

UNL Graduate Council Minutes
December 3, 2020
Via Zoom
2:30 p.m.

Attending: Geoff Friesen, Adam Houston, Laurie Thomas Lee, Yusong Li, Laura Muñoz, Eric Rodene, Luz Sotelo, Kara Viesca; Dean Tim Carr (presiding).
Absent: Jennifer Clarke, Rhonda Fuelberth.

Presentation by Steve Booton, University Registrar, and Andrew Frye, MyRED programmer

Steve and Andrew demonstrated a public-facing course search tool. The Council asked if there was a way to show how many times and frequency of courses taught as well as who is teaching the course. Steve will look into this. There was a desire not to show the location of the course instructor so there is some protections. The intent was to give the public the simplest information when they came to the page. The students will still be able to see more complete information in MyRED. The Council expressed their appreciation for the new search tool. Dean Carr and Steve will visit later about some of the questions raised.

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made to approve the minutes from the November 5, 2020, Graduate Council meeting. Motion passed.

Motion was made to approve the minutes for the November 19, 2020, "special" Graduate Council meeting that focused exclusively on new course proposals. Motion passed.

Old Business

a. Update graduate catalog certificate policy (revised)

Discussion continued from the previous meeting as to whether the minimum grade for certificate courses should be C versus a minimum grade of B (following the Scholastic Grade Requirements). However, the SGR are somewhat unclear. The first sentence of the SGR mentions "credit in graduate-level courses," but later refers to courses "within the student's major department or area," implying that the SGR apply to courses taken as part of degree requirements, but perhaps not certificates because certificates do not have majors.

It was suggested that the SGR could be modified to include certificate courses. For example, the SGR could state that 800 level with 400 counterpart would require a grade of B, whereas 900 and 800 level without 400 counterpart would require a grade of C. Alternatively, the SGR could state that all certificate courses would require a C, but that a higher grade may be required if the course is applied to a degree program. Dean Carr will revise the proposal for discussion at the next meeting.

b. Recommendation to change master's degree time limit (revised)

At the previous meeting, Council members asked if time to completion data could be obtained for each master's degree program. Dean Carr provided the data, which showed only two programs with average completion time exceeding four years: MS-Entomology (94 students; average 4.4 years) and MEd-TLTE (only two students; average 4.3 years). Some of the very short

times to completion were due to programs (like Engineering) that accept students into doctoral programs and then admit them to a “master’s along the way” after having completed many or all of the courses for the master’s degree, so they get admitted in one semester then graduate the next semester.

How would a shorter time limit affect joint JD/MA programs? Dean Carr explained that joint programs have the ability to share courses, but that requirements for earning each degree would not change. There is no evidence suggesting that JD/MA students would need more than five years to complete both degrees. Students will also have the ability to request an extension.

Dean Carr suggested changing the proposed time limit to six years, based on the Council input that six years may be a more realistic period. Should it be five years, given that very few programs push the five year window? Should we treat such programs individually and provide accommodations when needed if the window is five years? The five year window may have more benefits (ranking, students on track and moving). Several members expressed a preference for six years, which would allow students to take one course per semester (two courses per year) and still graduate in a 36 credit hour master’s program.

Additional comments: The data does not show how many students would drop out because of a shortened time limit. What does the extension entail: how long, how easy, etc.? Ranking should not dictate the policy, although rankings cannot be ignored. Important to include the sentence that students may use coursework up to 10 years old for the degree requirements, as is the current rule.

Dean Carr reminded the Council that the proposal will be sent to all UNL graduate faculty in spring 2021 for input. The proposal to be voted on has a six year time limit and the statement that coursework of up to 10 years would be acceptable. Motion was made to approve the document. Motion passed 7-1.

Dual level 300/800 courses (discussion)

This issue has come up more recently. Dean Carr reviewed Graduate Council minutes back to 1978 where the Council reviewed 300/800 courses for the History department. In some cases the courses were approved, and in other cases they were not approved. More proposals are planned because History and perhaps other departments would like to offer them. The reasons for wanting to offer 300/800 are the same reasons given back in 1978. The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee is not approving 300/800 courses. Questions were raised: Is there a graduate-level policy on this? Is there a process in place that requires new 300/800 course proposals to address the unique nature of the request? Dean Carr reminded the Council that a subcommittee is preparing new guidelines on graduate-level courses that will directly address dual level courses. That should help with this conversation.

Proposed MAS specialization in Environmental Education

The Master of Applied Science is CASNR college level degree. Most courses are online. Students could potentially earn the degree entirely online. The proposed specialization has a group of three required courses, with additional selected courses and a project. Supporting letters for courses outside of CASNR are provided. Motion was made to approve. Motion passed.

Proposed modification to MS option III in Environmental Engineering

Proposal to reduce the credit hours from 36 to 30. Many other Big 10 universities have a similar offering at 30 credit hours. Nothing else about the program will change. Motion was made to approve. Motion passed.

Proposed accelerated master's program in Political Science

Both undergraduate and graduate programs are within the same department and faculty. Dean Carr reminded the Council that nothing about the master's degree changes in accelerated programs. The undergraduate faculty determine which undergraduate courses are replaced with graduate courses (up to 12 credit hours). Because the students have not completed their bachelor's degree, they are not yet graduate students. It is up to the undergraduate advisors to coordinate with the graduate faculty to manage students who have been accepted into accelerated master's programs. Even if a student chooses not to pursue the master's degree, the graduate courses will still count toward their bachelor's degree. Motion was made to approve. Motion passed.

Proposed accelerated master's program in Community and Regional Planning

This accelerated program involves two colleges, CASNR and Arch. The undergraduate degree in Environmental Studies (CASNR) is agreeing to accept graduate courses in the Community and Regional Planning master's program (Arch). Both college deans and faculty approved this proposal. The shared courses are clearly identified. This seems like a logical pathway for students in Environmental Studies, given that they routinely apply to the MCRP degree program. Motion was made to approve. Motion passed.

New course proposals (see attachment)

Time was limited and only a few courses were reviewed.

Graduate Student Assembly Report

GSA hosted a Town Hall meeting two weeks ago. Good response. No December meeting is scheduled; January will be the next meeting.

Announcements

Spring semester meetings will be the 1st Thursday of the month. Dean Carr will send out calendar invitations. We are going to add one meeting in summer in June using the same schedule. Those on 9-month appointments are not required to attend, but Dean Carr would like to have everyone attend if possible.

Meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eva Bachman, Ph.D.

New Course Proposals
December 2020

Course	Primary Reviewers	Comments/Actions
AGRO 825	Yusong Li; Adam Houston	Very clear distinction between levels. Questions: 1) Class will have lab experiments – how do online students do lab work? 2) What is the plan after the funding goes away? Motion to delegate final approval to Dean Carr. Motion passed.
FDST 897	Luz Sotelo; Laurie Thomas Lee	The course number is used in CASNR level to designate independent study courses. Questions: What are the expectations for the range of credits? Course activity – generic explanation given but not defined how it would look differently for the range. There needs to be better description of grading and expectations specifically addressing the range of credits. What is the difference between the thesis and this project based course? Written as two separate courses, but what does that mean? Motion to table, pending revisions. Motion passed.
NRES 902	Rhonda Fuelberth; Adam Houston	Only issue noted was participation is listed as 50% of grade, but no guidance on grading. The syllabus seem “pretty thin” for 900 level course. More detail and definition on expectations (as friendly suggestion). Motion to delegate final approval to Dean Carr based on greater definition of expectations. Motion passed.
SPAN 876	Kara Mitchell Viesca; Rhonda Fuelberth	Syllabus describes grad/undergrad differentiation pretty well. Has good descriptions of requirements for graduate students. Motion to approve. Motion passed.

Courses not reviewed due to lack of time:

Course	Primary Reviewers	
ANTH 856	Eric Rodene	Laura Muñoz
CHME 809	Kara Mitchell Viesca	Luz Sotelo
CYAF 881	Rhonda Fuelberth	Geoff Friesen
GERM 950	Geoff Friesen	Eric Rodene
MUSC 890	Laurie Thomas Lee	Kara Mitchell Viesca

NUTR 976	Adam Houston	Jennifer Clarke
PSYC 912A	Jennifer Clarke	Luz Sotelo
PSYC 912B	Laura Muñoz	Rhonda Fuelberth
PSYC 913	Yusong Li	Eric Rodene
PSYC 914	Adam Houston	Laurie Thomas Lee
SOCI 812	Jennifer Clarke	Kara Mitchell Viesca
SPAN 955	Laurie Thomas Lee	Geoff Friesen
SPED 848	Eric Rodene	Laura Muñoz
SPED 850	Laura Muñoz	Yusong Li
TEAC 848G	Geoff Friesen	Luz Sotelo