Minutes Approved at the 599th Meeting – February 6, 2012

GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES
598th Meeting
December 5, 2011


MEMBERS ABSENT: Bennardo, Gowen, Han, Konen, Patitu, Radosta, Sido, Umoren, Zaleski,

OTHERS PRESENT: Hughes (Secretary), Smith (Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator), Van Ael (Coordinator of the Certificate of Graduate Study in Museum Studies)

Bond called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Approval of Minutes
Zittel moved approval of the November 7, 2011, minutes; Walker seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Committee Reports

Colloquium Committee: Bond reported that the committee met last month and that Janet Hathaway was elected as the chair. There were approximately fifty proposals, all of which were funded. Hathaway stated that the committee suggested that departments be notified about there being extra money. Bond commented that there was money carried over from last fiscal year. He informed members that he would entertain new spring proposals and asked that they share the information with departments.

Curriculum Committee: In Bennardo’s absence, Garver presented the November 14 and November 21, 2011, Curriculum Committee minutes for approval. She reported that the committee approved a new master’s program in financial risk management.

In addition, there are three new certificate programs: 1) Certificate of Graduate Study in Entrepreneurship in the College of Business; 2) Certificate of Graduate Study in Law and Women’s Studies, which is a joint program in the College of Law and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; and 3) Certificate of Graduate Study in Museum Studies. Garver informed members that the only other substantial change was in the College of Visual and Performing Arts, which was in response to their certification review from a national accrediting agency.

Bond informed members that Peter Van Ael was in attendance in case there were any questions with regard to changes approved in the Certificate of Graduate Study in Museum Studies.
Morris moved approval; Zittel seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. (Curriculum Committee minutes and catalog changes are available at: http://www.niu.edu/provost/curriculum/committeeminutes.shtml.)

Standards Committee: The Standards Committee agreed to changes in the Ph.D. research-tool requirements and now recommends them to the Graduate Council for approval. In addition, the committee has made suggestions for changes in graduate faculty status and would like to discuss them with members of Graduate Council. In Konen’s absence, Morris reviewed the documents containing the proposed changes.

Morris stated that the first document, “Ph.D. Research-Tool Requirements,” contains various rewording changes and clarification of the foreign language requirement and the research-tool requirement, which can be different based on specific disciplines. In addition, the committee proposes changing the required hours for doctoral degrees from 90 hours to 72 hours of graduate work beyond the baccalaureate degree. Morris stated that Bond compiled data from other institutions. The current 90 hour requirement is high in comparison and normally consists of a lot of dissertation hours. The committee made changes to clarify that Ph.D. students need 30 content hours with a minimum of 12 dissertation hours.

Abdel-Motaleb raised concerns about lowering the university-wide minimum requirement. Willis stated that she was not concerned about the hour requirement because it takes years to complete the Ph.D. in physics. However, she questioned the 30-hour requirement of formal coursework after the master’s degree. She suggested that formal coursework requirements should be left up to individual programs instead of being a university requirement. Bond asked if she was suggesting that the 30 hour formal coursework requirement simply be stricken so that it states that 42 post master’s hours are required with a minimum of 12 dissertation hours. She confirmed, but added that it did not matter to her what the number of dissertation hours was. Macdonald suggested adding a similar statement as the one used for research-tools on page two, paragraph three. She suggested adding “A description of program-level requirements for satisfying credit requirements can be found in the relevant departmental section of this catalog or in the graduate student handbook for each program.”

Garver inquired about the foreign language requirement being changed from two levels of proficiency to one. She stated that most institutions that she is familiar with have two levels. Bond stated that they looked at other institutions and, while it has changed at the Graduate School-level, many humanities departments still require at least two languages. The proposed change allows departments to determine competency instead of specifying in the catalog that there is average proficiency and high proficiency. Garver stated that it works to the benefit of the Department of History to have two levels. Bond stated that was fine and that this change effectively gives departments the responsibility of defining competency, which can vary by student based on the field of study.

Morris moved approval of the revisions in the “Ph.D. Research-Tool Requirements” document with the following amendments: 1) remove “and a minimum of 30 hours
Bond stated that the second document for discussion pertains to graduate faculty status. The committee was concerned about having gaps that Graduate Council members would be aware of in the way departments deal with graduate faculty or those who teach or serve on committees. The proposed changes to the APPM will not be voted on today and are for discussion only. The committee reviewed classifications used by other institutions for comparison. The changes include an effort to create a fourth category of graduate faculty membership called “Graduate Faculty Scholars,” which is specifically designed for retirees, those who resign from the institution, visiting and adjunct faculty, as well as instructors. The appointment would be for four years. The proposal suggests that full and senior members who retire can retain that status for one year then, if necessary, the department can apply for “Graduate Faculty Scholar” status for them. Currently, there is no direction of graduate faculty status for retirees.

Macdonald asked if a person would have to obtain status in one of these categories in order to serve on a dissertation committee. Bond confirmed that that is what the committee is suggesting and added that it also applies to master’s committees, which currently requires no approval at all. Macdonald commented that students often find external experts to serve on their committees and it would be nice to have some sort of official affiliation.

Bond asked members to mull over the proposed changes during the break and provide him with feedback that he will share with the committee. If the Graduate Faculty Membership Committee and the Graduate Council approve the changes, Bond stated that it would then need a graduate faculty referendum for final approval.

New Business

Graduate Student Travel: Sagarin expressed concern about graduate student travel grants being allocated in a way that disqualifies master’s-level students in Ph.D. programs from receiving funds. Bond stated that the criteria are new this year, and there is certainly room for tweaking. The Graduate School has $10,000 for graduate student travel grants, and typically receives no fewer than 120 requests each year and has had as many as 180 requests within the past five years. If 120 students were funded, they would receive approximately $52 each, which is not enough to matter. The criteria were established in hopes of getting the most “bang for the buck” instead of making the money available on a first-come, first-served basis, which is how it has traditionally been done. The current criteria provides three time periods for which applications will be accepted. Departments are asked to rank multiple applications because it is difficult to distinguish amongst the students. Bond added that the Graduate School also raised the matching funds from $200 to $500 this year. Another new requirement is that students must submit
a one-page report when submitting their travel reimbursement request. Bond stated that there have been some really impressive reports and outcomes from these conferences and presentations.

Sagarin commented that the Department of Psychology would tend to prioritize junior-level students to get them out and start building their vitae, especially since senior-level students may have more access to alternative funding. He recommended that, if there is going to be a distinction between master’s-level students in Ph.D. programs and doctoral students in Ph.D. programs, the Department of Psychology would recommend prioritizing the junior students.

Bond stated that one way to resolve the issue of junior-level funding may be to rely more heavily, perhaps exclusively, on departmental rankings, at least, where there are multiple applications. Bond indicated that the current guidelines also prohibit part-time students from being considered, which also needs to be revisited. In addition, there may be a need to move to four deadlines versus three to accommodate some late decisions about conferences and who will be participating.

Bond indicated that he would take all of this into consideration and incorporate it into the criteria for the next academic year. He stated that the Graduate School could easily double the amount of travel money available and still not be able to accommodate all requests.

Announcements

**HLC Reaccreditation:** Macdonald announced that the university will go up for reaccreditation in 2014. The process has been started with the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, which is an accredited body. The accreditation process starts a couple of years out with data gathering and writing reports. The Steering Committee has been established and the first meeting is on Friday, December 9. Each member of the Steering Committee will chair a subcommittee that will be responsible for obtaining relevant information to meet the criteria that the HLC looks for in their reaccreditation report. Macdonald believes that a draft document will be available in either late fall 2012 or early spring 2013 to allow time for input from the university community. Macdonald will keep the Graduate Council informed about the process. If anyone wants more information about future meetings and timelines, please let her know. Bond suggested that it would be good to know who is on the Steering Committee. Macdonald will provide information at the next Graduate Council meeting.

**Enrollments in Certificate Programs:** The Provost’s Office has asked that the Graduate School review enrollments in certificate programs. Bond stated that 41 out of 54 programs are currently dormant. He distributed memos to those program directors or department chairs asking what they plan to do with those certificates because either no one is enrolled or very few people have received a certificate in the past ten years. They have been given until February to let us know if they want to cancel them or how they plan to get students enrolled in those programs. Bond asked Garver to let Bennardo know that the information will go to the Curriculum Committee just as an informational item.
Willis commented that there has been some discussion about the difficulty of tracking certificate programs in MyNIU. Bond stated that they are not tracked in MyNIU and that information is currently maintained in a spreadsheet. However, we just received approval to run certificates through the DPR. Bond informed members that the Graduate School has been waiting 4 years to proceed with the project, but did not have permission to assign codes to those certificates. Bond stated that we are testing a certificate in the DPR now.

**Graduate Student Handbooks:** Bond asked members if any of their departments had graduate student handbooks. There were several members who indicated that their departments do. Bond stated that there have been catalog changes approved by the Graduate Council that refer to a handbook. He indicated that we might need to inform departments about graduate handbooks and provide them with the type of information that should be included in them and how they could use them to be responsive to particular student situations. Macdonald asked if a handbook trumped the catalog when the catalog referred to them. Bond stated that they do, as long as the handbook does not set a lower standard than the catalog.

**Graduate Enrollments:** Bond distributed information about graduate enrollments over the past 5 years. A brief discussion ensued.

**Commencement:** Bond informed members that commencement is Saturday, December 10. Laurie Zittel and Terry Borg will be our marshals.

Meeting adjourned at 11:22 a.m.
Ph.D. Language and/or Research-Tool Requirements

Specific language and/or research-tool requirements for the Ph.D. degree vary by department. These requirements may be found in the description of the doctoral program under each departmental heading or in the graduate handbook for the program.

The general Graduate School requirement for proficiency in foreign language(s) and/or research tool(s) for the Ph.D. degree may be met by one of the following.

- Two foreign languages with average reading proficiency.
- One foreign language with a high level of proficiency.
- One foreign language with average reading proficiency and one research tool with average proficiency.
- Two research tools with average proficiency.
- One research tool with a high level of proficiency.

Students wishing to demonstrate average proficiency in French, German, Italian, or Spanish may do so by achieving a grade of S (satisfactory) in FLFR 382, Reading Expository French II; FLGE 382, Reading Expository German II; FLIT 382, Reading Expository Italian II; or FLSP 382, Reading Expository Spanish II, respectively. These courses and their prerequisite courses are described at the end of this section.

Translation examinations in these and other languages are arranged through the Office of Testing Services. Such examinations are available for languages taught by the faculty of the NIU Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. Details on the nature of the foreign language examination and how it is administered are available from the Office of Testing Services.

Average proficiency in a foreign language may also be demonstrated by the possession of a degree from a college or university at which that language was the language of instruction.

Course work to be used to satisfy research-tool requirements must be approved by the student’s major department and the office of the dean of the Graduate School. Unless the major department specifies a higher grade, an undergraduate grade of C or better, or a graduate grade of B or better, must be received in each such course. If course work from another university is to be applied toward meeting research-tool requirements, an official transcript showing satisfactory completion of the course(s) must be provided to the Graduate School.

Students should work closely with their advisers in coordinating efforts to satisfy the Graduate School and departmental language and research-tool requirements with their doctoral research objectives.

FLSP 382, READING EXPOSITORY SPANISH II (3). Continuation of FLSP 381. Open only to graduate students with credit for FLSP 381. S/U grading.
The Graduate School requires that Ph.D. students demonstrate competency in at least one research tool prior to the candidacy examination. A research tool is defined as a relevant foreign language or languages or as a methodology for conducting research. The expectation of competency with a research tool ensures that a doctoral student possesses the knowledge, skills, and abilities to conduct research appropriate to his/her field of study, not only during the process of completing the dissertation but as a professional researcher.

Options for satisfying the requirement for competency in a research tool(s) are determined by program faculty. Programs may establish in writing requirements for competency in more than one research tool and may set a higher threshold for determining competency in a research tool than does the Graduate School.

A description of program-level requirements for satisfying the research tool requirement can be found in the relevant departmental section of this catalog or in the graduate student handbook for each program.

Students must demonstrate competency by achieving grades of B or better in no fewer than six hours of related graduate-level course work focused on a method of conducting research. The course work may be taken in a student’s department or outside of it. Courses taken outside of a student’s department to demonstrate competency in a research tool may, with program approval, count toward the hours necessary to satisfy degree requirements.

Students may also demonstrate competency in a relevant foreign language. Competency in a foreign language or languages may be demonstrated by achieving a grade of S (satisfactory) in FLFR, FLGE, FLIT, FLSP 381 and 382, provided that both courses are taken in a single language; by achieving a passing score on a translation examination approved by faculty in the student’s program; by having achieved a grade of B or better in at least 12 hours of foreign language acquisition course work, or the equivalent, completed at an accredited U.S. institution of higher learning within five years of admission to, and enrollment in, the student’s doctoral program. Competency in a foreign language may also be demonstrated by the possession of a degree from a college or university at which that language was the language of instruction. With the approval of the Graduate Dean, programs may verify competency in a foreign language through alternative means.

Students should work closely with their advisers in coordinating efforts to satisfy the Graduate School and departmental research-tool requirements with their doctoral research objectives.

Requirements for the Degrees
Doctor of Education
Doctor of Philosophy

Credit Requirements for the Doctor of Education
Graduate students working for a doctor of education degree must complete at least 90 semester hours of graduate work beyond the baccalaureate degree. Departments may waive 30 semester hours for students holding a master’s or similar degree in the same field or a related one, allowing the doctoral degree to be completed with 60 semester hours. The hour requirement for a doctoral degree includes formal course work, independent study, research, and the dissertation. Some doctoral programs require more than 90 semester hours.

The minimum GPA requirement of 3.00 applies to all graduate courses taken at NIU and applicable to the degree. Some programs require a higher GPA. Consult the departmental sections of this catalog for other requirements.

Credit Requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate students working for a doctoral degree must complete at least 90 72 hours of graduate work beyond the baccalaureate degree. Departments may waive 30 semester hours for students holding a master’s or similar degree in the same field or a related one, allowing the doctoral degree to be completed with 60 42 semester hours. The hour requirement for a doctoral student with a master’s degree includes a minimum of 12 hours of dissertation credit. Some doctoral programs require more than 90 72 semester hours. A description of program-level requirements for satisfying credit requirements can be found in the relevant departmental section of this catalog or in the graduate student handbook for each program.