Dr. Barbara Spencer called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. in 611 Allen Hall.

2. Dr. Spencer asked for any revisions to the minutes (February 23, 2007).

   Motion was made by Dr. John Boyle and seconded by Dr. Larry Barrow to accept the minutes.

   Minutes were approved.

3. No Report from the University Committee on Courses and Curricula (UCCC)

4. Report from Graduate Studies (OGS)

   Dr. William Person was not present. In his absence, Dr. Spencer distributed a written report submitted by Dr. Person with the following information:

   a) The Second Annual Super Recruitment Weekend, titled IMPETUS-PGE (Increasing Momentum to Provide Empowerment to Talented Undergraduate Students to Pursue Graduate Education), will be held April 13-14, 2007. OGS will invite 50 talented juniors and seniors in higher education institutions from Mississippi and the contiguous states to participate. Please be reminded that the Graduate Council is cordially invited to attend the Graduate Research Information Fair and the informal reception. The Graduate Research Information Fair will be held on Friday, April 13, from 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. in the Hunter Henry Center. During this fair, several graduate faculty members will showcase some of MSU’s “cutting edge” research to the potential STEM students. An informal reception will be held on Friday, April 13, at 7:00 p.m. in the Memorial Hall Coskrey Auditorium.

   b) To date, 63 doctoral students have applied for graduation in May. At least 43 doctoral students are needed to reclaim SREB Doctoral Level I status that was lost in 2004.
c) The dates for the International Teaching Assistant (ITA) and General Teaching Assistant (GTA) workshops are August 6 – 10 and August 13-14, 2007, respectively. The ITA workshop will be held in Allen Hall, and the GTA workshop will be in McCool Hall.

d) The New Graduate Student Orientation has been scheduled for Wednesday, August 15, 2007, at 11:45 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. in McCool Hall.

e) The second Fulbright Preacademic Program for up to 46 international graduate students will be July 21 – August 12, 2007. This grant is funded by the Institute of International Education (IIE).

5. Report from Graduate Student Association (GSA)

Mr. Curtis Matherne, GSA president, presented the following report:

The final GSA meeting will be held on Thursday, March 29, 2007, from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in Allen Hall, Room 13. The Research Symposium will be held on Friday, March 30, 2007, at the Wise Center.

4. Old Business

a) Wrap-up of the revised 2007 (5th Edition) “Standards for Preparing Theses and Dissertations”

Mr. Scott Willard presented the following update:

An announcement regarding the changes in the Standards for Preparing Theses and Dissertations and the electronic submission process will be disseminated. The notification is designed to alleviate fears for students who are currently working toward a paper copy of their theses or dissertations, and assure them that their method of submission is still acceptable. The subcommittee reviewed the language of the correspondence and is asking the Office of Graduate Studies to distribute the announcement as soon as possible.

b) Research Hours in Distance Programs Offered through Distance Learning

This issue was tabled. Dr. Roger King could not be present to present more information on this topic as previously scheduled. Graduate Council will have a discussion and vote on a policy at the next Graduate Council meeting scheduled for April 27, 2007.

c) Survey to Pre-test Electronic Application

Dr. Spencer stated that the survey did go out to all the Graduate Coordinators. However, it was discovered that a firewall on the link prevented people from
opening the link. Consequently, the electronic application did not get tested by everyone prior to this Graduate Council meeting. After consulting with Information Technology Services (ITS) regarding the firewall problem, the survey will be sent again to all Graduate Coordinators and the issue will be discussed at the next Graduate Council meeting.

5. New Business

a) Subcommittee to Review Program Information on Graduate Application (Handout)

Dr. John Boyle and Dr. Dwayne Wise distributed a handout and gave the following report:

Since the test link did not work, Drs. Boyle and Wise registered as prospective students and made screen shots of items they identified as problems.

- When a student exits the application with the “Come back later” option and then returns, one of the choices a prospective student is presented with is called “Planned Course of Study.” However, the link actually refers to Degree, Major, Concentration. We suggest that the link be renamed to reflect what it is intended for. “Planned Course of Study” is too obscure a title to be clearly understood, especially for prospective students.

- There are two issues with the application for international students. When an international student applies, a pop-up about unclassified enrollment appears. On another site in the application it is stipulated that international students are only allowed to apply to the Starkville campus. It was suggested that the choice of “unclassified” be eliminated in the international application and that international applications are flagged and automatically filled in with “Starkville Campus.”

- Dr. Boyle stated that the screen students see first after they reenter a saved unfinished application is unclear. He suggested a more clearly identified link to the unfinished application, labeled “Go back to electronic application.”

- Dr. Boyle questioned the need to print out PDF files and mail them in as part of an electronic application process. There is no clear differentiation on the application screen between electronic application and paper application. He suggested that the paper application be identified as such.

- Dr. Boyle noted that all tables in the electronic application should be presented in the same format and be easy to understand for the applicant. He suggested a more user-friendly reversal in the order of the current tables, starting with Concentration, then Major, then Degree.
Dr. Spencer assured that any questions generated from Graduate Council discussion on the electronic application topic will be noted for further investigation.

Two separate issues emerged from the discussion of the handout; one deals with international applicants and unclassified status, and the other deals with international applicants and distance learning programs.

Ms. Forest Sparks, manager of Graduate Admissions in the Office of Graduate Studies, explained that most of the information for the electronic application was pulled from Banner, utilizing the existing curriculum rules and campus rules. The reason international students are barred from applying in unclassified status is due to immigration rules; they are only allowed to apply to degree programs. For international students who are already on campus the rules are slightly different, and they can apply to unclassified status using a paper application.

Dr. Stephen Cottrell, Assistant Director of the International Services Office (ISO), noted that short-term I-20’s for unclassified students have been generated before and that immigration rules do not negate admission in unclassified status.

Ms. Sparks further stated that there are definite reasons why ITS designed the application a certain way. However, since there are questions, she suggested that Graduate Council ask ITS to provide relevant explanations and discuss these issues once more.

It was determined that the subcommittee will meet with ITS to discuss these issues.

Ms. Rita Burrell, Manager of Graduate and Distance Education in the Bagley College of Engineering, asked whether international students are precluded from applying to distance programs. Ms. Sparks explained that the admission process simply followed the established guidelines that were already in place.

Discussion ensued regarding the impact of precluding international applicants to distance programs. Dr. Wise noted that neither he nor Dr. Boyle tried to apply to a distance program as an international applicant; however, Dr. Boyle remarked that Banner states “Campus 1only” for international applicants, which is indeed a problem. Graduate Council questioned whether there is a policy in place regarding international applicants and distance programs. The issue will be investigated further by the subcommittee and discussion on this topic will resume at a later meeting.

Dr. Boyle revisited the initial purpose of forming a subcommittee which was to find out whether a student can designate more than one program. He stated
that while it is possible for a student to designate more than one program, the dual degree form is not available online. Ms. Sparks confirmed that the form is not available online. She explained that the dual degree form is sent to a student when Graduate Admissions has questions while processing a student’s applications.

Dr. Boyle asked whether it is possible for a student to be considered by two separate programs at the same time. It was determined that a student can apply to two programs at the same time, and both applications will be processed. Ms. Sparks remarked that a student can make as many applications as he or she wants; however, only two applications are processed at a time.

Dr. Wise asked whether it will be possible for him to know whether a student who appears on the applicant list for his department has also applied to another program. It was determined that ITS will be consulted regarding the feasibility of allowing crossover of applicant lists for different departments. The topic will be discussed again at the next Graduate Council meeting.

Dr. Spencer asked Dr. Wise to address the issue of major changes in the GRE testing process. Dr. Wise noted that major changes are coming in September and that upcoming revisions in scoring will require major edits in the Graduate Bulletin. He will send information to Dr. Spencer to distribute to Graduate Council and Graduate Coordinators electronically. In the meantime, Graduate Council is encouraged to visit the GRE website at http://www.ets.org/portal/site/ets/menuitem.c988ba0e5dd572bada20be47c3921509/?vgnextoid=784c73e2fed90110VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD&vgnextchannel=bf8146f1674f4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD. Learn more about the revised GRE General Test has detailed information on the new scoring, as well as PowerPoint presentations of all the changes.

b) Graduate Dean search update

Dr. Spencer asked Dr. Larry Barrow, who serves on the Search Committee, to give a brief overview.

Dr. Barrow stated that four candidates emerged who will be interviewed. The following times are slated for Graduate Council interviews; all interviews are held in the Templeton Museum Conference Room in the Mitchell Memorial Library, with the exception of the April 3 interview:

April 2 - 1:50-2:30  Dr. Douglas Marshall
April 3 - 12:40-1:20  Dr. Lou D'Abramo (Stennis/Montgomery Room)
April 4 - 1:50-2:30  Dr. Jerald Ainsworth
April 5 - 1:50-2:30  Dr. William Person
Dr. Spencer urged Graduate Council members to attend all interviews and ask questions. If Graduate Council members cannot attend the interviews at the above mentioned times, they are strongly encouraged to attend the Open Sessions. Information for the Open Sessions will be available on the web.

Dr. Barrow asked Graduate Council members to complete an evaluation form after each interview. Dr. Spencer added that Graduate Council members should identify themselves as such when marking the group membership box.

Meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

The next Graduate Council meeting will be held on April 23, 2007, at 1:30 p.m., in the Conference Room at 611 Allen Hall.