GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES
628th Meeting
May 2, 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT: Arado, Bond, Bostwick, Clark Bremer, Gowen, Howell, James, Lukaszuk, McGuire, Osorio, Smith, Stoddard, Yang

MEMBERS ABSENT: Armstrong, Ayres, Bell, Gaillard, Gallaher, Hathaway, Hoffman, Majumdar, Mantzke, Menezes, Polala, Porter, Van Wienen, Wilkins

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

Bond called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Gowen moved approval of the April 4, 2016, minutes; Howell seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Committee Reports

Graduate Colloquium Committee: Bond reported on the April 14, 2016, meeting. The committee met to review forty-one proposals for Fall 2016, all of which were approved for funding. Bond stated that Debbie Williams continues to do a great job of working with the students to make sure proposals are in good form for the committee prior to the meeting.

Graduate Council Curriculum Committee: Howell reviewed the minutes of the April 11, 2016, meeting for approval. He informed members that the committee approved some new courses, as well as revisions made by the College of Business to the MBA learning goals and objectives. Howell stated that the only substantial issue was related to non-duplication of courses for a new course proposed by Literacy and Elementary Education: LTIC 715, Usage-based Linguistics in the Classroom. The department sent the non-duplication paperwork to English for review, but did not hear back with duplication issues for well over two months. Howell indicated that Bond and Smith have been communicating with faculty in English and Literacy and Elementary Education regarding the issues. As a result, the departments requested that the Curriculum Committee table the new course proposal. Howell stated that he applauds the departments for working together to resolve the issue, but stressed the importance of timeliness in responding to non-duplication requests. There was a motion to accept the minutes without the LTIC 715 tabled item, which carried unanimously. (Curriculum Committee minutes and catalog changes are available at: http://www.niu.edu/u_council/committees/minutes/gccc/index.shtml.)
New Business

**English Requirement for International Students:** Bond informed members that there is a special curriculum issue forthcoming that will require an electronic vote in order to be effective Fall 2016. The request is to change ENGL 451, 452, and 453 from 3 credit hours to 0 credit hours with a minimum grade of C. Bond explained that the ENGL sequence is designed for international students with perceived writing deficiencies. International applicants who do not achieve particular scores on the TOEFL or IELTS are placed into ENGL 451/452 or ENGL 453, but have the opportunity to test out within two semesters of their arrival. They can either take the Graduate Exemption Test, which is an English essay test offered on-campus through the Department of English, or they can retake the IELTS or TOEFL.

Bond explained that these are undergraduate courses designed to improve students’ writing skills and thus contribute to the professional development of international graduate students. The requirement is a long-standing Graduate Council one. Through the years, the Council has discussed the requirement: lowering thresholds, raising thresholds, eliminating the requirement, etc. The sense of the Council has been that the thresholds for placement are appropriate as is the requirement. For over a year now, the Graduate School has been paying for the bulk of instruction in the classes since it is a Council requirement.

Bond stated that, by making the classes 0 credit hours, the Graduate School will pay for all instructional costs, eliminating the need to charge students for the course or courses. By removing the cost barrier to students, we will improve recruitment, and we will change incoming students’ attitudes about the courses. Assessment of the courses reveals that students loathe the idea of the requirement, but benefit greatly from it. In fact, much of the assessment reflects real joy at having been required to ponder writing. Bond noted that because these are “deficiency” courses, international students will be able to register for them for 0 hours and take two additional 3 hour courses to maintain their visa status.

Bond informed members that the CLAS Curriculum Committee would be meeting on May 4 to approve the changes. It will then be forwarded to the Graduate Council for electronic approval and inclusion in the 2016-17 *Graduate Catalog*.

**(Update:** Bond distributed the attached CLAS Curriculum Committee minutes to the Graduate Council on May 12. He requested a “Yea” or “Nay” vote from each member by May 20. The Graduate Council unanimously approved the change to 0 credit hours for ENGL 451, 452, and 453 with a minimum grade of C.)*

**Announcements**

**Graduate Council Membership:** Bond expressed his appreciation to members for their service and highlighted the graduate students for their outstanding service on the Graduate Council and various subcommittees. He informed members that Sonya Armstrong (LEED) is leaving the university at the end of the semester. Carrie Kortegast (CAHE) will serve the remaining year of Armstrong’s term. Bond recognized the following faculty members and graduate students who have completed their terms on the
Graduate Council: Nicole Ayres (ACCY); Janet Hathaway (MUSC); Judith Lukaszuk (FCNS); James “Twigz” McGuire (PHIL); Samantha Menezes (AHCD); Nishitha Polala (ELE); Leila Porter (ANTH); Paul Stoddard (GEOL); Yurong “Ria” Yang (MUSC).
Bond also recognized the following members who were reappointed to another term on the Graduate Council: Jeanine Clark Bremer (LEED); Therese Clarke Arado (LAW); Charles Gowen (MGMT); Nestor Osorio (ULIB).

Bostwick asked how program prioritization will affect the Graduate Council workload next academic year. Bond indicated that it was a good question and that he was unsure, although he suspected the bulk of the any work would be for the Graduate Council Curriculum Committee.

Meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.
Present: Dave Ballantine (Chair), Kate Cady (COMS), Sherine Elsawa (BIOS), Steve Estes (Ex-Officio), Jeremy Groves (ECON), Melissa Lenczewski (ENVS), Doris Macdonald (ENGL)

Suzanne Hogan (CLAS)

Absent: Giovanni Bennardo (ANTH)

A. **Action on Minutes**

Minutes from the #12 meeting on April 6, 2016, have been submitted electronically to the catalog editor.

B. **Miscellaneous**

Discussed and approved candidates for the Baccalaureate Council and newly formed CIUAE.

C. **Curriculum – Old Business**

None

D. **Curriculum – New Business**

**Department of English**

The committee approved course revisions to ENGL 451, ENGL 452, and ENGL 453. Also approved were revisions to the Written English Proficiency section of the Graduate Catalog.
Department of English

Course Revisions

Writing Courses

451. ESL RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION I (3 0). Only for graduate students ... .... Weekly writing assignments. Grade of C or better required to satisfy written English proficiency requirement. Not available for graduate credit. PRQ: Placement by testing and consent of department.

452. ESL RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION II (3 0). Only for graduate students ... .... Special support for grammar and mechanics. Grade of C or better required to satisfy written English proficiency requirement. Not available for graduate credit. PRQ: ENGL 451.

453. ESL RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION (3 0). Only for graduate ... .... Documented writing required in all sections. Grade of C or better required to satisfy written English proficiency requirement. Not available for graduate credit. PRQ: Placement by testing and consent of department.

Rationale: (1) We are attempting to offer the course as a zero-credit hour course, one that will impose no tuition cost on the students required to take it. The Graduate School has agreed to cover the cost of instruction for sections of ENGL 451, ENGL 452, and ENGL 453 through fees already established. (2) Accompanying this change to zero-credits is a new minimum grade requirement. This brings the grade requirement in line with other courses administered by the First-Year Composition Program. This requirement had once been in place for these courses, but has not been for over a decade. Because the grade does not figure into the graduate student GPA, it is preferred that it be set at C rather than at a typical graduate student floor of B minus.

Other Catalog Change

General Regulations

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Written English Proficiency

The university expects a reasonable ... .... They will then be required to take and pass either the two-course sequence of ENGL 451 and ENGL 452, or the single course ENGL 453, depending on the score achieved.

A student who believes that the results of one ... .... A student's major department may require completion of additional course work in English it deems pertinent to graduate study in the student's chosen field.

ENGL 451. ESL RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION I (3 0). Only for graduate ... .... Weekly writing assignments. Grade of C or better required to satisfy written English proficiency
requirement. Not available for graduate credit. PRQ: Placement by testing and consent of department.

ENGL 452. ESL RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION II (3 0). Only for graduate ... .... Special support for grammar and mechanics. Grade of C or better required to satisfy written English proficiency requirement. Not available for graduate credit. PRQ: ENGL 451 and consent of department.

ENGL 453. ESL RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION (3 0). Only for ... .... Documented writing required in all sections. Grade of C or better required to satisfy written English proficiency requirement. Not available for graduate credit. PRQ: Placement into ENGL 453 by testing and consent of department.

Rationale: (1) We are attempting to offer the course as a zero-credit hour course, one that will impose no tuition cost on the students required to take it. The Graduate School has agreed to cover the cost of instruction for sections of ENGL 451, ENGL 452, and ENGL 453 through fees already established. (2) Accompanying this change to zero-credits is a new minimum grade requirement. This brings the grade requirement in line with other courses administered by the First-Year Composition Program. This requirement had once been in place for these courses, but has not been for over a decade. Because the grade does not figure into the graduate student GPA, it is preferred that it be set at C rather than at a typical graduate student floor of B minus.