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## Graduate Council Minutes 2013-11-04

Northern Illinois University

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Minutes Approved at the 612<sup>th</sup> Meeting – December 2, 2013

GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES

611<sup>th</sup> Meeting

November 4, 2013

MEMBERS PRESENT: Arado, Autry, Bond, Chown, Garver, Gowen, Hathaway, Holm, Levin, Lukaszuk, Morris, Osorio, Porter, Qin, Schraufnagel, Sims, Stoddard, Van Laarhoven, Walker, Wilkins, Zhou

MEMBERS ABSENT: Abdel-Motaleb, Balkanoff, L'Allier, Maligireddy, Sido

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

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

Committee Reports

**Curriculum Committee:** Chown presented the October 14, 2013, minutes for approval. He reported on the minor curriculum changes and revisions that were reviewed and approved by the committee. Bond noted two departmental name changes: 1) Department of Literacy Education to Department of Literacy and Elementary Education; and 2) School of Art to School of Art and Design. Gowen moved approval of the minutes; Sims seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. (Curriculum Committee minutes and catalog changes are available at: <http://www.niu.edu/provost/curriculum/committeeminutes.shtml>.)

**University Fellowship Committee:** Bond reported on the thesis and dissertation awards. The most outstanding thesis prize went to Stephen Strader in the Department of Geography. The most outstanding dissertation prize went to Sourabh Dhingra in the Department of Biological Sciences. Recipients and departments have been notified.

Announcements

**Enrollment Report:** Bond distributed several sheets containing enrollment information by college. He indicated that the data provided are unofficial. Unofficial data contains duplicate headcounts and other misleading information, but useful in this form to indicate trends. Bond asked that the data be used only for internal information and internal management. The information in the summaries is for Fall semesters only effective Fall 2008 with the implementation of MyNIU through the current semester. Bond reviewed each sheet individually. (See attached unofficial data.)

Bond stated that applications were higher this year than at any time since Fall 2008. There was a substantive increase in applications to programs in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. He noted the steady decline of student-at-large applications, which are down about 50% since Fall 2008.

Bond reviewed yield on admissions. He stated that over half of the students admitted to NIU enroll, which has been fairly consistent over time. Bond noted that the Colleges of Engineering and Engineering Technology and Liberal Arts and Sciences have lower yield rates than the university as a whole, which reflects the number of applications received.

Bond reported on incomplete applications. He stated that he was perplexed as to why 20% of applicants would not complete the application process. Bond acknowledged that work schedules and life situations change but indicated that he did not have a good sense of why applicants abandon the process. Sims stated that he sees a good number of applications from international students that have no supporting documents and asked if there was a known reason why. Bond responded that there has been indication that there is some fear associated with required exams (e.g., GRE, GMAT, TOEFL, IELTS), in addition to a small number of instances in which some students have difficulty obtaining transcripts and other required documents.

Bond stated that the next sheet showed the rate of denial or rejected applications by college. Overall, one-third of all applications are denied. Bond noted the percentage for the College of Health and Human Sciences and stated that the college has programs that receive hundreds of applications but have very limited space, including physical therapy and speech language pathology. He indicated that psychology in CLAS confronts a similar situation. Bond commented that the College of Business, specifically the MBA program, does an intensive job recruiting, essentially prescreening all applications before encouraging a student to apply, which is why there is a relatively low rejection rate.

Bond reviewed the final sheet containing information about overall enrollments, not new student enrollment. This information is effective Fall 2005 and shows end of term data, except for the current term. The gray bar reflects peak enrollment. Bond noted that SAL applications have been cut in-half since Fall 2005.

There was some discussion about the effects of the economy on enrollment. Sims noted that there seems to be a discrepancy between the enrollment and application trends. Bond acknowledged that applications have increased, but enrollments have not. He indicated that retention was not really an issue at the graduate level with about 85-88% retention, plus an additional 6% stop-out rate in any given semester for those students who take a semester off. Schraufnagel suggested the discrepancy may be due to tougher admissions standards. Bond stated that it could just be that departments are graduating more students during a two-year program period than they are pulling-in to the pipeline. He noted that the pipeline has been fairly steady for doctoral students, with enrollments hovering around 1,000 per Fall. Morris suggested that it was a capacity issue because some departments just do not have the faculty to deal with increased applications even if the applicants are qualified. Bond agreed that capacity is an issue and the ability to accommodate is uneven across colleges and throughout programs.

Chown inquired about the number of graduate students who also completed their undergraduate degree at NIU. Bond indicated that a little less than half of our graduate students are internal. He stated that was typical nation-wide, particularly at the master's level.

Bond reiterated that the data he provided are unofficial and offered only to show trends. He indicated that the data are not precise and contains some duplicates of students who are double majors or who have messed-up program plans and are listed as both a SAL and graduate student. Bond indicated the duplications have traditionally accounted for approximately 50 students. He informed members that he could easily provide enrollment figures for departments or specific programs, if anyone is interested in viewing the raw data for an individual department or program.

***Noel-Levitz Consulting:*** Hathaway asked if there would be any feedback from the meetings with Noel-Levitz. Bond elaborated for those members of the Graduate Council who were not involved in those meetings. Bond indicated that Craig Engel, Vice President of Noel-Levitz, has provided a draft version of an eight-page preliminary report of the meetings that took place in early September with faculty from each college. Bond stated that Engel has requested data from him that will take a few weeks to compile. At this point, Engel is reviewing the way awards are made and the timing of awards, which includes tuition waivers, assistantships, financial aid, and various other awards. Bond stated that he may have to call upon departments for specific data. He indicated that Engel was very pleased with the turnout at those meetings and with the solid information he received from participants, so much so that he chose not to assign the rest of the work with NIU to one of his subordinates. Instead, Engel will treat the NIU project as his own.

Meeting adjourned at 10:33 a.m.