

**GRADUATE COUNCIL
MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY**

NUMBER: 8

DATE: April 28, 2000

PRESENT: John Boyle, Chair; M. Burnham, A. Friend, L. Hanson, R. Harkess, K. Kelly, T. Kohers, D. Monts, W. Person, L. Reinschmiedt, G. Rent, C. Sides, J. Sumrall, M. Thorne, D. Welch, J. Wesley, N. Younan.

ABSENT: R. Altenkirch, S. Bridges, F. Coleman, R. Jenkins, J. Miller, S. Miller, C. Taylor, D. Wolfe, L. Crumpton-Young.

Graduate Council Minutes for March 24, 2000

Dr. John Boyle called the meeting to order at 1:33 and presented the March Graduate Council minutes for approval. The motion was made, seconded and unanimously passed by the Council to accept the minutes from March 24, 2000 with editorial changes from Dr. Mike Thorne.

University Courses and Curriculum Report

There were no Courses and Curriculum documents to consider, but Dr. William Person said that he expects a UCCC Report for the May Graduate Council meeting.

Report From Graduate Studies

Dr. Boyle asked for the Graduate Studies Report. Dr Person opened with information about GradAdvantage. There are two pages of editorial changes that the GradAdvantage technician is reviewing. Dr. Person stated all editorial and technical changes should be submitted at one time, because he is unaware of the cost pertaining to the changes. There will be opportunity for changes on an annual basis, but he thinks that interim changes could be very costly. Diane Wolfe, Dale Welch, Terri Roberson, Alan Ulmer, Tommy Parker, and Cathy Gresham make up the MSU GradAdvantage team. He hopes to have this completed by the Graduate Council meeting next month.

Dr. Person apologized to the GSA President for not consulting with him about the next document that he presented to the Council. The document listed the names and a short background of the TA/RA awards that were given out at the GSA Banquet on March 24, 2000. He then went on to tell that there were approximately 100 people at the awards ceremony.

Dr. Ted Kohers asked a few questions about the GradAdvantage page pertaining to when the changes could be made. Dr. Person explained that he was discussing the Peterson's GradAdvantage on-line application and not the Office of Graduate Studies web page.

Report From Graduate Student Association

Mr. Matthew Burnham, President of GSA, apologized for not having a representative attend the last Graduate Council meeting, he then thanked Dr. Person for reporting for the GSA. Mr. Burnham reported that Dr. Donald Zacharias sent a thank you note to the GSA congratulating them on the awards that were presented to the TA/RA Graduate Students and the Awards Banquet. Dr. Zacharias recognized, in his note, the tremendous effort put forth by the GSA this year.

On April 10, 2000, the new GSA officer induction was held at the Hill Poultry Science Building. The GSA Officers for 2000-2001 academic year are as follows: President: Carrie Weaver, Vice-President: Becky Fiorillo, Secretary: Jennie Pitts, and Treasurer: Michael Rybolt. These students will take office on July 1, 2000. On June 2, 2000, the GSA will hold a transitional meeting in Allen Hall, Room 162 where the exiting officers will pass the baton to the 2000-2001 GSA officers.

Old Business

Dr. Boyle informed the Graduate Council that the Library Committee has been discussing the possible assessment of a library fee. The Library is trying to generate additional funds, (due to the lack of increase in budget this year) by instituting a fee of \$3.00 per hour per student. Dr. George Rent said that this was not a recommendation from the Library. The Office of Academic Affairs is recommending that President Portera seek approval from the Board of Trustees (IHL) to implement such a fee. Due to the budget cuts, the President wants to continue to allocate approximately one million dollars in order to achieve the American Research Library (ARL) status. Dr. Rent said the IHL Board does not want to raise tuition so the only alternative is to implement an increase in fees in order to generate more funds for the University. These fees could generate approximately 1 million dollars. There could possibly be an increase of fees in several different areas such as: activity fees, Library fees, and/or technology fees.

Unclassified Students

Dr. Joe Sumrall distributed a document titled "Unclassified Student Issues" with five items listed. A meeting will be scheduled with Mr. Butch Stokes, Associate Registrar, concerning items two and three, which pertains to categorizing unclassified students as to purpose for being unclassified. Another document stated two motions pertaining to the first item. Motion one stated that students taking an unclassified graduate course should submit an official transcript indicating proof of a Bachelor's degree. The question was how long should the student have to produce that evidence. Other discussion under this topic included the following:

- Dale Welch said that under this policy classified students would not have the same opportunity as unclassified students to switch to an audit if they are not doing well in class.
- Dr. Kohers felt that students needed to be encouraged to take classes even if it was for fun. He said the unclassified student might eventually become the classified student.
- There was also a discussion on the subject of monitoring the unclassified students.

A motion was made to require that official transcripts showing a Bachelor's degree has been awarded must be submitted with the unclassified application. This motion was seconded and passed unanimously by the Council.

The second motion concerning unclassified status stated that current and retired faculty or those with equivalent faculty status from Mississippi State University will not be required to submit a transcript in order to enroll in a graduate course as an unclassified student.

A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously by the Council.

Dale Welch requested an effective date for this motion. It was agreed that this motion would become effective January 2001.

Distance Learning and residency requirements

Dr. Boyle asked for volunteers to form a subcommittee to work on this issue. The University has on-line courses as well as continuing education courses that need to be considered. The question was brought up that possibly a residency requirement would soon be obsolete due to the internet and other means of education that are surfacing in today's world. Video programming is also widely available. There are situations in which some students do their research in a different geographical area compared to where their school is located. Dr. Boyle suggested that the colleges might want to form a committee to address this issue. Dr. Rent said that the residency issue began due to the access to the library. Now most material can be accessed through the Internet. The subject of Distance Learning fees was addressed. Dr. Rent suggested that distance learning was probably less expensive to students, mainly to avoid fees since activity fees are not charged to distance learning students. Dr. Thorne was concerned that this would devolve into a mail order degree. He said that some students did not do as well through distance learning due to lack of interaction with instructors.

Dr. Boyle said the Council could propose to do away with the residency requirements or the Office of the Provost might want to present the Council with a policy on monitoring the quality of the program. Dr. Rent suggested that the Deans of each college be responsible for this program if the residency requirements were to become obsolete. Dr. Alex Friend proposed that the residency requirements be waived for Master's but not Doctoral degrees. Dr. Boyle suggested that a motion be put on the floor to eliminate the residency requirements in order to see what kind of support that motion would carry. If there is not enough support, then the motion can be rephrased. The motion is that the residency requirements on individual programs be eliminated and deans are charged with monitoring quality of distance programs. The motion was made and seconded. Dr. Boyle then asked for a show of hands. The vote was 6 to 3 in favor of passing the motion. It was then decided that this issue would not be closed at this time and that more information should be gathered from the individual colleges. Dr. Boyle will contact each of the colleges to ask for a committee representative. It was also suggested that the Associate Deans Council be asked to look into this matter. It was determined that there are not any IHL requirements attached to this issue.

New Business

Deadline for Thesis Defense

Dr. Boyle asked Dale Welch to address the letter she sent to him concerning Master's thesis defense deadlines. In her letter Mrs. Welch is asking that sufficient time be allowed for students to obtain approval from committee members, graduate coordinators and deans before submitting the documents to the Library. A seven-day deadline is recommended for defending theses. This deadline is consistent with the deadline for defending Doctoral dissertations. The effective date will be Fall semester 2000.

The motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously the council.

Nominations for Council Chair

Dr. Boyle called for nominations for the new Graduate Council Chair. He stated the vote will be by email to Dr. Person. Dr. Boyle was nominated. There were several seconds to his nomination. Dr. Person asked if just the council members could vote, to which Dr. Boyle answered yes, only Graduate Council members could vote. Dr. Person asked about the vice-chair nomination, but Dr. Boyle said the Chair needed to be elected first.

Dr. Boyle asked about members who would be available for a May 26, 2000 Graduate Council meeting. Dr. Person said that there would be some UCCC reports to consider during that meeting. The consensus was that there would be enough people to have the May meeting. Dr. Boyle said that he, Dr. Kohers, and Dr. Friend would meet next week to start looking at the compliance issue. Dr. Friend will be rotating off the Graduate Council soon.

Dr. Person suggested inviting the newly elected and appointed Council Members to attend the May meeting.

Dr. Boyle wants to write a summary report of the Council's actions this year to send to the Provost and others involved.

Jimmie Wesley asked about any changes that the Council members wanted to make in the Graduate Assistant Handbook before it is posted on the web. There was some discussion about a revised offer letter for Graduate Assistantships that is to be in the Graduate Assistant Handbook. Dr. Person said that document was to be reviewed by the Executive Council first before being posted on the web.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:00p.m.