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Graduate Council Minutes 2013-03-04

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Minutes Approved at the 608th Meeting – April 1, 2013

GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES
607th Meeting
March 4, 2013


MEMBERS ABSENT: Bennardo, Bruce, Efanov, Garver, Sims, Umoren

GUESTS: Sherrill Morris (Acting Associate Vice Provost, Office of Assessment Services), Mary Pritchard (Associate Dean, College of Health and Human Sciences), Sherilynn Spear (Professor Emeritus, School of Allied Health and Communicative Disorders)

OTHERS PRESENT: Hughes (Secretary), Smith (Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator)

Approval of Minutes

Hathaway moved approval of the February 4, 2013 minutes; Sido seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Committee Reports

Curriculum Committee: Chown presented the February 11, 2013 minutes for approval. He reported that the committee reviewed and strongly supports the proposal for a new interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Health Sciences. Bond noted that Pritchard and Spear from the College of Health and Human Sciences were present to answer any questions. Abdel-Motaleb asked if the College had considered proposing a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree. Pritchard responded that a D.N.P. proposal would be forthcoming. However, because of a critical shortage of Ph.D. qualified faculty to teach in disciplines like nursing and physical therapy, for example, the college decided to pursue the Ph.D. proposal first. Abdel-Motaleb declared his support for the new Ph.D. program, and he declared that he was anxious to see a D.N.P. proposal. Rossetti moved approval of the minutes with the new interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Health Sciences; Levin seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. (Curriculum Committee minutes and catalog changes are available at: http://www.niu.edu/provost/curriculum/committeeminutes.shtml.)

Old Business

Course Syllabus Policy: Bond reminded members that they reviewed the initial draft of the proposed policy last November and made several suggested changes for consideration by the ad hoc committee consisting of members from the Undergraduate Coordinating
Council and the Graduate Council (Hathaway, Schraufnagel, Rosalez), as well as Birberick and Bond. The ad hoc committee met and created a reconciled version of the proposed policy for inclusion in the APPM. The policy was approved by the UCC on February 7 with the indicated change and now requires Graduate Council approval. L’Allier moved approval of the policy; Rosetti seconded, which carried unanimously. (See attached document.)

*Tuition Waivers:* Bond apologized for his absence from the last Graduate Council. He opened the floor for questions and discussion about tuition waivers.

Abdel-Motaleb asked for confirmation that the new process only applies to the McNair, recruitment, under-represented minority, and artistic talent tuition waivers, not graduate assistantship tuition waivers. Bond confirmed.

Abdel-Motaleb stated that departments would like to be given a specific number of tuition waivers to use and asked if that was going to be the policy. Abdel-Motaleb asked if the policy could be changed. Bond responded that the policy could not be changed today and not for this fall. He reminded members that President Peters and Provost Alden formed a task force last summer to review the tuition waiver process to see how waivers were awarded and to look at expenditures and what was reported as uncollected revenue. Bond informed members that the task force was asked to make specific recommendations that would ensure that waivers were awarded in an openly competitive and centralized fashion, with a cap on the value of the waivers awarded. He stated that this is what we were asked to do, and the centralized, competitive process is a starting point. Abdel-Motaleb commented that it was going to affect all departments and persisted that departments should be given a specific number of waivers to use. Bond responded that he understood the concern, but suggested waiting to see how the process works for this year to see what the law of unintended consequences tells us, which will allow us to be better armed to make an argument to change the process.

Hathaway expressed concern about department justifications and how reviewers would evaluate since they would be comparing apples to oranges. Bond agreed it would be difficult for reviewers, especially with recruitment waivers, but stated that Graduate Council committees often compare apples to oranges when reviewing materials for competitions, such as University Fellowships and Dissertation Completion Awards. Bond stated that it was not an easy task, but not unfamiliar territory for Graduate Council members. Hathaway asked how detailed the justifications needed to be. Bond stated that it was a competition so it would be necessary for departments to state their case.

L’Allier asked if departments and colleges would be able to see the rubric used for reviewing applications. Bond stated that he would talk with members of the review committee about the rubric. L’Allier commented that students and faculty should know what the weighting is for the justification. Bond stated that departments should count on it being pretty heavy.

Chown asked if departments should still operate under the assumption that recruitment tuition waivers are to be used in the absence of an assistantship and that, if an assistantship becomes available, it should be offered to that student. Bond replied yes,
and stated that was the assumption that has always undergirded recruitment tuition waivers. He indicated that they are a way for programs to bring in students who can quickly morph into a graduate assistant role.

Sido shared two concerns that have been brought to his attention. One of those concerns is the potential for enrollment numbers to diminish greatly, and the other is the deadline being too deep into the semester for his college to use as a recruitment tool since they begin reviewing applications around February 1. He stated that the late deadline would severely impact recruitment for his college. Bond responded that he had only heard that concern from one other person because most people feel that it is too early of a deadline. Bond indicated that the deadline was set based primarily on the assistantship commitment date of April 15.

Bond asked for volunteers to serve on the review committee. The committee will meet after mid-March with decisions to be made by early April for new admits in the fall semester. Tuition waivers are for one academic year, with the exceptions of McNair and artistic talent.

**Announcements**

**2011-2012 Annual Assessment Update Graduate Programs Report:** Bond introduced Sherrill Morris from the Office of Assessment Services (OAS). Morris distributed hard copies of the 2011-12 annual assessment update graduate programs report, which was also distributed electronically prior to the meeting. She explained that each graduate program submits an annual assessment update to the OAS, which is responsible for reviewing and providing feedback. Morris stated that the annual report is based on those graduate program assessment updates and noted that 100% of the annual assessment updates for graduate programs were submitted over the past six years, which is outstanding. Morris reviewed the data in the report, which is available at: [http://www.niu.edu/assessment/annualupdate/_docs/Annual-Updates-Graduate-Summary-2008-2009-to-2011-2012.pdf](http://www.niu.edu/assessment/annualupdate/_docs/Annual-Updates-Graduate-Summary-2008-2009-to-2011-2012.pdf).

Levin asked what happens when departments do not meet all of the criteria. Morris stated that departments are contacted and provided an opportunity for additional support. She commented that 55% of our graduate programs are meeting 100% of all criteria.

Wilkins asked how the OAS was educating various graduate programs about the expectations of this annual report. Morris responded that the department chair is ultimately responsible, although it often gets delegated to other people. Morris stated that she is relatively new to this role, but the OAS is trying to communicate with people before report submission if there were criteria not met in the prior year. She commented that OAS might need to expand the rubric so it is extremely clear what the expectations are. Morris stated that the OAS provides feedback on assessment plans to assist departments with reporting their data so it is clear to individuals outside the program.

Wilkins suggested that the OAS consider making changes in the way information is conveyed and to consider the many changes in leadership within departments and colleges. She asked if there was a vehicle in which OAS receives the names of the people...
in the department who are actually writing these reports, which could then serve as a second layer of communication with regard to what the expectations are. Morris stated that many people do not list their name on the electronic form, so the OAS would only have that information if they were informed by the chair. She commented that she may need to talk with Bond about the possibility of including directors of graduate studies on OAS communications. Morris agreed that there is a lot of confusion about annual updates and how they relate to status reports and program review. L’Allier suggested that it would be helpful if there were a clear statement somewhere to describe how teacher certification assessment in the fall ties together with assessment in the spring and how they all fit together with program review. Morris agreed that it is not a seamless process, but assured members that it is the goal. She expressed her appreciation for all of the comments and suggestions. Bond thanked Morris for taking the time to talk with Graduate Council.

New Business

Graduate Assistant Assessment Survey: Bond stated that Chown asked some very interesting questions at the last Graduate Council meeting about the graduate assistant population. The fundamental question was how they live on an assistantship stipend. Chown requested hard data about what is happening with our graduate assistants. Bond stated that he, Chown, Rosalez, and Wilkens met to draw up a survey instrument, which will be going out to graduate assistants very soon. There are approximately twenty questions, mostly yes/no, that should only take graduate assistants a couple of minutes to complete. Bond thanked Chown, Rosalez, and Wilkens for taking the time to work with him on the survey. He indicated that he would also notify directors of graduate studies about the survey in case assistants asked any questions. Bond stated that the purpose of the survey is to provide the Graduate Council information so that the council can advocate on behalf of graduate students as we move forward.

Honorary Degrees: Graduate Council discussed nominations for honorary degrees. All nominations are kept confidential until approved by the President and Board of Trustees.

Meeting adjourned at 11:02 a.m.
COURSE SYLLABUS POLICY

Students need a consistent level of basic information about the content and expectations for each course in which they are enrolled. A syllabus is a written document that informs students about course requirements and expectations.

Instructors of record are required to develop a syllabus for every course, regardless of delivery method (e.g. traditional, online, hybrid, etc.), and distribute the syllabus to students enrolled in the course in an appropriate written format. The syllabus must be distributed in class or posted electronically on Blackboard on or before the first scheduled day of the class. The Higher Learning Commission’s Credit Hour Policies, developed to enforce the U.S. Department of Education’s requirement related to credit hour definition, necessitates that a syllabus be available for review for each course taught.

Syllabi vary in format, but must ordinarily include:

1. Course Information
   a. Course title
   b. Designator and number
   c. Section number
   d. Number of credit hours
   e. Semester/Term
   f. Course location (if applicable)
   g. Related lab, recitation, studio locations
   h. Course website (if applicable)
2. Instructor/TA Contact Information
   a. Name and title
   b. Office location
   c. Methods of communication (2 methods suggested, including office phone, email, fax, etc.)
   d. Office hours
   e. TA information (if applicable), including name, office location, email address, and office hours
3. Course Description
4. Intended Learning Outcomes
5. Student Assessment
   a. Assessment types (e.g. quizzes, exams, journals, observations, performances, etc.)
   b. Weighting of assessments
   c. Grading scale to be used
6. Course Resources
   a. Required reading assignments (if applicable)
   b. Required software, equipment including personal response system (if applicable)
   c. Suggested readings (if applicable)
   d. Course packs (if applicable)
   e. Electronic reserves (if applicable)
   f. Course website on Blackboard (if applicable)
   g. Laboratories, studios, and learning centers available for the course (if applicable)

7. Course Policies, as appropriate (e.g. attendance, make-up work, extra credit, etc.)


9. Academic Integrity Statement

10. Proposed Course Schedule

11. Additional College or Unit Requirements (if applicable)

Exemptions: For nontraditional courses (e.g., theses, dissertations, independent studies, and internships), the syllabus may be replaced by a learning contract and/or proposal providing it includes items 1-5 above.

Use of Syllabi: Information from course syllabi will be used internally and for accreditation related purposes and will not be disseminated publicly.

*Rationale: As described in the opening paragraphs, the need for a syllabus policy owes to the requirements of the U.S. Department of Education and the Higher Learning Commission. The policy was constructed based upon the best practices guidelines that the NIU Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center. An ad-hoc committee comprised of members from the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) and the Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC) met to discuss a first draft of the syllabus policy and make suggestions/corrections. The present document reflects the committee’s changes and is recommended for approval.*

(Revised Version, January 22, 2013)