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Graduate Council Minutes 2012-04-02

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Minutes Approved at the 602nd Meeting – May 7, 2012

GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES
601st Meeting
April 2, 2012


MEMBERS ABSENT: Beeson, Bennardo, Han, Macdonald, Morris, Patitu, Radosta, Sido

OTHERS PRESENT: Betty Birner (Department of English), Hughes (Secretary), Smith (Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator)

Bond called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Approval of Minutes
Gowen moved approval of the March 5, 2012, minutes; Konen seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Committee Reports
Curriculum Committee: In Bennardo’s absence, Zittel presented the March 19, 2012, minutes for approval. She reported that the committee approved various course revisions and two new certificate programs in the College of Education: Middle School Literacy and Postsecondary Developmental Literacy and Language Instruction. Two items were tabled, including a new interdisciplinary course proposal associated with the Center for the Interdisciplinary Study of Language and Literacy, for which the committee provided feedback to the departments. There were also various revisions due to the change from an Ed.D. in Educational Psychology to a Ph.D.

Birner noted that all of the courses listed for the new certificate program in Postsecondary Developmental Literacy and Language Instruction, which is an interdisciplinary and intercollegiate program of study, are in the College of Education. She asked if the program might consider including courses from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, such as English or foreign language courses. L’Allier encouraged her to contact Sonya Armstrong to discuss inclusion of such courses in the program.

Graduate Council members unanimously approved the minutes. (Curriculum Committee minutes and catalog changes are available at: http://www.niu.edu/provost/curriculum/committeeminutes.shtml.)

Graduate Faculty Membership Committee: Bond presented the following recommendations from the March 21, 2012, meeting for Council approval:
**Educational Technology, Research and Assessment:** Three full and fourteen senior members were renewed. The committee approved the recommendations. There were no proposed revisions to the department’s criteria.

**Leadership, Educational Psychology and Foundations:** Thirty-four senior members were renewed. Four senior members who no longer teach in the department will be removed from the department’s graduate faculty list. Two full members were renewed. Three full members who have either retired or resigned will be removed from the department’s graduate faculty list. One faculty member was not renewed and will have provisional status beginning this summer. The committee approved the recommendations.

The committee discussed the department’s proposed revisions to its criteria. The department deleted a second category through which faculty could demonstrate evidence of activity in graduate-level education and made a few minor changes in the language. The committee approved the revised criteria.

**Mathematical Sciences:** Seventeen senior members were renewed. Two retired faculty members were not renewed and will be removed from the department’s graduate faculty list. Four senior members did not meet the criteria and were not renewed. They will have full status beginning this summer. Nine full members were renewed. The committee approved the recommendations.

Although there were no proposed revisions to the department’s criteria, the committee made some suggestions for changing the senior membership requirements. The committee would like clarification of the paragraph in section 1 with regard to the five publications. In addition, members suggested that faculty should meet the requirements of both 1.a (two refereed journal articles or book chapters), and 1.b (two “others,” e.g., grant, referee, review panel, editor) in the past six years instead of just one or the other. Furthermore, the committee recommends that the department reconsider the weighting of subsets in 1.b by possibly creating a 1.c (lesser) category. The committee also encourages faculty to list dates on CVs with regard to graduate-level teaching and committee service. Bond will share the suggestions of the committee with the chair of the department.

**Statistics:** Five senior members were renewed. One member did not meet the criteria and will have full status beginning this summer. There were no full members to review. The committee approved the recommendations.

The committee discussed the division’s proposed revisions to its criteria. The division updated its criteria to reflect an eight- versus six-year review cycle and, therefore, increased the requirements for senior membership by one with regard to refereed publications and graduate-level teaching. There were also a few minor changes in the language. The committee approved the revised criteria.

Zittel moved approval of the recommendations by the Graduate Faculty Membership Committee; Willis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
**Honorary Degree Committee:** Bond reported that no honorary degree will be bestowed at the May commencement ceremony. A recipient has been identified, but the individual cannot attend. She will receive the degree at a future ceremony. Formal announcement of the recipient awaits formal approval by the Board of Trustees.

**Standards Committee:** Konen reported on proposed changes to the “Requirements for Graduate Degrees” section of the catalog with regard to the composition of thesis and dissertation committees. Many of the revisions are based on the proposed APPM changes to graduate faculty membership, which are pending approval by the graduate faculty. The formation of thesis committees will require Graduate School approval, and permission will need to be obtained to remove/add committee members. A common form for the formation of thesis committees will be created. Bond stated that the key to success for master’s students is to form committees early and to keep all members in the loop.

Willis was concerned about the proposed language with regard to students removing a committee member and needing consent from that person. She commented that students might feel “trapped.” Sagarin agreed. Bond asked them to think about how to change the language and to forward suggestions to him to share with the committee. He suggested that it may be adding a simple statement that students could petition the Graduate School dean to have a committee member removed if that person did not consent.

Sunderlin moved to table the proposed changes; Willis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**New Business**

**Ad Hoc Committee on Graduate Learning Expectations:** Garver reported on the outcome of the ad hoc committee, which was formed in response to a request by the Provost’s Office based primarily on the report/study on learning expectations issued by the Lumina Foundation in December 2010. The committee has proposed a “Learning Expectations” section for inclusion in the catalog under “Requirements for Graduate Degrees.” Garver stated that the committee tried to broadly distinguish the difference between the masters-, professional doctorate- (Au.D. and D.P.T.) and research doctorate-level degrees and how they differ from each other and from undergraduate-level degrees. Council members discussed the language used in the statement and suggested that “formal logic” be stricken from paragraphs two and three.

Abdel-Motaleb moved approval of the “Learning Expectations” statement with amendments striking “employ formal logic to” from paragraph two and “formal logic and” from paragraph three for inclusion in the Graduate Catalog. Konen seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. (Approved statement attached.)

**Student-at-large Status:** Bond stated that potential students who are interested in taking graduate-level classes often times do not understand the term “student-at-large.” He commented that it is an odd term compared to other graduate schools and suggested changing the terminology, at least in a public interface if not in the catalog. Bond asked Council members for suggestions. The terms “non-degree” and “post graduate” were briefly discussed. Willis suggested a simple statement on the Graduate School website
such as, “If you want to take graduate-level classes but are not interested in pursuing a degree, click here.” L’Allier agreed and suggested that the website could be more user-friendly.

**Accredited Institutions in India:** Bond informed Council members that he recently visited India on University business and came back with a lot to digest. He stated that India is in a demographic crisis with regard to higher education. In 1990, there were approximately 5 million degree-seeking students; in 2000, approximately 10 million; and, currently, approximately 20 million in a population of about 1.2 billion. There are around 600 universities in the country and 39,000 colleges. None of those colleges offer degrees. The only institutions that offer degrees are universities, which tend to be very small and only for graduate students. The University of Hyderabad, which is the region from which many of our Indian students come, has about 4,000 students. It is a huge facility located on 2,000 acres with very few students, all of whom are graduate students. For a college to offer a curriculum, it has to be affiliated with a university. The University of Hyderabad has about 2,000 colleges that affiliate with it. Many of our students who have a degree from Hyderabad do not actually attend that institution. They attend much smaller institutions, but have a degree that says it came from Hyderabad, Mumbai, or another similar institution.

Bond expressed concern about how we treat accreditation with regard to India. Currently, we require an institution to have the equivalent of regional accreditation. That does not work for India because there are no regional accreditors. The question becomes what is the equivalent of regional accreditation in India. We have always treated accreditation as University Grants Commission recognized institutions or Deemed institutions. The University Grants Commission is the government organization that dispenses money to universities through grants. It is equivalent to the Illinois Department of Education, but for the whole nation. At the college-level, there is a standard curriculum for courses. Faculty at the colleges deliver the courses, students take their exams, then the exams are sent to universities for grading.

Bond admitted that he struggles with what accreditation means with regard to India. There are all sorts of other accrediting bodies in India, such as the NBA, NAAC, and the All India Council on Technical Education, yet we limit what we accept to essentially the UGC recognized institutions. Bond stated that he is unclear as to what direction we need to go in terms of dealing with these institutions, in part, because India is going through so many changes in higher education. The number of institutions is growing dramatically, some of which are quite good.

Bond stated that his hope is that the Graduate Council can visit the accreditation issue next academic year and dig a little deeper.

**Three-Year Degrees in India:** Bond indicated that he would also like to have another conversation with Graduate Council next academic year with regard to India and three-year degrees, particularly with the B.Comm. degree for business students. The argument for not accepting three-year degrees from India has traditionally been that those students do not have a general education curriculum experience. They are often told to take
general education courses at a community college for a year then apply. None of the colleges in India have a general education curriculum, which is not unlike European institutions from which we accept three-year degrees. Bond questions why students from India with three-year degrees are not even considered. He stated that the question of where the standard should be set will be one for the Graduate Council to decide next year.

Abdel-Motaleb raised concern about the current issue of students from India suspected of cheating on the TOEFL. Bond stated that, since March 2011, approximately 200 students who had applied from India have had their TOEFL scores canceled due to suspected cheating. The problem, in large part, is due to TOEFL outsourcing management of centers which, in turn, have been outsourced and outsourced again. Unfortunately, institutions were not notified by ETS about the cancellations until several months after the students had taken the exam. Because of that and until ETS can get a handle on the situation, there is a statement on the Graduate School website encouraging international students to take the IELTS, instead.

**Announcements**

**Graduate Student Research Conference:** Willis stated that she attended the conference on Saturday, which went well. She said the talk given by Dr. Story Musgrave, NASA Space Shuttle Astronaut, was absolutely stellar. It was recorded by Media Services for anyone interested.

**Willis Retirement:** Bond congratulated Sue Willis on her impending retirement. Willis stated that she will be retiring at the end of June. There will be a reception on May 4, Reading Day, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. in the Chandelier Room, Adams Hall. Bond thanked Willis for her dedication to graduate matters over the years.

Meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.
Requirements for Graduate Degrees

The following are general university requirements for the various degree programs as established by the graduate faculty. Individual departments and programs may have established additional or more restrictive requirements, which are described in the corresponding departmental sections of this catalog. Students should consult those sections to determine such requirements and must meet all requirements specific to their own major/specialization in addition to the general requirements of the university.

Learning Expectations

Graduate education is characterized by its diversity of purpose. Programs educate for reasons ranging from the purely academic to the purely applied. All hold in common overarching learning expectations. Building on the knowledge, skills, and abilities that students possess, graduate programs seek to develop among students specialized knowledge in a discipline or across disciplines; and they train students to act as innovators, problem solvers, advanced practitioners, creators of knowledge, and keepers of their discipline.

At the master’s and professional doctorate levels, students evince knowledge in their discipline or across disciplines when they master at an advanced level the pertinent content and skills. They apply that knowledge in innovative ways to solve problems, to contribute to scholarly discourse, or to engage in mature performance of their craft. As innovators, scholars, and performers, students demonstrate a high level of competency in critical thinking when they demonstrate their knowledge and skills or when they independently apply appropriate research methods, concepts, and theories within their fields of study. They communicate effectively and professionally both orally and in writing.

At the doctorate level, students evince knowledge in their discipline or across disciplines when they become specialists in the content and skills necessary to be independent researchers and original contributors to knowledge within their fields. They understand and appreciate the philosophy and historical development of their discipline as a field of inquiry, and they know how that philosophy and history shape their own research. As independent researchers, they identify problems and develop solutions by employing appropriate research methods. They also effectively communicate in a scholarly fashion their knowledge and disseminate that knowledge orally and in writing.

Justification: The addition helps to clearly differentiate general learning expectations for advanced degrees from general learning expectations for undergraduate degrees. The expectations are written in such a way as to accommodate the variety of disciplines and graduate education practices on campus.