

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Graduate Council Meeting Minutes

May 2, 2024, 2:30 pm

Location: Zoom

**Attending:** Christopher Bilder, Jennifer Clarke, Tom Kubick, Xu Li, Maria Marron, Laura Muñoz, Elizabeth Niehaus, Brenda Wristen. Venn Jemkur and Katie Mowat. Dean Hope presiding. Eva Bachman, Alisha Hanshaw and Jason Carmichael.

1. Approval of Minutes from meeting on April 4, 2024. Motion to approve minutes, seconded, and unanimously approved.
2. Revised proposal for new specialization in Ecological Engineering in Agricultural and Biological Systems Engineering (MS), Mechanized Systems Management (MS), Biological Engineering (PhD).

Review and discussion followed a brief recap by Dean Hope of clarifications requested in the previous meeting. During the discussion, Council requested that students who are admitted to the Mechanized Systems Management MS who choose this engineering specialization be explicitly advised that it will not prepare them for the Professional Engineering (PE) license exam. Prof. Li provided suggested wording after the meeting.

*Students entering the Ecological Engineering specialization through the Mechanized Systems Management MS program (i.e., newly named as Agricultural Systems Technology) should be advised at the time of admission that the engineering name in the specialization will not qualify them for Professional Engineer (PE) licensure exams in jurisdictions such as Nebraska if they do not have an undergraduate degree from an ABET-accredited engineering program. PE licensure may be important for career advancement for some engineering-related positions at public and private employers.*

Motion to approve the proposal pending notice to department to include advising of Mechanized Systems Management students who choose this specialization. Motion seconded and unanimously approved.

3. Proposal for new Graduate Certificate "Internet of Things":

Review and discussion followed a brief introduction of the proposal. Discussion focused on clarifying learning objectives and logically grouping the electives. The proposed graduate certificate is stackable with Computer Science MS degrees. The Council requested that the need for a separate application to the master's program be explicitly mentioned if certificate students pursue that option.

Motion to approve the proposal pending discussion of listed concerns with proposing department and review of edits. Since this is the last Graduate Council meeting of the Academic year, Prof. Clarke offered to represent the Graduate Council and review the edits once returned. Motion seconded and unanimously approved.

4. "Stacking of Credentials" policy as related to the creation of new graduate certificates:

Discussion of the Provost policy requiring that new graduate certificates stack credentials with at least one existing master's degree program. Dean Hope explained that this policy is intended to create a positive incentive for students planning to transfer credits earned for certificates toward a master's degree. Graduate Council members expressed concern that this would not always be appropriate for certain graduate certificates, given educational objectives identified by the faculty putting forth a proposal. Dean Hope recommended that this issue be put on the agenda of the upcoming Graduate Deans' meeting, which was unanimously supported by the Graduate Council.

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Addendum: The discussion at the Graduate Deans' meeting clarified that the requirement for graduate certificates to be stackable is only included in expedited review, not full review. Further, per the Vice Provost, it is acceptable to consider the requirement as a subset of a current master's degree, without the implication that certificate students would necessarily wish to pursue the master's degree. The subset requirement is consistent with expedited reviews that no new courses or resources are required for proposed graduate certificate.

5. Discussion on whether to accept international admission documents from external agencies:

Dean Hope presented the benefits and costs associated with using external agencies to evaluate international student admission documents in order to gain a sense of whether such a change would be acceptable to faculty. Currently, all international admission documents are evaluated by trained Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) staff. This change will provide international applicants with the option to submit documents either directly to OGS or through external agencies. Sample application documents from three different agencies were provided for review. Discussion focused on the quality of information provided in the application samples for the purposes of admission evaluation, potential impact on international applicants, and whether more faculty need to be engaged prior to moving forward with this change. Alisha Hanshaw was present to answer questions. Support for the change was favorable with no significant objections raised. Dean Hope and OGS staff will gather additional input from graduate programs with large numbers of international applications and consider a formal policy change.

6. Any needed curriculum discussions: None.

7. Graduate Student Assembly Report: GSA will hold its final meeting of the year on Tuesday, May 7th. Final speeches will be given, new representatives will be sworn in, and goals for the future will be discussed. They are excited about the new group of student representatives that will be serving on task forces.

8. Announcements: The last meeting of the Graduate Council will be a luncheon on May 14<sup>th</sup>. A task force is working with Central Administration to provide input on a new contract for student health insurance for future years. For the coming year, student health insurance costs will stay the same; there are no premium increases. Commencement is this month at Pinnacle Bank Arena with an increased level of student participation.

Meeting adjourned: 3:55 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Carmichael