Graduate Council  
Mississippi State University

Number: 9  
Date: April 28, 2006  


Absent: E. Bergiel, L. Crittenden, J. Gilbert, L. Hardin, D. Reynolds, C. Sides  
B. Spencer, R. Taylor, S. Willard  

Guests: Edward Allen, Susan Bridges, Bob Ontondo

1. Dr. Tom Hosie called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m. in 611 Allen Hall.

2. Dr. Hosie asked for any revisions to the minutes (March 24, 2006).

   Dr. Lou D’Abramo noted a correction to page 5:

   “Dr. Scanes encouraged everyone to attend the Faculty Senate Roundtable Meeting on Graduate Education on April 29, 2006.”

   Motion was made by Dr. John Boyle and seconded by Dr. D’Abramo to accept the minutes with the noted correction.

   Motion carried.

3. UCCC Report

   • Doctor of Philosophy with a major in Computer Science

   Dr. Edward Allen presented the following change to the Doctor of Philosophy program in Computer Science:

   Add the sentence:  
   “A Ph.D. student’s program of study may include at most one 6000-level prerequisite course.”

   Discussion followed.

   • Master of Science with a major in Computer Science
Dr. Allen presented the following changes to the Master of Science program in Computer Science:

**Replace the sentence:**
“None of the prerequisite courses may appear on a student’s graduate program of study.”

**with the sentence:**
“A program of study for the Master’s degree may include at most one 6000-level prerequisite course.”

Motion was made by Dr. Boyle and seconded by Dr. Ratnasingham Shivaji to accept the modifications to both the Doctor of Philosophy with a major in Computer Science and Master of Science with a major in Computer Science.

Motion carried unanimously.

- **Computational Biology Certificate**

Dr. Susan Bridges presented the following information for the Computational Biology Certificate:

This will be a five-course certificate program which would include courses from computational sciences and life sciences. The department is proposing three new courses: CSE 4623/6623 Computational Biology, CSE 4613/6613 Bio-computing, and BCH 4113/6113 Essentials of Molecular Genetics. An advisory board consisting of three members would approve admission to the certificate program and the certificate program of study.

Discussion followed.

Motion was made by Dr. D’Abramo and seconded by Dr. Nick Younan to approve the Computational Biology Certificate program with the inclusion of the 3.0 minimum GPA requirement.

Motion carried unanimously.

- **Master of Science with a major in Information Systems**

Dr. Bob Otondo presented the following changes to the Master of Science program in Information Systems:

- Eliminate the required BIS 8413 course
- Drop BIS 8122 from the list of electives
- Add BIS 6533 to the list of electives
- Require two out of the four listed electives rather than one out of four
Motion was made by Dr. Boyle and seconded by Dr. D’Abramo to accept the modifications to the Master of Science program in Information Systems.

Motion carried unanimously.

- **Doctor of Philosophy with a major in Electrical and Computer Engineering**

Dr. Nick Younan presented the following changes to the Doctor of Philosophy program in Electrical and Computer Engineering:

- Require a qualifying examination in place to assess the students’ broad background in ECE and ensure their capabilities in managing Ph.D. work.
- Direct admit from the B.S. to the Ph.D. program
- Transfer from the M.S. to the Ph.D. program
- More structured research proposal, monitored by the Department

Discussion followed.

Ms. Rita Burrell noted that the Ayers case does not allow us to specify a GRE score.

Dr. Hosie asked that a subcommittee be formed to look at the process of allowing students to change degrees within the same department. Dr. Hosie, Dr. Boyle, and Ms. Burrell volunteered to serve on the subcommittee.

Dr. Hosie noted the following correction: delete the GRE score requirement but require a GRE score.

Motion was made by Dr. Boyle and seconded by Dr. D’Abramo to accept the modifications to the Doctor of Philosophy program in Electrical and Computer Engineering with the noted correction.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. Report from Graduate Studies

Dr. William Person presented the following report:

- Dr. Person thanked the Council members for their support of the 2006 GSA Annual Awards Banquet which was held on April 25, 2006. Approximately 160 people attended the banquet.

- The Office of Graduate Studies has underway its super recruitment weekend titled IMPETUS- PGE (Increasing Momentum to Provide
Empowerment to Talented Undergraduate Students to Pursue Graduate Education). The theme for our program is A Celebration of Graduate Education. We anticipate that over 50 juniors and seniors in the STEM areas will be involved. Graduate Council members have received an invitation to participate, especially the Networking Reception tonight in the Leo Seal M-Club, 7:15 – 9:30 p.m.

- The Faculty Senate roundtable on graduate education will involve several Graduate Council members and will be held tomorrow at Plymouth Bluff, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

- In our previous meeting, Dr. Scanes mentioned that MSU has moved to a second tier university (high research activity) in the new Carnegie Foundation classification of institutions. We have determined that MSU would need to increase its external funding by approximately $10 million and increase the number of doctoral graduates to approximately 130 per year.

- Fifty-six doctoral students have applied for May graduation; of this number nine were red-lined. We need 39 doctoral graduates to meet SREB Level I status. If we meet SREB status, this will be our second year in a row. We need to meet this goal one more year to get back into the top tier for SREB.

- Dr. Person noted the Office of Graduate Studies has been restructured with several promotions, title changes, and equity adjustments being granted. Ms. Rita Burrell has been promoted to Associate Director and Ms. Forest Sparks has been promoted to Admissions Manager. We will also advertise for three new positions.

5. Report from Graduate Student Association

Dr. Person noted because of schedule conflicts a GSA representative was unable to attend this meeting. Dr. Person reported that Mr. Curtis Matherne, III, is the 2006 – 2007 GSA president.

6. Old Business

Tuition waiver for continuously enrolled students

Dr. Boyle submitted the report from the subcommittee regarding tuition waivers for continuously enrolled students. Three issues were addressed:
**Issue B:** 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 presented the following recommendation to address Issue B: Our subcommittee felt that current continuous 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, special 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 he/she is also enrolled as a DVM student at Mississippi State University.

In order to make the policy explicitly clear to students, we propose that when a graduate student applies for a degree online, the following statement should be sent to them as an auto response:

1. To qualify for graduation in a given semester, the thesis/dissertation defense or non-thesis comprehensive examination must take place by the “Last day for thesis/dissertation defense and non-thesis comprehensive examination” as published in the Graduate Academic Calendar. In addition, the student must meet the deadlines for submission of signed examination results to the Office of Graduate Studies, and first and final submission of thesis or dissertation to the Library. All fees must be paid. A student must be enrolled at MSU during the semester in which the examination is administered.

2. If you have completed all work for a graduate degree, including payment of all fees, before the start of the next regular semester, you will be allowed to graduate at the end of that next regular semester without registering. You must still reapply for graduation and pay another graduation fee.

3. If you have not completed the necessary work for graduation, you must register for at least one hour of credit and pay all necessary tuition and fees including out-of-state fees for the next semester. You must meet all the requirements outlined in (1) in order to graduate in that semester.

Discussion followed.
On item #3, Dr. Scanes noted the statement “pay all necessary tuition and fees including out-of-state fees for the next semester” should say “pay all necessary tuition and fees including out-of-state tuition and fees for the next semester”.

Dr. Jerald Ainsworth asked how this information (item#2 --that you just apply for graduation and don’t register) will get communicated to students so that it is clear. Dr. Hosie noted that we should perhaps send this information to Graduate Coordinators. Ms. Burrell noted that she usually sends an email to the Graduate Coordinators and Department Heads that lists all the things the Council approves during the year. Ms. Burrell also noted that we should post the changes to the Office of Graduate Studies website.

Motion was made by Dr. D’Abramo and seconded by Dr. Larry Barrow to accept the recommendation with the noted correction.

Motion carried unanimously.

**Issue C**: If a student is on assistantship and completes the degree in the middle of a semester, he/she is usually taken off assistantship and are required to pay a prorated share of the tuition (including any necessary out-of-state tuition) for that semester.

The subcommittee presented the following recommendation to address issue C: This committee feels that this problem is beyond our scope since sources of funds may constrain any possible actions.

Discussion followed.

The Council decided to leave this issue alone.

**Issue D**: 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.

The subcommittee presented the following recommendation to address issue D: Master’s candidates and Educational Specialist candidates will take their comprehensive examination in their terminal semester.

Discussion followed.
This issue will be taken back to the subcommittee for further discussion and will be revisited at the May 12th Graduate Council meeting.

7. New Business

- Nominations for Council Chair and Vice Chair

Dr. Hosie asked the Council members to bring their nominations to the May 12th meeting. The vote will take place through email.

- Issues to bring before the Deans Council

Dr. Hosie distributed draft copies of potential issues to bring before the Deans Council. They include: annual meeting of the Deans to focus on graduate education and issues; have the Deans create the agenda with input; vision (goals) of Provost and Vice President for Research for graduate education; role of the college in graduate education; common college goals for graduate education; communication of graduate procedures; standardization of policies and procedures; current problems; and role of the Graduate Council.

Dr. Hosie also distributed a page from the graduate bulletin that contains information about the Graduate Council.

- Official Transcripts Required for Graduate Admissions Consideration

Dr. Person distributed copies of the Graduate Admissions Transcript Requirements. Current University policy requires that graduate students provide transcripts from each college and university attended, including junior or community colleges.

Dr. Person asked the Council to rescind its decision made in February 2002 to require all official transcripts of students before they can be considered for admission to Mississippi State’s graduate program. The problem is gathering up official transcripts, particularly community college transcripts. Dr. Person stated it would helpful if we can just use the transcript where the student obtained his/her bachelor’s degree, which shows that the student has earned a bachelor’s degree and lists any courses the student has taken at a community college that applies to that degree.

Discussion followed.

Ms. Burrell will review the SACS requirements. This issue will be brought back to the May 12th Graduate Council meeting where Dr. Person will bring a formal motion.

Meeting adjourned at 3:01 p.m.