1. Dr. John Boyle called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and asked for introductions from those present.

2. Dr. Boyle explained the voting procedures for the Graduate Council, which had been distributed to the members prior to the meeting.

3. A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to accept the minutes of the Graduate Council meeting held on May 26, 2000.

4. Dr. Boyle announced that no report had been received from the University Committee on Courses and Curricula (UCCC). Dr. Boyle explained that in the past the Graduate Council reviewed all course proposals presented from the UCCC. However, the Council voted last year to review only proposals pertaining to graduate programs presented from the UCCC.

5. Dr. William Person reported that the Office of Graduate Studies has been quite busy for the past few weeks with the Teaching Assistants Workshop, which was held August 7-15, 2000. The international segment of the workshop was held August 7-11, and the general segment was held August 14-15. There were 154 students attending the international segment, with 109 being certified. The 45 students who were not certified will be attending a remedial course during the fall semester. There were about 250 international and domestic students attending the general segment of the workshop. An additional teacher was hired in order to accommodate the international students, bringing the number of teachers to five.

Dr. Person reported that the New Graduate Student Orientation was held on Wednesday, August 16, 2000, with about 230 students attending. Several Starkville
businesses and campus units and organizations contributed to the success of the orientation.

Dr. Person distributed information concerning application and enrollment data and graduate assistantship data. Dr. Person pointed out that in the last two years (1998 and 1999) the number of students who were admitted and actually matriculated had increased significantly from previous years (54.1% in 1996, 49.3% in 1997, 74.4% in 1998, and 67.5% in 1999).

6. Ms. Carrie Weaver, Graduate Student Association (GSA) President, introduced the GSA Vice President, Becky Fiorillo, and GSA Treasurer, Michael Rybolt. Ms. Weaver reported that the GSA officers have been busy planning for the new year. This year instead of having a fall banquet, the GSA has planned a fall function including a picnic, games, and door prizes, in order for returning graduate students to get to know new graduate students and make them feel welcome. Ms. Weaver also reported that the GSA is considering some safety issues for the campus including lighting and call boxes. Ms. Weaver stated that the GSA officers are trying to promote the GSA and are encouraging all graduate students to join in order for graduate students to have a better voice on campus. Dr. Boyle stated that the Council supports the GSA and will be of assistance when needed.

7. Dr. Boyle reported that a summary of Graduate Council Activities for 1999-2000 was distributed prior to the meeting. Dr. Boyle stated that the first item of old business would be to elect a vice-chair for the Council. Dr. Susan Bridges was the vice-chair for last year and she has rotated off the Council. A nomination was made and seconded to elect Dr. Lynn Reinschmiedt as vice-chair of the Council for 2000-2001. A motion was made and seconded to close the nominations. Dr. Boyle stated that voting will be by email and that Dr. Reinschmiedt will be informed of his nomination.

8. As a matter of new business, Dr. Boyle announced that because Dr. Joe Sumrall has left the University, the Council will need to elect a replacement to serve as its representative on the Academic Review Board and Academic Honesty Committee. Also, a substitute for this replacement will need to be elected. Dr. Robert Jenkins, a current member of the committee, summarized the functions and duties of the Academic Review Board and Academic Honesty Committee. Dr. George Rent confirmed for the Council that the representative does not have to be a member of the Graduate Council. Dr. Alex Friend was nominated to represent the Council. Dr. Boyle stated that he would contact Dr. Friend for confirmation that he was willing to serve and that additional nominations will be accepted by email.

9. Returning to old business, Dr. Boyle stated that the Council had decided that the matter of residence requirements for distance learning programs should be determined by the Deans’ Council and had been turned over to the Provost’s Office. Dr. Rent reported that a subcommittee has been appointed from the Associate Deans’ Council to study the issue of residence requirements for distance learning programs and to make recommendations based on its findings.
10. Dr. Boyle informed the Council that another item of old business to be considered is the report from the Council’s subcommittee to study compliance issues. Dr. Boyle distributed copies of the report. The subcommittee divided the issue of compliance into two areas: 1) monitoring adherence to policy and 2) monitoring quality. A major concern of the subcommittee is that there is no compliance monitoring mechanism above the deans’ offices. Therefore the subcommittee identified some specific items of concern which are as follows:

A. Programs of Study. Programs of Study are now left totally in the academic departments. The subcommittee felt that there needs to be an audit of these programs of study prior to graduation to make sure that the rules are being followed and that the students do not run into difficulties as they approach graduation. It was not the feeling of the subcommittee that programs of study should be sent forward to the deans early in the students’ careers, but that some type of audit should take place.

B. Graduate Committees. The subcommittee felt that the composition of graduate committees should be monitored for adherence to regulations prior to graduation.

Ms. Dale Welch informed the Council that with further development of the Banner system there would be a mechanism available for monitoring the composition of graduate committees. She also stated that with the development of the degree audit module of Banner there should be a mechanism for monitoring graduate programs of study. However, the time frame for this development has not been announced. Dr. Boyle stated that the Council would need to think about whether it would be sufficient to wait for this to come forward or to take immediate action to address the problem.

C. Minors. Dr. Boyle stated that the subcommittee felt that minors need to be monitored above the college level, because minors are not always confined to the same college as the major.

D. Graduate Faculty. The graduate faculty is currently monitored at the deans’ level. The subcommittee felt that there should be some auditing of graduate faculty status above the deans’ level to monitor for uniformity among the colleges.

Dr. Boyle stated that one of the first acts of the Graduate Council last year was to reaffirm its support for graduate faculty status. The Provost has supported this action and has informed the deans about this.

E. Theses and Dissertations. The Library has had occasional problems with students not understanding that the Library would monitor their compliance with thesis/dissertation style. Therefore, the subcommittee felt that it should be emphasized to the departments that the Library is the final auditor of theses and dissertations as far as style is concerned. There are sufficiently detailed style
manuals available for use in writing theses and dissertations. Policies concerning style are advertised along with dates for workshops and deadlines for submission of theses and dissertations. By the time a thesis or dissertation progresses to the submission to the Library stage, it should have been approved by the major professor, a committee of faculty, the graduate coordinator for the department, and the dean of the college. Yet, students continue to submit documents that do not comply with regulations.

After a lengthy discussion concerning compliance of style and format, a motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to have the Library staff send copies of the thesis/dissertation correction check sheet to the graduate coordinators and departments heads for each student whose document does not comply with format regulations. Dr. Boyle will notify the department heads and graduate coordinators of this new policy. Dr. Boyle will confer with the Library staff as to the possibility of a report being generated at the end of each semester to summarize the number of documents being corrected each semester.

F. Doctoral Oral Examinations. As a requirement set forth by the Graduate Council, graduate faculty representatives are required to attend doctoral oral preliminary/comprehensive examinations and doctoral dissertation defenses to ascertain that the examinations are conducted in a fair and impartial manner. This practice was discontinued several years ago because of the increased difficulty in obtaining faculty representatives from outside the students’ disciplines to attend the examinations. The subcommittee proposed that each year the Provost appoint a committee composed of twenty graduate faculty, excluding members of the Graduate Council, to act as a pool of representatives at oral preliminary/comprehensive examinations and doctoral dissertation defenses for that year. It is estimated that this would require five to ten visits per year per committee member. It was also suggested that each committee member be given a 5% salary release this service. The committee member could use the released salary for travel, for purchasing books, etc. The net cost to the University would be one FTE. Dr. Boyle stated that this topic will be on the agenda for the September meeting of the Council.

G. Plans for the academic year. Plans are to consider the following: items remaining from the Kohers’ Committee report, the role of graduate coordinators, establish a council of graduate coordinators, graduate certificate programs, and other items that may develop throughout the year.

11. Dr. Boyle announced that the IHL has increased tuition and fees for the 2000-2001 academic year and asked Dr. Rent if this is actually a fee increase. Dr. Rent explained that although the former separate categories of tuition and fees have been combined into one category of “tuition and fees,” it has been discovered that we do have separate fees for the health center and athletics. The fee that was added this semester in the amount of $50.00 for technology and libraries has been included in the tuition and fees category. Dr. Boyle pointed out that although tuition is waived
for graduate assistants, they are responsible for paying the fees. Dr. Boyle asked if the additional $50.00 fee should be included as a separate fee since the graduate assistants’ tuition waiver does not cover this. Ms. Jimmie Wesley informed the Council that the $50.00 technology and library fee appears on a separate line on the student’s bill and is included in the $457.50 each full time graduate student pays per semester. It was pointed out that the Comptroller’s Office is responsible for entering information onto the fee assessment table. Dr. Rent stated that the initial request to the IHL was for an increase in fees for technology and libraries.

12. Dr. Boyle distributed copies of a new list of Graduate Council members.

13. The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p. m.