Dr. Tom Hosie called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. in 611 Allen Hall.

Dr. Hosie asked for any revisions to the minutes (February 24, 2006). Motion was made by Dr. John Boyle and seconded by Dr. Nick Younan to accept the minutes as distributed.

Motion carried.

3. UCCC Report

Information Assurance Professional Certificate Program

Dr. Lou D’Abramo made the motion to accept the program addition of the Information Assurance Professional Certificate Program; Dr. Boyle seconded the motion.

Discussion followed.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. Report from Graduate Studies

Dr. William Person presented the following report:

- Fifty-eight doctoral students have applied for graduation this spring. We need thirty-nine students to meet our minimum goal of one hundred doctoral graduates for the 2005 - 2006.

- We distributed an announcement to graduate students and copied it to Graduate Coordinators and Academic Department Heads regarding the Fulbright program. The announcement focused specifically on the Canada Fulbright program. The competition for the 2007-2008 Fellowship Award
will open on May 1, 2006. Please encourage your graduate students to look at the Fulbright program. Rita coordinates this program in the Office of Graduate Studies. We pair students applying for the Fulbright program with Fulbright faculty. Mr. Tommy Claudino, a representative from the IIE, will be here on April 13, 2006, to meet with faculty and students.

- We are continuing to develop our plans for the Super Recruitment Week, April 27 – 29, 2006. The program will include 100 talented juniors and seniors from Mississippi institutions and institutions in the contiguous states. The Graduate Council will receive a special invitation to come to the networking reception which will be held on Friday evening at 6:30 p.m. in the M-Club.

- We had a meeting this week with several entities: Continuing Education, ITS, Dr. Spencer, and representatives from the Mississippi National Guard and the head of the Business program at the Meridian campus. We will implement a partnership starting this fall with a new delivery method for the MBA program. It will be partnered with the Mississippi National Guard. This program will serve approximately 25 – 50 graduate students who are interested in completing the MBA. Six sites will be set up. This interactive program will be setup and administered primarily from the Meridian campus.

5. Report from Graduate Student Association – Mr. Erich Bergiel

Mr. Bergiel noted the GSA Research Symposium will be held on March 31, 2006, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Union Ballroom. A guest speaker will present during the lunch break. Mr. Bergiel noted more judges are needed; Dr. Scanes noted he would serve as a judge for the Life Sciences competition.

6. Old Business – None

7. New Business

- Tuition waiver for continuously enrolled students

Dr. Boyle submitted the report from the subcommittee regarding tuition waivers for continuously enrolled students. Two issues were addressed:

- **Issue A:** If a student has defended the thesis or dissertation after the deadline for a given semester, current informal policy allows that the completed thesis or dissertation be turned in without registering for the next semester.

- **Issue B:** On the other hand, if all courses and research have been completed, but the student has not defended the thesis or dissertation, the student is now required to take one hour of credit in that last semester.
The subcommittee recommended the following actions regarding the three issues:

- **Recommendation to address Issue A:** The subcommittee recommends that the informal policy be made formal. That is, if a student has completed all work for a graduate degree, including payment of all fees, before the start of the next regular semester (this excludes any intersession but includes summer school), that student will be allowed to graduate at the end of that next regular semester without registering. If they are required to register for head counting purposes, then any tuition and fees will be administratively waived.

  Dr. Gilbert noted that in order to administratively waive tuition and fees the waiver account would have to be bigger.

  Discussion followed.

  Dr. Barbara Spencer motioned to accept the recommendation with the noted change of dropping the last sentence. Dr. Larry Barrow seconded the motion.

  Discussion followed. Several Council members noted that students must apply for graduation.

  **New recommendation:**

  The subcommittee recommends that the informal policy be made formal. That is, if a student has completed all work for a graduate degree, including payment of all fees, before the start of the next regular semester (so this excludes any intersession but includes summer school), that student will be allowed to graduate at the end of that next regular semester without registering. **If they are required to register for head counting purposes, then any tuition and fees will be administratively waived. Students must reapply for graduation.**

  Motion passed unanimously with noted corrections.

- **Recommendation to address Issue B:** The subcommittee felt that current enrollment policy is sufficient in this case. If the student has not defended his/her work, then faculty effort is still required and registration is warranted. However, exceptional circumstances should allow for exceptions. For example, a student begins an MS program and then enters into the DVM program at CVM. The intention is to complete the MS while enrolled as a DVM student. Under some circumstances under current policy, that student will need to enroll for one graduate hour per semester in order to satisfy the need for
continuous enrollment. We feel the student should still enroll in that one hour of MS work, but the tuition and fees should be waived upon appeal by that student since she/he is also enrolled as a DVM student at Mississippi State.

Discussion followed.

This issue will be taken back to the subcommittee for further discussion.

- **Issue C:** Current policy states that a student must be within six hours of completion of the program of study before taking the comprehensive examination. This impacts MS students adversely in some circumstances.

- **Response to Issue C:** Masters and Educational Specialists students will be allowed to take their comprehensive examinations only when they are within six hours of completion of their course work or when they are in their terminal semester. The examination must be given after progress grades are due in the Registrar’s Office or within the last two weeks of a summer term. In the case an examination is given in the second summer term, those students will be granted their degrees at the end of the Fall semester.

Discussion followed.

This issue will be taken back to the subcommittee for further discussion.

- **Graduate students who register after classes start – Dr. Scanes**

  Dr. Scanes noted this issue impacts reporting to the IHL. Dr. Scanes asked if students who register early are charged interest. Mr. Butch Stokes noted students are given a two month grace period and that there is a $50/ course late add fee assessed.

Discussion followed.

Dr. Boyle made a suggestion that we raise the late fee significantly.

Dr. Scanes noted he and Dr. Gilbert will bring this issue before the Deans Council.

Discussion followed.

Dr Scanes asked that Mr. Stokes come up with an effective way of addressing this issue and bring suggestions back to the Council.
Discussion followed.

Mr. Stokes noted he would speak with our peer institutions as to what they are doing to address students who add after classes start.

Dr. Gilbert invited Dr. Hosie to attend the Deans meetings to address graduate issues. Dr. Hosie noted he would attend the meetings. Dr. Hosie asked that we put establishing important graduate issues on the agenda for the next meeting.

Dr. Scanes discussed how to make the program better. Dr. Scanes noted the following are issues that are germane to developing the strongest graduate program: (1) the number of graduate students and (2) the number of graduates. Dr. Scanes would like the Council to focus on the philosophical issues of how to make the program better. We need to move beyond the rules.

Dr. Scanes noted we are struggling to get over 100 doctoral graduates; we are no longer in the top Carnegie category.

Dr. Scanes noted he had the opportunity to listen to both the Dean of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the Dean of Engineering. The Dean of Agriculture and Life Sciences spoke of the increase in the number of graduate students – particularly doctoral students; the Dean of Engineering spoke of increasing the number of doctoral students to 300-- approximately three students per faculty member.

Dr. Scanes noted he and Dr. Person are working to reorganize the Office of Graduate Studies and improve the office’s website. Dr. Scanes asked the Council for suggestions on graduate websites around the country that do a good job -- what we will aspire to be.

Dr. Scanes also discussed: applications, funding in programs, the GSA, and training of African American students at the graduate level (19.4% of MSU’s doctoral students are African American); issues to take to the graduate deans.

Dr. Hosie noted he will have the Graduate Division to send out an email to remind the Council about the discussion in our next meeting to prioritize the list of topics to take to the graduate deans. Dr. Scanes encouraged everyone to attend the Faculty Senate meeting on April 29, 2006.

Dr. Spencer congratulated Mr. Bergiel on his successful defense of his dissertation; he is now Dr. Bergiel.

Meeting adjourned at 2:51 p.m.