September 26, 2014

PRESENT: Jim Adams, Amy Adkerson, Tim Barnett, T. J. Bradford, Ashli Brown-Johnson, Lori Bruce, Russell Carr, Tim Chamblee, PC Cinnella, Bob Wolverton, Jr. (for Frances Coleman), Richard Harkess, Rebecca Long, Beth Miller, David Morse, Brian Baldwin (for Dan Reynolds), Jon Rezek, Scott Roberts, Peter Ryan, Judy Schneider, Kirk Swortzel

ABSENT: Tommy Anderson (excused), Shalyn Claggett (excused), Steve Elder (excused), Dana Franz (excused), Jerry Gilbert (excused), Julia Hodges (excused), David Shaw (excused), Steve Taylor (excused)

GUESTS AND REGULAR ATTENDERS: Michael Gann, Kathy Griffin, Pam Sullivan

I. The September 26, 2014, meeting of the Graduate Council of Mississippi State University was called to order by Chair Scott Roberts at 1:30 PM in Room 611 of Allen Hall. He introduced the new vice-chair, David Morse, and new members Rebecca Long, interim associate dean of the Graduate School, Richard Harkess, Beth Miller, T. J. Bradford, president of the Graduate Student association, and regular attenders Michael Gann and Kathy Griffin from the Graduate School.

II. Roberts asked for a motion to approve the May 9, 2014, minutes. A motion was made and seconded, and the minutes were approved.

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

Swortzel stated there were no degree proposals from UCCC for consideration. He reported on the progress of the online submission and approval for new and modified courses. Training is currently taking place for those involved in these processes, which do not involve Graduate Council. Training for new and modified degree programs will take place later, and the approval process for Graduate Council will need to be established. He suggested approvals from UCCC would be sent to Pam Sullivan to add to Council agendas with approval authority given to the Graduate Council chair. Implementation of this process should begin around the first of the year. Training sessions will be available.

IV. Graduate Dean’s Report: Dr. Lori Bruce

Copies of the Dean’s Report were distributed. Bruce announced Graduate School updates on the new online graduate catalog, admission and enrollment trends; assistantships; number of applicants; and currently enrolled graduate students. She also announced that a graduate coordinator workshop would be held on two days the following week to work interactively in small groups on typical graduate student situations and also to seek input on Graduate School forms before they are modified in the near future. She also discussed the accelerated BS/MS program, also referred to as 5th year master’s and combined BS/MS programs. Graduate Council approved this program in October 2008 and four departments currently have adopted it: Biological Sciences, Computer Science and Engineering, History, and Plant and Soil Sciences. Bruce believes the program is a valuable recruiting tool for high achieving undergraduate students that also impacts Graduate School enrollment. When discussing the issue with Dr. Gilbert, he stated that a proposed accelerated program would only need Graduate Council approval since UCCC had approved the plan and no degree modifications are involved. She is encouraging other departments to adopt it and wants Graduate Council to develop a template a department would use when submitting a proposal. A template would ensure that departments follow the approved guidelines, and Graduate Council approval would provide formal recognition of the proposal following its approval by the department committee, the department head, and the college dean. Scott Roberts appointed a subcommittee to develop the template and steps of approval process; members are Richard Harkess, chair; Lori Bruce; Peter Ryan; and Kirk Swortzel.
Bruce reported that 275 students completed the TA Training and Certification program in August, a record number. Fourteen faculty and staff members made presentations, and 62 graduate faculty members evaluated students’ presentations for teaching certification. Jon Rezek asked about the role played by the ESL Center in the TA training and the amount of time and effort they spend in the program. Since its participation in TA training began, ESL has become self-funded. Bruce agreed to discuss this situation with Rezek. Bruce mentioned other professional development programs for students and stated that the Department of Communication will partner with the Graduate School by offering training programs for students as they prepare for 3MT presentations.

V. Graduate Student Association (GSA): T. J. Bradford, President
Roberts introduced T. J. Bradford, the new GSA president. Bradford said he is a Ph.D. student in the Agricultural and Extension Education program. He reported that the GSA held its first meeting of the year on September 8 with almost 70 students attending. The group meets the second Monday of each month, from 5:00-5:45 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for October 13 at 5:00 pm. He announced the Symposium is scheduled for March 21 at 9 am and the Awards Banquet will be held April 1 during Graduate Student Appreciation Week.

VI. Old Business:
Robert discussed items of old business.
- Split-level courses. In April 2013 Graduate Council moved to add the following statement to AOP 11.04: “Students who have already taken a course at the 4000-level are not allowed to enroll in the same course for credit at the 6000 level except for those courses that are specifically approved to be taken multiple times for credit. Only courses that are specifically approved to be taken multiple times for credit may be taken at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.” In March 2014 statement #5 was further revised to state: “Students who have already taken a course for credit at the 4000 level are not allowed to enroll in the same course for credit at the 6000 level without explicit permission of the instructor and graduate coordinator of the department offering the course, and the dean of the Graduate School.”
- Dr. Gilbert approved the Graduate Council policy establishing a course (subsequently assigned the number XXX9913) designed to assist Ph.D. students in starting and/or completing their dissertation. The course must be non-GPA graded and can be repeated for up to 6 credit
- Dr. Gilbert approved the Graduate Council policy stating that “A graduate student cannot graduate with .... 3) more than two courses not exceeding 8 credit hours of grades below a B earned for all courses since admission to the program, including those outside the program of study;... Note: The original grade for a course that is retaken and in which the student earned a grade of B or higher will not be included in the eight total hours. However, the original grade is included as part of the calculation of the GPA.”
- Roberts stated that the policy approved by Graduate Council on February 28, 2014, establishing a 53-hour course credit requirement beyond the bachelor’s for a Ph.D. was not approved by Dr. Gilbert. The Provost said he would support a 53-hour total requirement with minimum of 24 GPA hours. Roberts said this issue will be discussed further.
- M.S. and Ph.D. Biochemistry minors. These proposals were tabled by Graduate Council, and Roberts had returned them to the department. Swortzel will discuss the proposals with Dr. Willeford and Dr. Dean.

VII. New Business:
There were no items of new business.

VIII. With no further business, Tim Barnett moved to adjourn, and Brian Baldwin seconded. The meeting adjourned at 3:05 PM.