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Graduate Council Minutes 2014-03-03

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Minutes Approved at the 615th Meeting – April 7, 2014

GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES
614th Meeting
March 3, 2014

MEMBERS PRESENT: Abdel-Motaleb, Arado, Autry, Bond, Chown, Garver, Gowen, Hathaway, Holm, L’Allier, Levin, Lukaszuk, Morris, Qin, Schraufnagel, Sims, Stoddard, Walker, Wilkins, Zhou

MEMBERS ABSENT: Balkanoff, Maligireddy, Osorio, Porter, Sido, Van Laarhoven

OTHERS PRESENT: Hughes (Secretary), Ridinger (University Libraries)

Bond called the meeting to order at 10:55 a.m., immediately following the Graduate Council meeting with HLC peer evaluators.

Approval of Minutes

Levin moved approval of the February 3, 2014, minutes; Morris seconded the motion. Holm noted one correction to the statement regarding her tuition bill. With this correction, the Council unanimously approved the minutes.

Committee Reports

Curriculum Committee: Chown presented the February 10, 2014, minutes for approval. The committee reviewed and approved minor curriculum changes. Chown noted two pending items related to verification of non-duplication between the Departments of Special and Early Education and Communication and the Departments of Economics and Finance. The minutes were unanimously approved.

New Business

Requirements for English Language Competency: Prior to the meeting, Bond distributed information to members about the English 451 and 452 or 453 requirement for certain non-immigrant students. Currently, there is a backlog of international students who have been unable to enroll in 453, specifically, due to the limited number of sections offered. Bond stated that he was informed over the weekend that the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences was able to obtain funding for 5 additional sections next year, which will resolve the backlog issue for current students, but not for incoming students. Graduate Council discussed the requirement, in general.

Bond noted that the purpose of the requirement is to assist students with improving their English writing skills for NIU course work and beyond graduation. However, there is no supporting evidence that this is the case. In addition, many students do not attempt to enroll in the course(s) until late in their programs. Some members felt strongly that the
requirement was important, needed to be assessed, and that students should be required to take it their first semester. Other members questioned how an immediate assessment could be made when results of such course work are likely to appear over the course of time. Some members questioned whether the requirement should exist at all when many other institutions do not require it, especially since the additional course work results in extra costs for international students. In general, some members seemed to feel strongly about the importance of the requirement, while others did not seem to feel strongly either way.

Wilkins suggested that an ad-hoc committee be established to further assess the English requirement for international students. Stoddard expressed interest in serving on such a committee. Bond said he would be willing to initiate an ad-hoc committee and suggested an invitation to Doris Macdonald. He said he would contact individuals directly.

Announcements

*GSRA Annual Conference:* Bond reminded members that the GSRA 6th Annual Research Conference is on Saturday, April 19, and asked members to encourage student participation.

*Graduate Colloquium Proposals:* Bond reminded members that Graduate Colloquium proposals are due in the Graduate School on March 7.

Finally, Bond thanked members for their participation in the meeting with the HLC peer evaluators.

Meeting adjourned at 11:39 a.m.