GRADUATE COUNCIL
MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

NUMBER: 7

DATE: March 24, 2000


Dr. John Boyle called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. in 611 Allen Hall and thanked Dr. Alex Friend for chairing the meeting of February 25, 2000.

Minutes

A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to accept the revised minutes of the February 11, 2000 meeting of the Graduate Council with editorial changes.

A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to accept the minutes of the February 25, 2000 meeting of the Graduate Council with editorial changes and modification of the second paragraph under Minutes to read as follows: “Dr. Ted Kohers expressed concern about the last sentence under the section of Old Business in paragraph three of the February 11, 2000 minutes, regarding the Graduate Council mission.”

UCCC Report

A motion was made and seconded to accept the proposed modification of the Master of Business Administration (MBA) Program by adding a Project Management Major. This proposed modification was submitted by the College of Business and Industry in conjunction with the College of Engineering. Motion was approved unanimously with editorial revisions.

A motion was made and seconded to accept from the College of Business and Industry the addition of the Master of Arts in Economics degree program. Motion was approved unanimously.

Office of Graduate Studies Report

Dr. Person reported that this year the Office of Graduate Studies has approved less than 30 waivers to teach without having attended the TA workshop. That approval was with the provision that the graduate assistant must participate in the workshop held in August of this year. In order to monitor this the Office of Graduate Studies will place these TA’s on “Graduate Studies hold” for preregistration purposes. These students will receive a letter indicating that they must attend the workshop in order to be certified to teach the following year, and they must sign the letter
acknowledging receipt of this letter. The students will have to come to the Graduate Studies Office and sign the letter before they can preregister. The TA workshop is scheduled for international students on August 7-11 and all students (domestic and international) on August 14-15.

Dr. Person distributed copies of the revised Graduate Student Assistant handbook. Two thousand copies were ordered. Editorial changes were made in these copies on page 6. The handbook will be posted on the Graduate Studies web page as soon as editorial comments are received from the Graduate Council, if any are forthcoming. There is a sample offer letter in the back of the handbook. Mr. Charlie Guest, General Counsel, had expressed concern about the statement in reference to giving a 30-day notice to resign or terminate a student. Mr. Guest had asked Ms. Paula Jernigan with Human Resources Management to review the letter and make it more consistent with policy. The revised letter will be reviewed by the Office of the Provost and then will be presented to Executive Council for final approval. Once approved, Graduate Studies will send out a revised sample letter to insert in the handbook. The copy on the web page will be consistent with the revisions made.

The TA/RA awards banquet is March 24, 2000, at 6:00 p.m. at Bost Extension Center. Graduate Council members are invited to attend. Dr. Walter Taylor and Dr. Dwayne Wise have reported that there were some very good nominees for consideration. Dean Frank Saal of Arts & Sciences will be the guest speaker.

Graduate Student Association

There was no report from the Graduate Student Association.

Old Business

Graduate Student Fees. Dr. Boyle distributed a copy of a spreadsheet, Tuition/Fee Structure for Selected Peer Universities, prepared by Dr. Person at the suggestion of Dr. Rent. Rates at MSU are on par with most universities. What stands out is the rapid rate of increase at MSU over the past few years. Discussion followed about the recent Supreme Court ruling from Wisconsin concerning use of fees. If the Graduate Student Association wishes to pursue the issue, the Graduate Council may provide support.

Procedures to assure compliance across campus with graduate policies and standards. It was suggested that a subcommittee be appointed to consider such procedures and to come up with suggestions on how to monitor the operation of graduate studies. Dr. Boyle asked Dr. Ted Kohers and Dr. Alex Friend to serve with him on the subcommittee. The subcommittee is to bring proposals to the May meeting for discussion, and these proposals may be carried over to next year’s agenda.

New Business

A subcommittee consisting of Dr. Bill Person, Dr. Joe Sumrall, Dr. Lynn Reinschmiedt, and Dr. Clay Taylor compiled information, and Dr. Lynn Reinschmiedt presented for discussion a report summarizing their findings on the five questions at issue. Attached to the report is a “Summary: Unclassified Graduate Status Report” prepared by Dr. Person with a chart of 23 universities
surveyed to determine how selected aspects of unclassified or nondegree graduate student status are handled by each university. The five questions discussed and consensus reached are as follows:

(1) Should an unclassified applicant be required to submit an official transcript for admission considerations? It was suggested that a person should have an undergraduate degree for admission to graduate studies in an unclassified status. If a student is unclassified, he/she must receive permission or a course override from the instructor or appropriate person within the department before registering.

(2) Should an unclassified applicant be required to have a minimum QPA for admission consideration? It was suggested that if a course is being taken for leisure or professional development, QPA is not essential. However, if a course is being taken for certification or licensure, it was agreed that a minimal QPA is appropriate. If a student is taking a course for noncredit purposes, it should be noted on the application.

(3) Should an unclassified applicant be required to maintain a 3.0 QPA to continue graduate study? It was suggested that if a course is being taken for certification or licensure, a 3.0 QPA should be maintained.

(4) Should a student who has been dismissed from a graduate degree program be allowed to subsequently be admitted in unclassified status and, if so, should there be a waiting period before such admission is allowed? At present, if a student has been dismissed from one graduate degree program, that student may apply for admission as an unclassified student. Undergraduate students who are dismissed from a program are dismissed from the University. It was suggested that there should be a waiting period for graduate students. It was noted that students may take classes as unclassified and transfer the credit to another university.

(5) Should a student terminated from one graduate program be allowed to apply for admission to another graduate program and, if so, should there be a waiting period before such admission is allowed? All students must comply with the Academic Misconduct policy. If a student is dismissed for academic misconduct, he/she is dismissed from the University. Currently a graduate student can be academically dismissed from one program and admitted to another program. If a department chooses to admit a student who has been dismissed from another program, that is okay. The real problem occurs when students are dismissed from one program and then come back as unclassified. This says they have not applied for another degree program or that they have applied and have not been accepted. An example was given of a student who was academically dismissed during the semester because of poor lab performance. The day after dismissal the student applied for admission as unclassified. It is basically up to each academic area. Because of Banner, it is now easier to monitor the cumulative GPA. Requiring unclassified students to get permission from the instructor to re-enroll in a course might solve this problem.

The subject of off-campus enrollment was introduced in regard to Graduate Unclassified admission. The majority of off-campus graduate students register initially in the Unclassified classification. The Graduate Unclassified Application requires the approval of the instructor before a student is allowed to register. In order to insure consistency of policy, it was suggested that one person in each department, possibly the graduate
coordinator, be designated to grant approval for off-campus registration in the Graduate Unclassified status.

The subcommittee will bring a concrete proposal to the next meeting. Dr. Reinschmiedt asked for any recommendations or suggestions for the proposal to be submitted to any member of the subcommittee.

Dr. Rent discussed the residency requirements for graduate studies. The residency requirement for the Master’s degree is a minimum of 30 weeks. As stated in the Graduate Studies Bulletin,

No student will be permitted to complete the master’s degree in two summer sessions or equivalent, nor will the student be permitted to complete the Master’s degree in one regular semester and one summer session. The residence credit is computed as follows: (a) during a regular semester, a student taking 9 hours or more earns half of the required residence requirement of 15 weeks; (b) during each term of the regular summer school, a student taking 4 hours or more earns 6 weeks residence; (c) a part time student earns residence equal in weeks to the semester hours scheduled; and (d) night classes, Saturday classes, and three-week short term courses carry residence credit equal to the number of semester hours earned.

There are separate requirements for doctoral students. Students who do their doctoral work elsewhere must spend the final year in residence at Mississippi State University in order to satisfy residency requirements.

Dr. Rent stated that, because of on-line distance learning, the policy regarding residency requirements for graduate students should be updated.

Student parking fees will not be raised next year.

Dr. Boyle announced that a graduate representative is needed on the Academic Review Board. Graduate Council has been asked to nominate and elect this representative. This was sent by email to all members, and Dr. Boyle had received one nomination – Dr. Alex Friend. Dr. Friend stated that he already serves on the Academic Review Board and Academic Honesty Committee. Dr. Boyle asked for other nominations. Dr. Joe Sumrall was nominated and approved by acclamation.

Dr. Boyle asked for nominations for chair of the Graduate Council to be brought to next Graduate Council.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.