

UNL Graduate Council Minutes
February 2, 2023
Zoom
2:30 pm

Attending: Geoff Friesen, Adam Houston, Venn Jemkur, Xu Li, Maria Marron, Laura Munoz, Elizabeth Niehaus, and Brenda Wristen. Dean Hope Presiding. Dan Linzell, Associate Dean for Graduate Education for College of Engineering as guest.

1. Approval of Minutes from October 6, 2022 and December 1, 2022

Motion to pass minutes from October and December Graduate Council Meetings, Motion was seconded and Motion passed unanimously with seven members voting.

2. Computer Engineering Ph.D.-New Ph.D.

Dan Linzell, Associate Dean of the College of Engineering spoke regarding the proposal merging two specializations in computer engineering (in the School of Computing and Department of Electrical and Computing Engineering) in their overall Ph.D. in Engineering program into a single standalone Ph.D. in Computer Engineering. This will allow the department will better align with peer institutions, will improve marketability, and simplifies the structure. Given these are existing programs, there will be very few changes in administration of the programs which will continue to be jointly administered by the School of Computing and Electrical and Computer Engineering. Minor concerns were raised about the proposal including clarification of when the program would begin, that all funding for students comes from external sources, and details of shared administration of the program.

Dean Hope excused Dan Linzell. Motion to approve with minor changes, motion was seconded and approved with seven council members voting unanimously in favor.

3. Dual Degree (MA-Ph.D.) Communication Studies – new proposal

This is a proposal to enroll students simultaneously in the MA and Ph.D. to aid recruitment and meeting diversity and inclusion goals. Following brief discussion of credit hours and other minor details, the motion was made to approve, seconded, and seven council members voted unanimously to approve.

4. Specialization in Irrigation and Agricultural Water Management – new proposal

This is a proposal for a new specialization irrigation and agricultural water management to be associated with the MS in Agricultural and Biological Systems Engineering, and Mechanized Systems Management and the Ph.D. in Biological Engineering. There was a brief discussion of the applied nature of the specialization, but Dean Hope noted this was in the context of graduate program, not a professional program. It was also noted that this may be appropriate for a Graduate Certificate if the program wishes to pursue that option. Motion was made to approve the specialization, seconded and seven members unanimously approved.

5. MS in Accounting – Follow Up Discussion of New Proposal

Council member noted that the requested changes in whether this degree is intended to lead to the CPA exam and the number of planned students have been made. There was a motion to approve, seconded, and seven members unanimously approved.

6. Removal of ELT for English Language Proficiency (follow-up on previous discussion)

Alisha Hanshaw, Assistant Dean of Enrollment brought forth an OGS proposal for removal of the UNL English Language Test which is administered by PIESL (Programs in English as a Second Language) upon arrival on campus to students below certain cut-offs on Duolingo or TOEFL. This is following up on previous discussion with the Graduate Council in 2021-2022. Assistant Dean Hanshaw reported that analysis of student data did not support the use of the ELT and PIESL supported dropping the test in order to free up resources that would be more beneficial to students. Without the ELT, fewer students would be required to take ENG 887. Departments can still require ENG 887 course if they wish.

Motion was made to remove the requirement for ELT for graduate students, seconded, eight members voting unanimously to remove the requirement.

7. Discussion of Course Proposals

Two council members requested a discussion a course proposal from Marriage and Family Therapy, a zero credit course MFT 97. The MFT graduate faculty propose the course as a way to structure the knowledge acquisition and onboarding for professional training experiences. Graduate Council members raised several concerns including costs students may incur for the course being added to their curriculum, appropriateness of some of the activities such as serving at the clinic reception desk, whether a zero credit course is the best way to meet the program needs. Motion was made and seconded to table the discussion until the next meeting. The vote was unanimous to table. Dean Hope will invite a representative from the MFT program to the next meeting to respond to questions.

8. Graduate Student Assembly Report

Venn Jemkur, vice-president of the GSA voiced appreciation for all the work that went into getting the minimum stipends to be eligible for a tuition waiver to 14,000.00 for FTE of .49.

9. Announcements

Dean Hope provided updates on the application numbers for Fall admission and the establishment of a process to efficiently renew Graduate Faculty Associates

Meeting adjourned: 4:15

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Cordonier