

UNL Graduate Council Minutes  
November 5, 2020  
Via Zoom  
2:30 p.m.

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

Approval of Minutes from October 1, 2020

Motion was made to approve minutes from October 1, 2020. Motion passed.

Old Business

a. Proposed PhD specialization in Supply Chain Management and Analytics (revised)

The proposal was initially discussed at the 3/5/2020 meeting. At that time, several new SCMA courses were also being proposed. The Council concluded that new courses should first be established before acting on the specialization proposal and voted to delay taking action. Now that the SCMA courses are approved, the department has requested that the specialization be reviewed.

The discussion centered on whether the curriculum should have a core of courses so students clearly understand the expectations. This is an issue of “truth in advertising” about the availability and topics of the courses. Perhaps clarify for students electives vs. required courses. Is it typical to rely on the director of the program to develop an individual program for each student? Dr. Friesen interpreted this as students not being required to take a specific set of five courses, but rather having the flexibility to build a program based on the interest of the student and availability. It was also noted that there is a higher number of courses proposed than what is required for a specialization. Dean Carr reminded the Council that specializations are not entire degree programs or majors, but merely an area of focus in an already existing major. Specializations are not credentials, just a notation on the transcripts. A recommendation was made to suggest to the department that a 2-3 year cycle plan be used to enable students to know what is available so that a solid plan of study can be completed. Dr. Friesen will convey the Council’s discussion to the department.

Motion was made to approve the specialization. Motion passed.

b. Proposed PhD specialization in STEM Education Research (revised)

The proposed specialization is in the PhD in Engineering major. The specialization depends on approval of two courses still in the queue for review. Dean Carr apologized for his oversight in adding the proposal to the agenda prematurely. The two courses will be reviewed at a special Graduate Council meeting on 11/19/2020. If the courses are approved, the Council will review the specialization proposal at the regularly scheduled meeting on 12/3/2020.

Update graduate catalog master’s degree option policy

Dean Carr is proposing a language change in the graduate catalog that governs master’s degree options I, II and III. Current language for option II is appropriately worded and accurately

reflects the policy: "At least one-half of the credit hours required for the degree must be in the major." The proposal is to modify the descriptions for options I and III to be consistent with option II.

Motion was made to approve the modification. Motion passed.

#### Update graduate catalog certificate policy

Dean Carr is proposing a more thorough description for graduate certificates to be included in the graduate catalog. Current language does not provide rules or guidance on several aspects of certificate administration, such as student who want to pursue more than one certificate, concurrent enrollment in degree programs, transfer credits, minimum grades, etc. Dean Carr would like to encourage more opportunities for students to pursue certificates, but with clear rules, given that certificates are academic credentials.

Dean Carr highlighted sharing of credit hours for students pursuing two certificates. The proposal is to allow sharing of 3 credit hours, provided each certificate has a minimum of 12 hours of non-shared credits. Most institutions do not allow sharing of credits between two certificates. Additional discussion focused on the grade requirement for certificate courses. The proposal states that students can pass with a grade of C or better in all certificate courses. Alternatively, other institutions require students to earn the grade that is normally required to pass the course. Difficulties may arise if the student chooses to pursue a degree and the certificate grade of C does not meet the requirements for the degree. Can individual programs set a higher standard? Perhaps change the language to reflect that it must meet the required grade for the degree? Suggestion: "Be aware that some programs require a minimum grade of B for degree programs."

Dean Carr will revise the proposal based on Council's input and revisit at the December meeting.

#### Recommendation to change master's degree time limit

Dean Carr has been urged by several members of the graduate faculty to consider shortening the time limit for completing a master's degree from 10 years to five years. The completion limit used to be six years, with the ability to accept courses up to 10 years old, but with the requirement that students must pass an examination to revalidate their knowledge in any course between 6 and 10 years old. The completion time limit for the degree was changed to 10 years on 12/14/1999, which effectively eliminated the revalidation requirement.

Two major concerns are driving the proposal. First, there is a misconception that longer timelines are needed for part-time students to successfully finish their degree. However, the research indicates that longer timelines increases procrastination and the likelihood of quitting. Second, organizations that rank universities, such as U.S. News & World Report, use completion time limits as a factor in calculating rank. Shorter times results in better rankings.

A subcommittee of Geoff Friesen, Rhonda Fuelberth, and Tim Carr prepared the proposal for the Council to consider. The average time to degree for all UNL master's students is 2.3 years, with each college showing some variation between 1.8 and 2.8 years. Questions were asked about those who do not complete and need more time. Dean Carr explained that students in the final stages of their program can request an extension. Another safeguard is the ability of students to request an academic leave, which pauses the time to degree clock.

Dr. Fuelberth commented that the rationale for making this change makes sense. If students (and faculty) know how much time they have, they will use it. Dr. Friesen commented that we want to make sure that the policy is the right policy for the entire university, not just for the benefit of one program. Most peers in the Big Ten have a five year deadline.

Other comments: The proposal needs to include a statement about having a 10 year expiration date for coursework, even if the time to degree deadline is shorter. How will this affect those who are working toward a degree part time? Music Education and Engineering have students who are part time. Engineering students take one class per semester. They may not be able to complete in five years. Maybe a six year completion deadline is more realistic. We need to clarify the ability to request an extension. There needs to be the ability to work with the individual student on a case-by-case basis depending on their needs. Students need to know they have options. We need to find the right balance and be mindful of economic benefits of shorter timeline without compromising academic integrity or losing the concept of educating the next generation.

Council members would like to see the data for each program, for each year by college. Dean Carr will try to get the data and incorporate into a revised proposal before next meeting. The Council believes this will help the graduate faculty make an informed decision.

#### Proposed new certificate in Chromatography and Analytical Separations

This is an on-campus only certificate. The question was raised about having letters of support from departments of the participating faculty units outside of Chemistry. They need to clarify the extent of participation by the outside faculty. Perhaps get a CV from each of them? The 12 required courses are within Chemistry, the electives are outside the program. Expedited approval needs letters of support from other programs outside of Chemistry and the dean. Are they proposing this as an interdepartmental certificate? If this is the intent, then the proposal does not qualify for expedited review. Consequently, the proposal needs to be revised to include all of the additional information in Sections V and VI.

There is confusion about who comprises the advisory committees. The table in Section IV does not match the individuals listed on page 1. In particular, what is the role of Rebecca Lai? Admissions process needs clarification.

Motion was made to table the proposal, with request for revision. Motion passed.

#### Proposed new certificate in Bioanalytical Chemistry

The same concerns were raised as with the previous proposal. There is some overlap between the two certificates. Will there be a situation where a student would pursue both certificates? How would that be handled by the advisory committee?

Motion was made to table the proposal, with request for revision. Motion passed.

#### Proposed name change to certificate in Supply Chain Management Systems

The department requests a modification—removal of “Systems” from the name—to be consistent with the name of the department and degree offerings. No change in curriculum or coursework is being requested.

Motion was made to approve the proposal. Motion passed.

### Proposed MAS specialization in Environmental Education

Specialization will be in the online Master of Applied Science degree. The MAS is a college level degree, not “owned” by a particular department. Proposed specialization is comprised of 9 required credits, 6 elective credits, and 3 project credits for a total of 18 credits. Any courses taught within CASNR are considered to be “major” courses.

It was found that some courses in the proposed specialization have not yet been approved. No vote was taken, pending approval of the courses.

### New course proposals

Only had time to review three courses: AGRO 804, CHEM 925, and CIVE 898 (see below). Discussion was started on ENGR 824, but no action taken.

Dean Carr asked to schedule an extra meeting to complete the review of new course proposals. He would like to invite Dan Linzell and Heidi Diefes-Dux to describe their long term plan for courses, names, DEBR, STEM education, etc. to help with the discussion of the courses proposed. The meeting was set for November 19 at 3:00 pm.

### Graduate Student Assembly Report

GSA is scheduling a Town Hall for the November 19. The plan is to have RSVP deadline on November 12. General Assembly is next Tuesday. Dean Carr and Karen Cagley with ISSO will be participating along with someone from Student Affairs.

### Announcements

None.

Adjourned at 5:10 pm  
Respectfully submitted,  
Eva Bachman, PhD.

New Course Proposals  
November 2020

<b>Course</b>	<b>Primary Reviewers</b>
AGRO 804	Eric Rodene, Yusong Li ER: Looks complete; tentative schedule would need to be adjusted to match approved schedule. YL agreed. Syllabus does not state that the course is 2 credit hours. Motion was made to approve. Motion passed.
CHEM 925	Yusong Li, Laura Muñoz YL: 900 level class, syllabus very well written; no concerns. LM: syllabus was good; may want to broaden prerequisites. Motion was made to approve. Motion passed.
CIVE 898	Yusong Li, Luz Sotelo YL: Independent Research class; program wants to separate from 400 level; syllabus is just an example syllabus; there are concerns about lack of description of expectations, awarding of credit hours, etc.; without these expectations there is no basis for approval. This would be an opportunity for one faculty to draw up a sample syllabus with more detail. Maybe include examples of what has been done in the past in the course. Seems like a blank check. Motion was made to table pending revision. Motion passed.

Unable to review the following courses due to lack of time.  
Special meeting scheduled for November 19, 2020, to review remaining courses.

<b>Course</b>	<b>Primary Reviewers</b>
EMGT 803	Geoff Friesen, Eric Rodene
EMGT 804	Laurie Thomas Lee, Geoff Friesen
EMGT 822	Adam Houston, Kara Mitchell Viesca
ENGR 824	Jennifer Clarke, Luz Sotelo
ENGR 834	Laura Muñoz, Jennifer Clarke
ENGR 895	Kara Mitchell Viesca, Rhonda Fuelberth
FDST 824	Adam Houston, Eric Rodene
FDST 897	Luz Sotelo, Laurie Thomas Lee
GERO 889	Jennifer Clarke, Laurie Thomas Lee
IDES 887	Laurie Thomas Lee, Kara Mitchell Viesca
NRES 804	Eric Rodene, Geoff Friesen
NRES 805	Adam Houston, Yusong Li
NRES 902	Rhonda Fuelberth, Adam Houston
SOCI 882	Laura Muñoz, Jennifer Clarke
SPAN 876	Kara Mitchell Viesca, Rhonda Fuelberth