GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES
616th Meeting
May 5, 2014

MEMBERS PRESENT:  Abdel-Motaleb, Arado, Autry, Bond, Chown, Garver, Gowen, Hathaway, Holm, L’Allier, Lukaszuk, Morris, Osorio, Porter, Qin, Sims, Stoddard, Van Laarhoven, Zhou

MEMBERS ABSENT:  Balkanoff, Levin, Maligireddy, Schraufnagel, Sido, Walker, Wilkins

OTHERS PRESENT:  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 April 7, 2014, minutes; Stoddard seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Committee Reports

Colloquium Committee:  Porter provided an official report of the April 4, 2014, Colloquium Committee meeting. Because proposals are now reviewed in Blackboard, the committee felt that each proposal needed to describe how graduate students were involved in the process of selecting a speaker instead of referring to a document that was “on file” in the Graduate School. Therefore, the following statement in the instructions on the Colloquium website was stricken: “We strongly encourage departments to submit in advance a description of their intended process, which can be pre-approved and retained on file in our office. Once approved, future proposals can shorten this section by referencing that is following the procedure ‘on file.’” As a result, the colloquium proposal form has been revised to indicate what details should be provided to describe the process. The next Colloquium Committee meeting will be on November 20, 2014.

Curriculum Committee:  Chown presented the April 14, 2014, minutes for approval. He reported that the committee approved a proposed change from an Ed.D. in Counseling to a Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision in the Department of Counseling, Adult and Higher Education. He also noted the approval of a new course in History and indicated there were a few other minor curriculum changes.

There was discussion regarding justification of the change to a Ph.D. in counseling. Stoddard inquired about program standards and whether requirements had been increased to meet expectations of a Ph.D. program and dissertation. Bond assured members that the department had been working for the past couple of years to alter the curriculum and
dissertation requirements. Sims moved approval of the minutes; Garver seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**Standards Committee:** Bond reviewed proposed changes to the *Graduate Catalog* regarding the composition of committees. The changes loosen restrictions on committee membership for graduate faculty outside of a student’s program. Hathaway moved approval of the changes; Morris seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. (See attached document.)

Bond reviewed a proposal to increase the graduate application fee for non-immigrant students from $40 to $60. He stated that the $20 increase would allow the Graduate School to send international students their I-20s via DHL 2-day service. I-20s are currently sent via air mail, which can take upwards of 2-6 weeks for delivery, depending upon the country. While international students presently receive an electronic copy of their I-20, which allows them to schedule their visa interview, they cannot keep the appointment if they do not have the original documentation. The fee increase would cover the average cost of 2-day shipping abroad. There would be additional costs incurred by the Graduate School to prepare the mailings, which would include a welcome packet containing important information about immunizations, registration, travel to DeKalb, housing, international student orientation, and employment. Bond suggested that improved delivery times will increase the yield on international admits.

There was discussion about application fees at other institutions. Bond stated that comparable institutions charge application fees averaging from $50-$70, in addition to charging fees for student-at-large applications. Currently, NIU charges $40 for all graduate student applications and there is no fee for SAL applications.

Although Graduate Council expressed some concern about the application fee increase for international students, members determined that the $20 increase would be minimal to international students who are required to provide a financial statement with evidence of at least $27,000 accessible to them to cover expenses for the current academic year. It was suggested that applications should be tracked to ensure that NIU programs are not losing students from specific countries due to the application fee increase. Chown moved approval of the application fee increase for non-immigrant students to $60 in order to finance the cost of the additional service. Sims seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**Announcements**

**Graduate Council Membership:** Bond recognized the following faculty members and graduate students who have completed their terms on the Graduate Council: Ibrahim Abdel-Motaleb (ELE); Nicole Autry (COMM); Valerie Garver (HIST); Laura Holm (ACCY); Susan L’Allier (LTCY); Sherrill Morris (AHCD); He Qin (LTCY); Lee Sido (ART); Thomas Sims (BIOS); David Walker (ETRA); and Lei Zhou (FINA). Bond thanked all of the members for their dedicated service on the Graduate Council and the various standing committees.
Bond noted the faculty members and graduate students who will be new to the Graduate Council in the fall semester: Sonya Armstrong (LTCY); Sinclair Bell (ART); Wendy Bostwick (NUHS); Elizabeth Gaillard (CHEM); Beatrix Hoffman (HIST); Drew Johnson (PHIL); Pradip Majumdar (MEE); Kate Mantzke (ACCY); Dinesh Pamerla (ELE); and Thomas Smith (ETRA).

Thomas Sims indicated that he would be serving as Leila Porter’s replacement in the Fall 2014 semester while she is on sabbatical. (After the meeting, we received official notification from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences that David Goldblum (GEOG) will complete the final year of Jeff Chown’s term. On behalf of Graduate Council, congratulations on your retirement, Jeff! You will be missed!)

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.
Composition of Examination and Thesis Committees

All members of the comprehensive examination and thesis committee must be members of the graduate faculty at Northern Illinois University. The majority of the voting members of the comprehensive examination and thesis committee must be tenured or tenure-track faculty members at Northern Illinois University; at least one-half of the voting members and the committee chair must be full or senior members of the graduate faculty; and at least one-half of all voting members, including the committee chair, must be full or senior members of the graduate faculty in the student’s program or a closely related one as determined by the department chair. A provisional member of the graduate faculty or a graduate faculty scholar in the student’s program may, with a full or senior member of the graduate faculty, co-chair a comprehensive examination or thesis committee.

Composition of Committees (Doctoral level committees)

All members of the committee must be appointed to the graduate faculty of Northern Illinois University. The majority of the voting members of the committee must be tenured or tenure-track faculty members at Northern Illinois University; at least one-half of the voting members must be senior members of the graduate faculty; and at least one-half of all voting members, including the committee chair, must be full or senior members of the graduate faculty in the student’s program or a closely related one as determined by the department chair. A graduate faculty scholar or a full member of the graduate faculty may, with a senior member of the graduate faculty, co-chair a comprehensive examination or thesis committee.

Justification: The impending wave of faculty retirements threatens to leave some graduate students, particularly doctoral students, scrambling to assemble committees. Committee members often play roles in that capacity. By lifting the restrictions on the use of graduate faculty from outside a student’s program as committee members and chairs, we open the door to creative solutions. Already, in the College of Education, where it has seemed logical, students have appointed chairs and members from outside their programs. The current catalog language has created the need to have the faculty from outside the program, often subject matter experts, undergo review and appointment to a second (or even third) program graduate faculty. The maneuvering to escape the catalog language is unnecessary and time consuming. Additionally, for students doing interdisciplinary work, this change eases the way for construction of interdisciplinary committees. Hopefully too, by deemphasizes the connection between program and committee, we’ll be able to more clearly communicate that it is unnecessary to seek approval for a graduate faculty member to teach outside of his/her discipline.