

UNL Graduate Council Minutes

April 2, 2020

Via Zoom

2:30 p.m.

Present: Jennifer Clarke, Christina Falci, Rhonda Fuelberth, Adam Houston, Tony Juritsch, Laurie Lee, Yusong Lu, Shawn Ratcliff, Kara Viesca. Absent: Geoff Friesen. Dean Tim Carr presiding.

Approval of Minutes from March 5, 2020

The following sentence should be deleted from minutes: “there are many departments that offer courses with biochemistry at the core, yet these departments are not asked to consult with the Biochemistry department.” It was suggested there is a document in the Biochemistry department that contradict the sentence. A motion was made to accept the minutes with the deletion of the identified sentence. Motion passed.

New course proposals

Revised syllabi:

SCMA courses – Dean Carr asked department chair Jennifer Ryan to provide a more detailed justification for proposing the eight new SCMA courses at 1, 2 or 3 credit hours. She provided the following on March 13:

The proposed SCMA PhD program is designed to consist of eight content seminars which cover all of the main methodological and application areas relevant to supply chain management and analytics. The program design was selected to offer flexibility to both faculty and PhD students and to allow a variety of different faculty to contribute to the teaching of the PhD program. The new PhD courses are listed as variable credit. However, in a given semester the credit hours assigned will be fixed at either 1, 2 or 3 credit hours, and the assigned credit hours will be the same for all students enrolled in the course during that semester. Further, the course content/workload and the number of weeks/hours per week of instruction would be adapted based on the credit hours assigned in a given semester.

The use of variable credits for these proposed new PhD courses is designed to provide flexibility for the department to tailor the curriculum to the needs and interests of the PhD students and SCMA graduate faculty. In particular, the content for these PhD courses will not be static. Instead, the content will be regularly adjusted to reflect current developments in the field and to highlight state-of-the-art research in each area, including new methodological developments and current application trends. The flexible curriculum will also allow faculty to incorporate their own research expertise into the coursework.

In addition, the use of variable credit hours enables the program to shift emphasis between different methodological and application areas based on the interests and expertise of the faculty and the current trends and expectations in the field. For example, while today we may choose to have a balance between application areas related to (1) the production and distribution of physical goods (which includes the seminars on “Logistics and Transportation Modeling” and “Inventory Management and Procurement”) and (2) the provision of services (which includes the seminars on “Service Systems Design” and “Revenue Management”), in the future we may choose to place more emphasis on one or the other in order to leverage the existing (and evolving) expertise of the faculty, or to meet the expectations of a changing PhD job market. This shift in emphasis could be achieved by increasing and decreasing the credit hours for each seminar.

Dean Carr shared the comments via email. After further discussion, the Council is still concerned about the lack of specific information that a syllabus would have when the course is actually taught at 1, 2 or 3 credit hours. The Council would like to see three example syllabi representing 1, 2 and 3 credit hours. The syllabi should include a schedule of lectures, assignments, exams, and anything else that reflects an actual course being taught. Dean Carr

will convey the Council's request to Jennifer Ryan. Motion was made to table, pending review of the representative syllabi. Motion passed.

AECN 816 and 872 – Jennifer Clarke reached out to the department. They are having a discussion within their program. They will get back to Jennifer. Motion was made to table until the department provides further information. Motion passed.

ANTH 455/855 – As indicated from March meeting, this course could be approved by Dean Carr if amended syllabus was submitted. The syllabus was deemed appropriate by Dean Carr, who approved it.

First-time proposals:

CHME 483/883 – Minor comments: Syllabus needs to include performance and grading expectations of graduate term project. A group assignment mentioned, but not in syllabus. Assignment statement for graduate students does not have a complete description. Motion was made to approve, pending the corrections are made. Final approval is designated to Dean Carr. Motion passed.

DSGN 497/897 – Minor clarification: The course is listed for 1-6 credits, but it is a 3 credit course; need to verify if they can take it multiple times or if it should be 3 and correct. Motion was made to approve, pending minor corrections. Motion passed.

LAW 601G – 2 to 3 variable credit hours to allow flexibility for instructors. Assignments are vague. Council requests more detail on the 2 vs 3 expectations. Motion was made to table. Motion passed.

LAW 691G – Special topics. Motion was made to table for more detail and clarification. Motion passed.

LAW 704G – Course is split into sections, but sample syllabus did not have the class split up into three section. Syllabus should explain what the 3 sections are and expectations at each credit level. How will the final exam be different to reflect each credit hour level? Motion was made to table, pending clarification. Motion passed.

PHIL 430/830 – Motion was made to approve. Motion passed.

SOCI 430/830 – Motion was made to approve. Motion passed. (Excellent syllabus. This could be a model to send to faculty and staff for illustrating graduate differentiation.)

THEA 441/841 – The syllabus needs more clearly defined differentiation between 400/800 levels. The sentence on lecturer is not clear. Motion was made to approve conditionally, pending corrections. Final approval is designated to Dean Carr. Motion passed.

ACCT 801 – Motion was made to approve. Motion passed.

ACCT 804 – Motion was made to approve. Motion passed.

ACCT 813 – The only concern was that there are no makeup exams allowed. Is this consistent with the Registrar's policy? Need to clarify whether no makeup exam is acceptable. Eva will explore Registrar's policies. Motion was made to table, pending clarification. Motion passed.

CHEM 437/837 – Needs greater differentiation between 400 and 800. Motion was made to table; revision required. Motion passed.

SLPA 494/894 – Motion was made to approve. Motion passed.

SPAN 953 – Motion was made to approve. Motion passed.

TEAC courses (807A, 807B, 807C, 808G, 846G, 849G) – Courses were discussed as a group; no concerns. Motion was made to approve as a group. Motion passed.

Proposed CIP code change for the PhD degree in Economics

The proposed change essentially moves the department to a STEM classification, making it easier for visa approvals. Does narrowing the classification mean that it does not address the Economics general courses? The Council requests further clarification. Motion was made to table. Motion passed.

Proposed JD/History MA dual degree program

Our graduate catalog lists several coordinated, pre-approved dual degree programs. The purpose of having the programs approved by the Graduate Council is to avoid having students seek approval on a case-by-case basis, which is the policy of the Graduate College. The JD/History MA has been offered for many years, but there is no record that it was approved by the Graduate Council. This proposal is to formalize the JD/History MA dual degree program so we have a record of approval. Motion was made to approve, with a caution to confirm that the language regarding timing of the degrees is accurate. Motion passed.

Report on Certificate in Educational Neuroscience

The Council asked the department to clarify the course requirements. There are five courses to choose from, but student only need to choose four of them for a total of 12 credit hours. After clarification and slight modification, the proposal was sent the EVC's office by Dean Carr for the next step in the review process.

Update on COVID-19 guidelines/messages

Dean Carr reviewed UNL and Graduate Studies guidelines regarding COVID-19. Shawn Ratcliff and Dean Carr are serving on COVID-19 taskforce academic subgroup. The committee's purpose is to develop strategies and guidelines for converting to remote learning, grade adjustments, and other academic issues that have arisen due to COVID-19. The discussions have focused primarily on the undergraduate education. The BTAA graduate deans have been having vigorous conversations about relaxing grades policies for graduate students. UNL has made no adjustments to grade policies at this time, but Dean Carr is discussing the possibility with Susan Fritz, NU system graduate deans, Elizabeth Spiller, and Mike Boehm.

Dean Carr made arrangements with the Registrar's Office, Steve Booton, for any graduate student who applied to graduate this term, but is unable to finish. Affected students will automatically be changed to summer term without having to reapply or pay the fee again. These students are also not required to register for the summer term.

Dean Carr asked the Council for input regarding relaxing grade policies. UNL has already extended the deadline to April 24 for withdrawing from a course and changing to Pass/No Pass. The issue of P/NP is more difficult to implement at the graduate level because of the Scholastic Grade Requirement that graduate students must earn a "B" in major 400/800 courses. Council members preferred to not have a blanket policy applied. Rather, the Office of Graduate Studies could provide guidelines for adjustments, but allow the colleges to make their own decisions. We also need to be aware of accrediting/licensing bodies that require a letter grade.

One possibility recommendation is allow all graduate courses (no matter what level) to have a minimum grade of a "C" and be allowed to include on a student's plan of study. This would be a temporary measure for spring and summer terms only. The decision of the P/NP grade option

should be in control of the student, and they should be able to request the change after receiving their final grade. The Council voiced support of this temporary rule.

Another issue is graduate student financial support. Faculty can address concerns with the Office of Research and Economic Development (ORED). The Financial Aid office may be another resource. UNL is contractually obligated to honor graduate assistantship as defined in the student letter of offer. Stipends should be paid until the end date of the appointment. Dean Carr is encouraging departments to find ways to help students continue their work while following CDC guidelines. For the most part this is happening. If students are encountering difficulties, they should contact their program Graduate Chair.

Graduate Student Assembly Report

This is Tony Juritsch's and Shawn Ratcliff's last Graduate Council meeting. A big "thank you" was expressed by members of the Graduate Council.

Adjourned: 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Eva Bachman, PhD