant, candidate, and member institutions, regardless of the type of institution: private for-profit, private not-for-profit, or public.

The Commission evaluates an institution and makes accreditation decisions based on the following:

- Compliance with the Principle of Integrity (Section 1)
- Compliance with the Core Requirements (Section 2)
Components of the Peer Review Process

The Commission conducts several types of institutional reviews: (1) Candidate Committee reviews of institutions seeking candidacy, (2) Accreditation Committee reviews of institutions seeking initial membership, (3) Reaffirmation Committee reviews of institutions seeking continued accreditation following a comprehensive review, (4) Special Committee reviews of institutions seeking continued accreditation following evaluation of institutional circumstances that are accreditation related, and (5) Substantive Change Committee reviews of institutions seeking approval and continued accreditation following the review of a change of a significant modification or expansion to the institution’s nature and scope. Each of the above types of reviews has its own evaluation documents and peer review procedures and, except for item 3 dealing with reaffirmation, can be found on the Commission’s Web site: www.sacscoc.org.

The process described below is specific to an institution seeking reaffirmation of accreditation.

Preparation by the Institution

As part of the reaffirmation process, the institution will provide two separate documents.

1. Compliance Certification

The Compliance Certification, submitted approximately fifteen months in advance of an institution’s scheduled reaffirmation, is a document completed by the institution that demonstrates its judgment of the extent of its compliance with each of the Core Requirements, Comprehensive Standards, and Federal Requirements. Signatures by the institution’s chief executive officer and accreditation liaison are required to certify compliance. By signing the document, the individuals certify that the process of institutional self-assessment has been thorough, honest, and forthright, and that the information contained in the document is truthful, accurate, and complete.
2. Quality Enhancement Plan

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), submitted four to six weeks in advance of the on-site review by the Commission, is a document developed by the institution that (1) includes a broad-based institutional process identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment, (2) focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution, (3) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP, (4) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP, and (5) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement. The QEP should be focused and succinct (no more than seventy-five pages of narrative text and no more than twenty-five pages of supporting documentation or charts, graphs, and tables).

Review by Peers

1. The Off-Site Peer Review

The Off-Site Peer Review Committee, composed of a chair and normally eight to ten evaluators, meets in Atlanta, Georgia, and reviews Compliance Certifications of a group of institutions to determine whether each institution is in compliance with all Core Requirements (except Core Requirement 2.12), Comprehensive Standards, and Federal Requirements. The group of institutions evaluated, called a cluster, will consist of no more than four institutions similar in governance and degrees offered. At the conclusion of the review, the Off-Site Peer Review Committee will prepare a separate report for each institution, recording and explaining its decisions regarding compliance. The report is forwarded to the respective institution’s On-Site Review Committee which makes its final determination on compliance.

2. The On-Site Peer Review

Following review by the Off-Site Committee, an On-Site Review Committee of peers will conduct a focused evaluation at the campus to finalize issues of compliance with the Core Requirements, Comprehensive Standards, and Federal Requirements; provide consultation regarding the issues addressed in the QEP; and evaluate the acceptability of the QEP. At the conclusion of its visit, the On-Site Review Committee will finalize the Report of the Reaffirmation
Committee, a written report of its findings noting areas of non-compliance, including the acceptability of the QEP. The Report of the Reaffirmation Committee, along with the institution’s response to areas of non-compliance, will be forwarded to the Commission for review and action on reaffirmation.

3. **Review by the Commission on Colleges**

The Committees on Compliance and Reports (C & R), standing committees of the Commission, review reports prepared by peer committees and the institutional responses to those reports. A C & R Committee’s recommendation regarding an institution’s reaffirmation of accreditation is forwarded to the Executive Council for review. The Executive Council recommends action to the full Commission which makes the final decision on reaffirmation and any follow-up activities that it requires of an institution. The full Commission convenes twice a year.
SECTION 1:

The Principle of Integrity
Integrity, essential to the purpose of higher education, functions as the basic contract defining the relationship between the Commission and each of its member and candidate institutions. It is a relationship in which all parties agree to deal honestly and openly with their constituencies and with one another. Without this commitment, no relationship can exist or be sustained between the Commission and its accredited and candidate institutions.

Integrity in the accreditation process is best understood in the context of peer review, professional judgment by peers of commonly accepted sound academic practice, and the conscientious application of the *Principles of Accreditation* as mutually agreed upon standards for accreditation. The Commission’s requirements, policies, processes, procedures, and decisions are predicated on integrity.

The Commission on Colleges expects integrity to govern the operation of institutions and for institutions to make reasonable and responsible decisions consistent with the spirit of integrity in all matters. Therefore, evidence of withholding information, providing inaccurate information to the public, failing to provide timely and accurate information to the Commission, or failing to conduct a candid self-assessment of compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation* and to submit this assessment to the Commission, and other similar practices will be seen as the lack of a full commitment to integrity. The Commission’s policy statement “Integrity and Accuracy in Institutional Representation” gives examples of the application of the principle of integrity in accreditation activities. The policy is not all-encompassing nor does it address all possible situations. (See Commission policy “Integrity and Accuracy in Institutional Representation.”) Failure of an institution to adhere to the integrity principle may result in a loss of accreditation or candidacy.

1.1 The institution operates with integrity in all matters. (*Integrity*)

(Note: This principle is not addressed by the institution in its Compliance Certification.)
SECTION 2:

Core Requirements
Core Requirements are basic, broad-based, foundational requirements that an institution must meet to be accredited with the Commission on Colleges. They establish a threshold of development required of an institution seeking initial or continued accreditation by the Commission and reflect the Commission’s basic expectations of candidate and member institutions. Compliance with the Core Requirements is not sufficient to warrant accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation. Accredited institutions must also demonstrate compliance with the Comprehensive Standards and the Federal Requirements of the Principles, and with the policies of the Commission.

An applicant institution seeking candidacy is required to document compliance with Core Requirements 2.1 – 2.11; Comprehensive Standards 3.3.1, 3.5.1, and 3.7.1; and Federal Requirements 4.1 – 4.7 to be authorized a Candidacy Committee or to be awarded candidacy or candidacy renewal. An applicant/candidate institution is not required to document compliance with Core Requirement 2.12 until it undergoes its first review for reaffirmation following initial accreditation. (See Commission policy “Accreditation Procedures for Applicant Institutions.”)

An accredited institution is required to document compliance with all Core Requirements, including Core Requirement 2.12, before it can be reaffirmed. If an institution fails to document compliance, the Commission will place the institution on sanction or take adverse action. (See Commission policy “Sanctions, Denial of Reaffirmation, and Removal from Membership.”)

Core Requirement 2.12 requires an institution to develop an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Engaging the wider academic community, the QEP is based upon a comprehensive and thorough analysis of the effectiveness of the learning environment for supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution.

Implicit in every Core Requirement mandating a policy or procedure is the expectation that the policy or procedure is in writing and has been approved through appropriate institutional processes, published in appropriate institutional documents accessible to those affected by the policy or procedure, and implemented and enforced by the institution.

2.1 The institution has degree-granting authority from the appropriate government agency or agencies. (Degree-granting Authority)

2.2 The institution has a governing board of at least five members that is the legal body with specific authority over the institution. The
board is an active policy-making body for the institution and is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the financial resources of the institution are adequate to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from it. Both the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting members of the board are free of any contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution.

A military institution authorized and operated by the federal government to award degrees has a public board on which both the presiding officer and a majority of the other members are neither civilian employees of the military nor active/retired military. The board has broad and significant influence upon the institution’s programs and operations, plays an active role in policy-making, and ensures that the financial resources of the institution are used to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from the board except as specified by the authorizing legislation. Both the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting board members are free of any contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution. (Governing Board)

2.3 The institution has a chief executive officer whose primary responsibility is to the institution and who is not the presiding officer of the board. (Chief Executive Officer) (See Commission policy “Core Requirement 2.3: Documenting an Alternate Approach.”)

2.4 The institution has a clearly defined, comprehensive, and published mission statement that is specific to the institution and appropriate for higher education. The mission addresses teaching and learning and, where applicable, research and public service. (Institutional Mission)

2.5 The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. (Institutional Effectiveness)

2.6 The institution is in operation and has students enrolled in degree programs. (Continuous Operation)
2.7

2.7.1 The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification for all degrees that include fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit. *(Program Length)*

2.7.2 The institution offers degree programs that embody a coherent course of study that is compatible with its stated mission and is based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education. *(Program Content)*

2.7.3 In each undergraduate degree program, the institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the collegiate level that (1) is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, (2) ensures breadth of knowledge, and (3) is based on a coherent rationale. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent. These credit hours are to be drawn from and include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics. The courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification if it allows for fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit of general education courses. *(General Education)*

2.7.4 The institution provides instruction for all course work required for at least one degree program at each level at which it awards degrees. If the institution does not provide instruction for all such course work and (1) makes arrangements for some instruction to be provided by other accredited institutions or entities through contracts or consortia or (2) uses some other alternative approach to meeting this requirement, the alternative approach must be approved by the Commission on Colleges. In both cases, the institution demon-
strates that it controls all aspects of its educational program. (See Commission policy “Core Requirement 2.7.4: Documenting an Alternate Approach.”) (Course work for Degrees)

2.8 The number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of its academic programs.

Upon application for candidacy, an applicant institution demonstrates that it meets the comprehensive standard for faculty qualifications. (Faculty)

2.9 The institution, through ownership or formal arrangements or agreements, provides and supports student and faculty access and user privileges to adequate library collections and services and to other learning/information resources consistent with the degrees offered. Collections, resources, and services are sufficient to support all its educational, research, and public service programs. (Learning Resources and Services)

2.10 The institution provides student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission that promote student learning and enhance the development of its students. (Student Support Services)

2.11

2.11.1 The institution has a sound financial base and demonstrated financial stability to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services.

The member institution provides the following financial statements: (1) an institutional audit (or Standard Review Report issued in accordance with Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services issued by the AICPA for those institutions audited as part of a systemwide or statewide audit) and written institutional management letter for the most recent fiscal year prepared by an independent certified public accountant and/or an appropriate governmental auditing agency employing the appropriate audit (or Standard Review Report) guide; (2) a statement of financial position of unrestricted net assets, exclusive of plant assets and plant-related debt, which represents the change in unrestricted net assets attributable to operations for the most recent year; and (3) an annual budget that is preceded by sound planning, is subject to sound fiscal procedures, and is approved by the governing board.
Audit requirements for applicant institutions may be found in the Commission policy “Accreditation Procedures for Applicant Institutions.” (Financial Resources)

2.11.2 The institution has adequate physical resources to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services. (Physical Resources)

2.12 The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that (1) includes a broad-based institutional process identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment, (2) focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution, (3) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP, (4) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP, and (5) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement. (Quality Enhancement Plan)

(Note: This requirement is not addressed by the institution in its Compliance Certification.)
SECTION 3:

Comprehensive Standards
The Comprehensive Standards set forth requirements in the following four areas: (1) institutional mission, governance, and effectiveness; (2) programs; (3) resources; and (4) institutional responsibility for Commission policies. The Comprehensive Standards are more specific to the operations of the institution, represent good practice in higher education, and establish a level of accomplishment expected of all member institutions. If an institution is judged to be significantly out of compliance with one or more of the Comprehensive Standards, its reaffirmation of accreditation may be denied. (See Commission policy “Sanctions, Denial of Reaffirmation, and Removal from Membership.”)

A candidate institution is required to document compliance with Core Requirements 2.1-2.11 and all the Comprehensive Standards and Federal Requirements in order to be awarded initial membership.

Implicit in every Comprehensive Standard mandating a policy or procedure is the expectation that the policy or procedure is in writing and has been approved through appropriate institutional processes, published in appropriate institutional documents accessible to those affected by the policy or procedure, and implemented and enforced by the institution.

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION, GOVERNANCE, AND EFFECTIVENESS

3.1 Institutional Mission

3.1.1 The mission statement is current and comprehensive, accurately guides the institution’s operations, is periodically reviewed and updated, is approved by the governing board, and is communicated to the institution’s constituencies. (Mission)

3.2 Governance and Administration

3.2.1 The governing board of the institution is responsible for the selection and the periodic evaluation of the chief executive officer. (CEO evaluation/selection)

3.2.2 The legal authority and operating control of the institution are clearly defined for the following areas within the institution’s governance structure: (Governing board control)
3.2.2.1 institution’s mission;
3.2.2.2 fiscal stability of the institution;
3.2.2.3 institutional policy, including policies concerning related and affiliated corporate entities and all auxiliary services; and
3.2.2.4 related foundations (athletic, research, etc.) and other corporate entities whose primary purpose is to support the institution and/or its programs.

3.2.3 The board has a policy addressing conflict of interest for its members. (Board conflict of interest)

3.2.4 The governing board is free from undue influence from political, religious, or other external bodies and protects the institution from such influence. (External influence)

3.2.5 The governing board has a policy whereby members can be dismissed only for appropriate reasons and by a fair process. (Board dismissal)

3.2.6 There is a clear and appropriate distinction, in writing and practice, between the policy-making functions of the governing board and the responsibility of the administration and faculty to administer and implement policy. (Board/administration distinction)

3.2.7 The institution has a clearly defined and published organizational structure that delineates responsibility for the administration of policies. (Organizational structure)

3.2.8 The institution has qualified administrative and academic officers with the experience, competence, and capacity to lead the institution. (Qualified administrative/academic officers)

3.2.9 The institution defines and publishes policies regarding appointment and employment of faculty and staff. (Faculty/staff appointment)

3.2.10 The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its administrators on a periodic basis. (Administrative staff evaluations)

3.2.11 The institution’s chief executive officer has ultimate responsibility for, and exercises appropriate administrative and fiscal control over, the institution’s intercollegiate athletics program. (Control of intercollegiate athletics)
3.2.12 The institution’s chief executive officer controls the institution’s fund-raising activities exclusive of institution-related foundations that are independent and separately incorporated. (Fund-raising activities)

3.2.13 Any institution-related foundation not controlled by the institution has a contractual or other formal agreement that (1) accurately describes the relationship between the institution and the foundation and (2) describes any liability associated with that relationship. In all cases, the institution ensures that the relationship is consistent with its mission. (Institution-related foundations)

3.2.14 The institution’s policies are clear concerning ownership of materials, compensation, copyright issues, and the use of revenue derived from the creation and production of all intellectual property. These policies apply to students, faculty, and staff. (Intellectual property rights)

3.3 Institutional Effectiveness

3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas: (Institutional Effectiveness)

3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes
3.3.1.2 administrative support services
3.3.1.3 educational support services
3.3.1.4 research within its educational mission, if appropriate
3.3.1.5 community/public service within its educational mission, if appropriate

PROGRAMS

3.4 Educational Programs: All Educational Programs (includes all on-campus, off-campus, and distance learning programs and course work) (See Commission policy “Distance Education.”)

3.4.1 The institution demonstrates that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded is approved by the faculty and the administration. (Academic program approval)
3.4.2 The institution’s continuing education, outreach, and service programs are consistent with the institution’s mission. (Continuing education/service programs)

3.4.3 The institution publishes admissions policies that are consistent with its mission. (Admissions policies)

3.4.4 The institution has a defined and published policy for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit for transfer, experiential learning, advanced placement, and professional certificates that is consistent with its mission and ensures that course work and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and comparable to the institution’s own degree programs. The institution assumes responsibility for the academic quality of any course work or credit recorded on the institution’s transcript. (See Commission policy “The Transfer or Transcripting of Academic Credit.”) (Acceptance of academic credit)

3.4.5 The institution publishes academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practice. These are disseminated to students, faculty, and other interested parties through publications that accurately represent the programs and services of the institution. (Academic policies)

3.4.6 The institution employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery. (Practices for awarding credit)

3.4.7 The institution ensures the quality of educational programs and courses offered through consortial relationships or contractual agreements, ensures ongoing compliance with the comprehensive requirements, and evaluates the consortial relationship and/or agreement against the purpose of the institution. (Consortial relationships/contractual agreements)

3.4.8 The institution awards academic credit for course work taken on a noncredit basis only when there is documentation that the noncredit course work is equivalent to a designated credit experience. (Noncredit to credit)

3.4.9 The institution provides appropriate academic support services. (Academic support services)
3.4.10 The institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty. (Responsibility for curriculum)

3.4.11 For each major in a degree program, the institution assigns responsibility for program coordination, as well as for curriculum development and review, to persons academically qualified in the field. In those degree programs for which the institution does not identify a major, this requirement applies to a curricular area or concentration. (Academic program coordination)

3.4.12 The institution’s use of technology enhances student learning and is appropriate for meeting the objectives of its programs. Students have access to and training in the use of technology. (Technology use)

3.5 Educational Programs: Undergraduate Programs

3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which graduates have attained them. (College-level competencies)

3.5.2 At least 25 percent of the credit hours required for the degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. In the case of undergraduate degree programs offered through joint, cooperative, or consortia arrangements, the student earns 25 percent of the credits required for the degree through instruction offered by the participating institutions. (See Commission policy “The Transfer or Transcripting of Academic Credit.”) (Institutional credits for a degree)

3.5.3 The institution defines and publishes requirements for its undergraduate programs, including its general education components. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. (Undergraduate program requirements)

3.5.4 At least 25 percent of the discipline course hours in each major at the baccalaureate level are taught by faculty members holding the terminal degree—usually the earned doctorate—in the discipline, or the equivalent of the terminal degree. (Terminal degrees of faculty)
3.6 Educational Programs: Graduate and Post-Baccalaureate Professional Programs

3.6.1 The institution’s post-baccalaureate professional degree programs, master’s and doctoral degree programs, are progressively more advanced in academic content than its undergraduate programs. (Post-baccalaureate program rigor)

3.6.2 The institution structures its graduate curricula (1) to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and (2) to ensure ongoing student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences. (Graduate curriculum)

3.6.3 The majority of credits toward a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. In the case of graduate and post-baccalaureate professional degree programs offered through joint, cooperative, or consortial arrangements, the student earns a majority of credits through instruction offered by the participating institutions. (See Commission policy “The Transfer or Transcripting of Academic Credit.”) (Institutional credits for a degree)

3.6.4 The institution defines and publishes requirements for its graduate and post-baccalaureate professional programs. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. (Post-baccalaureate program requirements)

3.7 Faculty

3.7.1 The institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline. The institution also considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty. (See Commission guidelines “Faculty Credentials.”) (Faculty competence)
3.7.2 The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member in accord with published criteria, regardless of contractual or tenured status. (Faculty evaluation)

3.7.3 The institution provides ongoing professional development of faculty as teachers, scholars, and practitioners. (Faculty development)

3.7.4 The institution ensures adequate procedures for safeguarding and protecting academic freedom. (Academic freedom)

3.7.5 The institution publishes policies on the responsibility and authority of faculty in academic and governance matters. (Faculty role in governance)

3.8 Library and Other Learning Resources

3.8.1 The institution provides facilities and learning/information resources that are appropriate to support its teaching, research, and service mission. (Learning/information resources)

3.8.2 The institution ensures that users have access to regular and timely instruction in the use of the library and other learning/information resources. (Instruction of library use)

3.8.3 The institution provides a sufficient number of qualified staff—with appropriate education or experiences in library and/or other learning/information resources—to accomplish the mission of the institution. (Qualified staff)

3.9 Student Affairs and Services

3.9.1 The institution publishes a clear and appropriate statement of student rights and responsibilities and disseminates the statement to the campus community. (Student rights)

3.9.2 The institution protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of student records and maintains special security measures to protect and back up data. (Student records)

3.9.3 The institution employs qualified personnel to ensure the quality and effectiveness of its student affairs programs. (Qualified staff)
3.10 Financial Resources

3.10.1 The institution’s recent financial history demonstrates financial stability. *(Financial stability)*

3.10.2 The institution provides financial profile information on an annual basis and other measures of financial health as requested by the Commission. All information is presented accurately and appropriately and represents the total operation of the institution. *(Submission of financial statements)*

3.10.3 The institution audits financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations. *(Financial aid audits)*

3.10.4 The institution exercises appropriate control over all its financial resources. *(Control of finances)*

3.10.5 The institution maintains financial control over externally funded or sponsored research and programs. *(Control of sponsored research/external funds)*

3.11 Physical Resources

3.11.1 The institution exercises appropriate control over all its physical resources. *(Control of physical resources)*

3.11.2 The institution takes reasonable steps to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all members of the campus community. *(Institutional environment)*

3.11.3 The institution operates and maintains physical facilities, both on and off campus, that appropriately serve the needs of the institution’s educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities. *(Physical facilities)*
3.12 Responsibility for compliance with the Commission’s substantive change procedures and policy.

The Commission on Colleges accredits the entire institution and its programs and services, wherever they are located or however they are delivered. Accreditation, specific to an institution, is based on conditions existing at the time of the most recent evaluation and is not transferable to other institutions or entities.

When an accredited institution significantly modifies or expands its scope, changes the nature of its affiliation or its ownership, or merges with another institution, a substantive change review is required. The Commission is responsible for evaluating all substantive changes to assess the impact of the change on the institution’s compliance with defined standards. If an institution fails to follow the Commission’s procedures for notification and approval of substantive changes, its total accreditation may be placed in jeopardy. (See Commission policy “Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions.”) If an institution is unclear as to whether a change is substantive in nature, it should contact Commission staff for consultation.

An applicant or candidate institution may not undergo substantive change prior to action on initial membership.

3.12.1 The institution notifies the Commission of changes in accordance with the substantive change policy and, when required, seeks approval prior to the initiation of changes. (Substantive change)

3.13 Responsibility for compliance with other Commission policies.

The Commission’s philosophy of accreditation precludes denial of membership to a degree-granting institution of higher education on any ground other than an institution’s failure to meet the requirements of the Principles of Accreditation in the professional judgment of peer reviewers, or failure to comply with the policies of the Commission. (See Commission Web site for all current Commission policies: www.sacscoc.org.)
3.13.1 The institution complies with the policies of the Commission on Colleges. \( \text{(Policy compliance)} \)

\( \text{(Note: This standard is not addressed by the institution in its Compliance Certification.)} \)

3.14 **Representation of status with the Commission.**

The institution publishes the name of its primary accreditor and its address and phone number in accordance with federal requirements. In such a publication or Web site, the institution should indicate that the Commission is to be contacted only if there is evidence that appears to support an institution’s significant non-compliance with a requirement or standard. The institution is expected to be accurate in reporting to the public its status with the Commission. In order to meet these requirements, the institution lists the name, address, and telephone number in its catalog or Web site using one of the following statements:

(Name of member institution) is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award (name specific degree levels, such as associate, baccalaureate, masters, doctorate). Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of (name of member institution).

(Name of candidate institution) is a candidate for accreditation with the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award (name specific degree levels, such as associate, baccalaureate, masters, doctorate). Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4501 for questions about the status of (name of member institution).

No statement may be made about the possible future accreditation status with the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, nor may an institution use the logo or seal of the Southern Association in any of its publications or documents.

3.14.1 A member or candidate institution represents its accredited status accurately and publishes the name, address, and telephone number of the Commission in accordance with Commission requirements and federal policy. \( \text{(Publication of accreditation status)} \)
SECTION 4:

Federal Requirements
The U.S. Secretary of Education recognizes accreditation by the Commission on Colleges in establishing the eligibility of higher education institutions to participate in programs authorized under Title IV of the 1998 Higher Education Amendments and other federal programs. Through its periodic review of institutions of higher education, the Commission assures the public that it is a reliable authority on the quality of education provided by its member institutions.

The federal statute includes mandates that the Commission review an institution in accordance with criteria outlined in the regulations of the Amendments developed by the U.S. Department of Education. As part of the review process, institutions are required to document compliance with those criteria and the Commission is obligated to consider such compliance when the institution is reviewed for initial membership or continued accreditation.

Implicit in every Federal Requirement mandating a policy or procedure is the expectation that the policy or procedure is in writing and has been approved through appropriate institutional processes, published in appropriate institutional documents accessible to those affected by the policy or procedure, and implemented and enforced by the institution.

4.1 The institution evaluates success with respect to student achievement including, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, state licensing examinations, and job placement rates. (Student achievement)

4.2 The institution’s curriculum is directly related and appropriate to the purpose and goals of the institution and the diplomas, certificates, or degrees awarded. (Program curriculum)

4.3 The institution makes available to students and the public current academic calendars, grading policies, and refund policies. (Publication of policies)

4.4 Program length is appropriate for each of the institution’s educational programs. (Program length)

4.5 The institution has adequate procedures for addressing written student complaints and is responsible for demonstrating that it follows those procedures when resolving student complaints. (See Commission policy “Complaint Procedures against the Commission or its Accredited Institutions.”) (Student complaints)
4.6 Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the institution’s practices and policies. (Recruitment materials)

4.7 The institution is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the 1998 Higher Education Amendments. (In reviewing the institution’s compliance with these program responsibilities, the Commission relies on documentation forwarded to it by the U.S. Department of Education.) (Title IV program responsibilities)
APPENDIX:

Commission Policy, Guidelines, Good Practice Statements, and Position Statements
**COMMISSION POLICIES**

**Definition:** A policy is a required course of action to be followed by the Commission on Colleges or its member or candidate institutions. Commission policies may also include procedures, which are likewise a required course of action to be followed by the Commission on Colleges or its member or candidate institutions. The *Principles of Accreditation* requires that an institution comply with the policies and procedures of the Commission. Policies are approved by vote of the Commission on Colleges. At its discretion, the Commission may choose to forward a policy to the College Delegate Assembly for approval.

Examples of policy topics include substantive change, standing rules, procedures for applicant institutions, special committee procedures, sanctions and adverse actions, appeals procedures, etc. All policies are available on the Commission’s Web page ([www.sacscoc.org](http://www.sacscoc.org)). The Commission maintains currency on the Web and reserves the right to add, modify, or delete any of the policies listed.

**COMMISSION GUIDELINES**

**Definition:** A guideline is an advisory statement designed to assist institutions in fulfilling accreditation requirements. As such, guidelines describe recommended educational practices for documenting requirements of the *Principles of Accreditation* and are approved by the Executive Council. The guidelines are examples of commonly accepted practices that constitute compliance with the standard. Depending upon the nature and mission of the institution, however, other approaches may be more appropriate and also provide evidence of compliance.

Examples of guideline topics include advertising, student recruitment, contractual relationships, travel and committee visits, faculty credentials, etc. All guidelines are available on the Commission’s Web page ([www.sacscoc.org](http://www.sacscoc.org)). The Commission maintains currency on the Web and reserves the right to add, modify, or delete any of the guidelines listed.

**COMMISSION GOOD PRACTICES**

**Definition:** Good practices are commonly-accepted practices within the higher education community which enhance institutional quality. Good
practices may be formulated by outside agencies and organizations and endorsed by the Executive Council or the Commission. Good practice documents are available on the Commission’s Web page (www.sacscoc.org). The Commission maintains currency on the Web and reserves the right to add, modify, or delete any of those listed.

**COMMISSION POSITION STATEMENTS**

**Definition:** A position statement examines an issue facing the Commission’s membership, describes appropriate approaches, and states the Commission’s stance on the issue. It is endorsed by the Executive Council or the Commission on Colleges. Position statements are available on the Commission’s Web page (www.sacscoc.org). The Commission maintains currency on the Web and reserves the right to add, modify, or delete any of those listed.