Graduate Council  
Mississippi State University

Number: 7  
Date: April 24, 2009


1. Dr. Dwayne Wise asked for any revisions to the minutes (March 27, 2009).

   Motion was made by Dr. Dan Reynolds and seconded by Dr. Kathy Dooley to accept the minutes with the noted amendment above.

   Minutes were approved by acclamation.

2. University Committee on Courses and Curricula (UCCC)

   Dr. Tim Chamblee submitted six proposals for consideration by Graduate Council.

   Dr. Wise asked for a motion to consider all six items together and go through them one at a time. Dr. Juan Silva made the motion to approve all proposals and Dr. George Adebiyi seconded the motion.

   • Master of Agribusiness Management – Modification
   • Master of Business Administration – Modification
   • Doctor of Philosophy in Biological Sciences – Modification
   • Master of Science in Biological Sciences – Modification
   • Master of Public Policy and Administration – Modification
   • Graduate Certificate in Information Systems

   Graduate Council discussed the presented proposals.

   Dr. Lynne Cossman made a motion to amend the previous motion and only consider the five modifications for approval. Dr. Meghan Millea seconded the motion.
Graduate Council voted and approved the five modifications submitted by UCCC by acclamation.

Dr. Wise asked for a motion to address the certificate proposal as well. Dr. Cossman made a motion to approve the Graduate Certificate in Information Systems. The motion was seconded by Dr. Reynolds.

Discussion followed. It was decided that more justification regarding the need of such a certificate is required before Graduate Council can approve this certificate.

Graduate Council voted no to the motion to approve by acclamation. The Graduate Certificate in Information Systems was not approved.

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

Dr. Louis D’Abramo presented the following information:

- A Graduate Coordinators workshop was held on Friday, April 17. Fourteen graduate coordinators, including three representatives from the Meridian campus attended. A total of 30 graduate coordinators attended the workshop that was in both April and March to include as many coordinators as possible. 30 of the total 51 attended.

- The GSA Graduate Assistant Awards banquet was held on the evening of April 20 in Coskrey Auditorium of Memorial Hall and was a great success with a total of 130 people in attendance. The GSA and Julie Goodin of the OGS staff did an outstanding job planning the banquet festivities.

- The 4th Annual IMPETUS-PGE Super Recruitment Weekend sponsored by the Graduate School and the Alliance for Graduate Education in Mississippi (AGEM) included 40 juniors and seniors along with 12 faculty advisors from six regional universities on April 3-4, 2009, at the new Hilton Garden Inn-Starkville. The Graduate School appreciates the support provided by the graduate faculty, (especially the departmental visits) to help make this program a success. Associate Dean Person and Ms. Shlynn Morris of the OGS staff did an outstanding job coordinating and putting on the event.

- 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) sponsored a financial opportunities for graduate student support workshop on Tuesday, April 7, 2009 at the Colvard Student Union – Ballroom M. A total of 25 graduate students participated in this information workshop designed to encourage them to apply for funding to support their thesis and dissertation research. Associate Dean Bill Person was one of the coordinators of this well received resource opportunity provided for graduate students.
- Effective Monday, April 27, 2009, the College of Forest Resources and the Bagley College of Engineering (Remaining Programs) will move to Banner production for Workflow and Xtender processing of graduate admission applications. Associate Dean Bill Person and Ms. Forest Sparks off the OGS are coordinating this campus wide transition in association with ITS.

- The Graduate School will host a National Science Foundation (NSF) graduate fellowship preparation workshop on September 2, 2009 at 3:00 pm. Associate Dean Bill Person has taken the lead in the planning of this workshop.

- As of April 21, 2009, applications for fall 2009 admission into graduate school is up 7.0 % from last year. The number admitted is also up 5.9 %. The 5.9 % is a mean of a 17.6 % increase in the admission of domestic students and a 9.6 % decrease in the admission of international students.

- 366 graduate students have applied for May graduation. (299 master’s degrees, 17 educational specialists degrees, and 46 Ph.D.s) The total number of students who have been awarded a Ph.D. this year is 79 with the estimated 46 Ph.D.s for spring, the total for the 2008-2009 year will be 125.

- The OGS canvassed graduate coordinators for their opinions regarding the possible introduction of templates for the preparation of theses and dissertations. Overall, there was general support for such a service. All comments have been shared with the Library and are being reviewed to determine future course of action.

- The interviews for a new Admissions Assistant position have been completed. This additional staff person should begin working in the OGS around May 15.

- This past Thursday, April 23, I gave a presentation as part of the Budget Hearing for the Graduate School. I provided information on trends in the numbers and composition of the graduate student populations and also emphasized the need for additional personnel support in the admissions area of the office. Discussion also included incentive strategies to be highly competitive in attracting high quality graduate students.

5. Report from Graduate Student Association (GSA)

No Report

6. Old Business

- Graduate Faculty Appointment Policy (D’Abramo) (Handout)

Dr. D’Abramo deferred to the chair of the subcommittee (Drs. Hart Bailey, Tim Chamblee, Meghan Millea, Burnette Hamil and Juan Silva) formed to examine this issue. Dr. Bailey stated that the subcommittee met and drafted language for a policy statement to be published in the Graduate Bulletin.
Discussion followed. Graduate Council members again discussed whether Graduate Faculty appointment should be tied to tenure and Dr. Cossman reminded Graduate Council that there was an issue regarding the word “excellence” in the description of criteria for level 1 and level 2. Dr. D’Abramo suggested to replace the word “excellence” with “noteworthy” in the criteria. More discussion ensued.

Dr. Cossman suggested to add a comma after achievement in the statements making reference to the Faculty Handbook, such as “…and/or creative achievement, as described in the Faculty Handbook (6.1.2.).

Dr. D’Abramo stated that he would like Graduate Council to approve the proposed Graduate Faculty Appointment Policy Document in order to move the implementation forward through the proper channels and satisfy SACS requirements in a timely manner. He estimated that the changes will be incorporated by Spring 2010 at the earliest. He also stated that he would seek the approval of the Faculty Senate as a matter of courtesy and that he would take the document before the Dean’s Council to garner support.

Dr. Wise asked for a motion regarding the Graduate Faculty Appointment Policy Document. Dr. Cossman made a motion to approve the proposed Graduate Faculty Appointment Policy Document with the changes noted above. Dr. Millea seconded the motion.

Graduate Council voted and the proposed Graduate Faculty Appointment Policy Document was approved by acclamation. Three graduate council members voted no.

Dr. Millea pointed out that the AOP on Academic Fresh Start was left off the agenda and asked that this item be included in the next meeting. Dr. Wise acknowledged omission and moved the item to the next meeting.

7. New Business

• Degree Program Coordinators (Dr. Chamblee)

Dr. Chamblee stated that Mississippi State University has to do a compliance certification that in essence states that MSU has determined that all policies are followed in compliance. Currently, Mississippi State University has no policy regarding undergraduate or graduate degree program coordinators in place. He asked that Graduate Council vote on the proposed criteria for appointing undergraduate and graduate degree program coordinators and the definition of responsibility for each.

Discussion followed. Can a dean in a college or a department head also serve as a graduate coordinator for a department? It was determined that this would present a potential conflict of interest.

Dr. Cossman made a motion to approve the draft of the Degree Program Coordinator Policy. Dr. Reynolds seconded the motion.
Discussion followed.

Graduate Council voted and the Degree Program Coordinator Policy proposed by Dr. Chamblee was approved by acclamation, one graduate council member abstained.

Graduate Council Chair Dr. Wise cancelled the May 8, 2009 Graduate Council meeting.

Nominations and Elections for the chair and vice-chair for the 2009-10 Graduate Council will be held via email.

Dr. D’Abramo asked Ms. Julie Goodin to explain a handout regarding the Fall Teaching Assistant Workshop Components.

Meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

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