May 9, 2014

PRESENT: Cynthia Hill (for Amy Adkerson), Kent Maret (for Tim Barnett), Lori Bruce, Russell Carr, PC Cinnella, Karen Coats, Lara Dodds, Steve Elder, Dana Franz, Beth Miller (for David Lewis), David Morse, Dan Reynolds, Scott Roberts, Judy Schneider, Juan Silva, Kirk Swortzel, Vemitra White, Steve Taylor

ABSENT: Jim Adams (excused), Tommy Anderson (excused), Ashli Brown-Johnson, Tim Chamblee, Frances Coleman (excused), Jerry Gilbert (excused), Julia Hodges (excused), Jon Rezek, Peter Ryan (excused), David Shaw

GUESTS AND REGULAR ATTENDERS: Pam Sullivan

I. The May 9, 2014, meeting of the Graduate Council of Mississippi State University was called to order by Chair Juan Silva at 1:35 PM in Room 611 of Allen Hall. Silva announced a quorum was present and thanked Dan Reynolds for the ice cream. Members gave Reynolds a loud round of applause.

II. Silva called for review of the March 28, 2014, minutes. The minutes were approved as read following a motion by Dana Franz and second by Lara Dodds.

III. Report from University Committee on Courses and Curricula (UCCC): Kirk Swortzel, Chair

Ph.D. in Public Policy Administration: program modification. David Morse moved to approve the proposed modification and Russell Carr seconded. Swortzel said the department developed a series of new courses which were approved by UCCC and is substituting them following the deletion of other courses from the program. The modification also reduces the number of elective hours. Following discussion concerning an IE assessment statement, Council voted unanimously to approve the modification.

Master of Arts in Teaching-Community College Education: program modification. Reynolds moved to approve and Morse seconded. The modification reduces the required hours from 33 to 30 by removing a 3-hour internship requirement. In response to a question, Morse stated that the internship was difficult for students to schedule in a community college setting. Council voted unanimously to approve the modification.

M.S. in Workforce Education Leadership: program modification. Scott Roberts moved to approve and Beth Miller seconded. The proposed change moves the required internship and adds a new course in its place; the credit hour total remains at 30. Motion passed unanimously.

M.S. in Secondary Education: program modification. Franz moved to approve and Russell Carr seconded. Swortzel stated that the modification affirms an earlier action of IHL and offers the program through distance. It was approved unanimously.

M.S. in Agricultural and Extension Education: program modification. Morse moved to approve and Franz seconded. Swortzel stated that the modification changes the required credit hour total from 30 to 31 (Leadership concentration) and to 34 (Teaching concentration). Other changes are: requiring AIS 8801 for both concentrations; requiring either AIS 8000 (thesis/research) or 8100 (a 6-hour creative component project) for all students; adding AIS 6703 to the Teaching concentration; adding AIS 8603 and 8613 in place of 8606 for the Teaching concentration; and reduction of electives from 14 to 9 hours in Leadership and to zero for Teaching. Council voted unanimously to approve the modification.
M.S. and Ph.D. minors in Biochemistry: new. Roberts moved to approve and Franz seconded. Swortzel reported that both minors are worded the same and required the same 13-14 hours of coursework requirements. Members questioned the learning outcomes, the catalog description, the justification, and the target audience description. Following discussion, Dodds moved to table both proposals, seconded by Russell Carr. Council voted unanimously to table.

IV. Graduate Dean’s Report: Dr. Lori Bruce
Dean Bruce distributed copies of her report. She recognized John Paul Jones, honored as the Graduate Student Showcase recipient, and Wes Schilling, the Graduate Faculty Showcase honoree. Jones is a doctoral student in Geosciences who discovered two clutches of dinosaur eggs in Montana. He will collaborate with the National Museum of Wales, the University of South Hampton, and Diamond Light Source (UK) using non-invasive imaging to analyze the eggs and their embryos. Schilling was named the 2014 Graduate Faculty Mentor of the Year for his work with students in the Department of Food Science, Nutrition and Health Promotion.

Bruce reported that the Graduate School has hired a new staff member, Michael Gann, to serve as the graduate enrollment management coordinator. He will work with marketing graduate programs and is available to help departments, at their request, with recruiting. He is helping the OGS understand how processes in our office affect enrollment. As an example, the Graduate School does not contact students who were admitted but did not come, stating that contacting these students could provide valuable information and be a possible recruiting tool.

She reported that as of the first of April Fall the number of fall applications is down but the number of admissions is up. A possible reason is that applicants now must pay the application fee in order to submit the application, meaning that the more serious students are applying.

Bruce updated the Council on the Six Sigma analysis of admissions processes as it relates to measuring the application process. The report includes charts that track the process for master’s degree applicants in randomly selected different-sized departments. The charts record the length of time for Admissions to process the application, for the department to process it, and for Admissions to complete the decision process notifying the student. This information is beneficial in developing best practices.

Next Bruce addressed the Fall deadlines of May 1 for international applicants and July 1 for domestic applicants. These deadlines have not been enforced in the past. This results in large amounts of time spent dealing with late applicants who were not admitted and want their fee returned and other similar situations. Students are able to apply because the system allows them to. This year the deadlines will be enforced. The student must only submit the application by the deadline; completion of the packet is not required by that date. After July 1 domestic students can apply only as unclassified. Questions were raised about departments needing to know first about grant money before encouraging a student to apply. Dr. Bruce replied that she had rather give a waiver in those cases that allows an unclassified student to hold an assistantship than not to enforce the deadlines.

A recent Graduator Coordinator Training Workshop focused on four topics.
1. Judy Spencer and Kim Thomas from HRM discussed the Affordable Care Act and its effect on the number of hours that a graduate assistant can work.
2. Dr. Teresa Gammill and Kacey Strickland announced that a recent NSF audit raised concerns regarding University compliance for graduate research assistants on research ethics training, and the University expects similar audits soon by NIH and USDA. As a result, ORED and DAFM will announce new requirements for graduate students funded by these agencies.
3. The University is launching a pilot program to cover out-of-state tuition for a number of non-resident graduate students.
4. The OGS is considering changes to a current assistant/fellowship program that would result in higher impact on graduate enrollments.
V. Graduate Student Association (GSA): Vemitra White, President
   White reported that the GSA held its last general meeting of the school year at which she recapped the
   semester’s activities and accomplishments. She announced that on the previous evening the new
   executive board had transitioned into leadership with T. J. Bradford serving as the 2014-15 president. She
   expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to serve as president and to serve on Graduate Council
   and UCCC. She also thanked Council for its support of the GSA.

VI. Silva stated that the Graduate School had requested clarification on a policy on graduate minors. A
    question often asked of the OGS is if a student can take a minor using courses that are required for the
    major, if all other requirements for a minor are met. The alternative is that a minor is in addition to the
    hours required for the major. The ensuing discussion leaned toward the first scenario: that courses taken
    for the major can count toward a minor. An example is the MBA degree which requires marketing hours;
    those courses can be used toward a minor in marketing. To clarify, Bruce asked if the default requirement
    for a minor is that courses for a minor can count toward the major unless the department requirements
    specify otherwise. Members agreed that this statement is correct. No motions were made and no action
    was taken.

VII. Discussion took place regarding the election of the chair and vice chair for the 2014-15 academic year.
    Bruce will initiate the nominations and election by email after replacement members have been
    announced for those whose terms expire.

VIII. There being no further business, Steve Elder moved to adjourn the meeting, and Russell Carr seconded.
    The meeting adjourned at 2:45 PM. This was the last meeting of the 2014-15