

UNL Graduate Council Agenda
March 6, 2025
Location: Zoom
2:30 p.m.

Attending: Rochelle Dalla, Souparno Ghosh, Xu Li, Tom Kubick, Maria Marron, Elizabeth Niehaus, Dai Shizuka, Brenda Wristen, Venn Jemkur, Alejandra Vasquez. Dean Hope presiding. Eva Bachman and Jason Carmichael.

1. **Approval of Minutes from February 6, 2025 meeting:** Motion to approve minutes, seconded, and unanimously approved.
2. **Jennifer Clarke, UNL Graduate Council Liaison to Academic Planning Committee:** Prof. Jennifer Clarke joined to present her research on policies related to differentiating 800 from 900 level courses and other topics from APC.
 - a. **800 – 900 Course Distinctions:** It was presumed that the registrar’s current guidance for numbering graduate courses was based upon a Board of Regents policy from 1971. The registrar’s current guidance states that 800 classes are introductory graduate level courses with a possibility for cross-listing 400 level courses, while 900 level courses are more advanced graduate courses with no possibility of cross-listing. However, after researching the University Library archives with assistance from library staff, , no record of this policy could be found. Next, Prof. Clarke contacted the Deans of every college to survey how each college numbers courses, and every college indicated they follow the registrar’s current guidance. However, there is some inconsistency in how different programs distinguish 800 from 900 level courses. Furthermore, some programs cross-list all their 800-level courses while others do not, nor do they intend to ever cross-list certain 800-level courses because students are required to take so many hours of “graduate only” courses for their degree program. When programs cross-list all 800-level courses, they may designate 900-level courses as “graduate only”. Some colleges use 900-level for advanced graduate courses and for introductory graduate courses intended for professional/lifelong learners. Although this flexibility may meet the needs of a given department, it may be confusing for students taking courses in different departments, as well as their faculty advisors, who might not be aware of these differences when signing off on memorandum of courses or programs of study that include courses from other departments. The Graduate Council discussed that it is important for programs to understand their variability when advising students taking courses outside of their home department.
 - b. **Academic Planning Committee and Graduate Council Program Approval Processes:** The EVC noted that the process to approve graduate programs has an extra step compared to undergraduate programs. Currently, a program proposal is reviewed by Graduate Council before passing to the EVC’s office after which it is reviewed again by APC and passed back to the EVC’s office. Prof. Clarke reported on the discussion from a recent APC meeting that the Graduate Council and APC reviews are duplicative. According to university bylaws, APC has to approve all graduate programs. Options were discussed of having an APC representative (e.g., the representative for Graduate Council) be informed of the Graduate Council review to allow APC to act without a separate review. Further

discussion will develop a pilot procedure prior to a potential policy or bylaws change.

Graduate Council members were supportive of a streamlined procedure.

3. **Proposal for Dual MS-PhD in Earth & Atmospheric Science:** Dean Hope provided a brief overview of the proposal and the rationale for establishing dual degrees. Motion to approve, seconded and unanimously approved.

The Council also discussed whether the Graduate Council needs to continue to review and approve proposals for dual degrees since these proposals do not include new courses or curriculum changes. The Council decided to table a vote until the next meeting to determine whether the Dean of Graduate Studies could review and act on these proposals when the dual degrees are in the same unit. However, if the dual degrees are in two different units, the proposal would be reviewed and approved by Graduate Council.

4. **Grade Appeal:** Dean Hope provided an overview of the grade appeal. After discussion and due consideration of the issues, the Council reached a decision on the grade appeal. Motion to approve the decision, seconded and unanimously approved. One abstention.
5. **Curriculum Discussion:** None.
6. **Graduate Student Assembly Report:** Executive Vice President Alejandra Vasquez reported on meeting with the Chancellor to create a new program that supports student travel to conduct research and participate in conferences. President Jemkur reported on her meeting with the Chancellor regarding the impact on graduate students of the changes occurring at the Federal level. President Jemkur sent out a feedback form to graduate students to collect data about their perspectives on how these changes are impacting them, so that can be shared with leadership. GSA continues to plan for Graduate Student Appreciation week, which will kick off with an event on Friday, April 4. President Jemkur will be included in a meeting with the Chancellor to better understand the proposed budget cuts that were recently announced.
7. **Announcements:**
 - a. Dean Hope has been meeting with groups of graduate students in each of the colleges for dialogues to get to know them and answer their questions.
 - b. Dean Hope has been working with programs and groups across campus to support Fulbright scholars whose funding has been paused.
 - c. OGS has partnered with GSA to schedule a series of events for Graduate Student Appreciation week to help celebrate students.
 - d. Implementation of the new graduate application system is still uncertain. For the time being, we will continue with the current system.

Meeting adjourned at 4:58 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Carmichael