MINUTES
UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COMMITTEE

September 25, 2013

Members Present: Michael Amundson (History), Karen Applequist (Educational Specialties), Emily Babcock (Physician Assistant Studies), Steven Barger (Psychology), Colleen Byron (Administration), Joe Collentine (Modern Language), William Crawford (English), Patrick Deegan (Ex-officio: Extended Campuses), Crystal Ewen (Graduate Student Government), Evie Garcia (Ex-officio: Graduate College), Michelle Harris (Sociology), Amy Hughes (Ex-officio: Cline Library), Stephanie Hurst (Chemistry), April Brown Judd (Mathematics and Statistics), Tom Kolb (Forestry), Alan Lew (Geography, Planning, and Recreation), John Masserini (Music), Gretchen McAllister (Teaching and Learning), Ramona Mellott (Ex-officio: Graduate Dean), Marcia Metcalf (College of Business), Catherine Propper (Biological Sciences), Jim Sample (School of Earth Sciences and Environmental Sustainability), Brant Short (School of Communication), Fred Solop (Substitute, Politics and International Affairs), Anna Sosa (Chair, Communication Sciences and Disorders), Barbara Tomlinson (School of Nursing), and Meghan Warren (Physical Therapy)

Members Absent: Yuly Asencion-Delaney (Modern Languages), Michael Costelloe (Criminology and Criminal Justice), Kim Curtis (Sustainable Communities), Gary Emanuel (Educational Leadership), Fred Hurst (Ex-officio: Extended Campuses), Mary McLellan (Educational Psychology), Kerry Thompson (Anthropology), David Trilling (Physics and Astronomy), and Niranjan Venkatraman (Engineering)

Guests: Mark Cornwall (Physical Therapy), Scott Galland (Curriculum and Assessment), Tom Hughes (Educational Leadership), Jenny Scott (Extended Campuses), Kim VanDerLinden (Educational Leadership), Lisa Williams (Registrar), and Lisa Wischmeier (Extended Campuses)

Graduate College: Kirsten Slaughter-Rice

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 pm by Anna Sosa.

I. Welcome, Announcements, and Brief Reports

A. Approval of the Minutes from the August 28, 2013 meeting – Anna Sosa

The minutes were approved by all present.

B. Graduate Student Government Report – Crystal Ewen

Crystal Ewen discussed the GSG meeting on Monday, September 23, 2013, and feedback from the textbook adoption campaign, which will be given to the bookstore. She also noted iClickers will be added to the campaign because they are very popular and used widely. GSG representatives will continue to meet with graduate students in their respective colleges to provide updates about GSG events.
C. Dean’s Remarks – Ramona Mellott

Dean Mellott reminded the Committee about the upcoming Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) submission deadline of Monday, September 20, 2013. The memo requesting PLOs was sent to each department in April 2013. Ninety-one PLOs were requested from degrees and emphasis areas and forty-two have been submitted. Of the forty-nine PLOs that have not been submitted, nine of these were pending.

Dean Mellott requested that members return to their departments and ask about the status of their PLOs and submit them. She reminded the Committee that having PLOs is part of the University’s accreditation. The Assessment Office is willing to work with departments to submit their PLOs. If any members had a question about whether or not their program had already submitted their PLOs, she had a list of which programs had already submitted their PLOs.

D. Announcements

Michael Amundson of the Department of History gave a brief update on Eric Meeks, Chair of History and previous UGC member, who is doing well after a sudden medical issue.

Anna Sosa made an announcement about attracting and retaining high quality students with graduate assistantships and stipends. She will convene a group to discuss this issue. Jim Sample had volunteered to join the group at the August meeting. Dr. Sosa called for additional volunteers to work with Dean Mellott and her on this issue.

II. Curricular Items

A. Consent Items

There were no Consent Items on the agenda.

B. Action Items

1. College of Education – Educational Leadership
   a. Community College/Higher Education, MEd, Fall 2014 – Major Requirements-Course(s) Added, Course(s) Deleted, and Units Change
   b. CCHE 600, “Leadership Skills,” Spring 2014 – Cross-List, New Course
   d. CCHE 690, “Master’s Seminar,” Spring 2014 – Cross-List, New Course
   e. EDL 680, “Master’s Seminar,” Fall 2014 – Cross-List, Prerequisites
   f. EDL 600, “Leadership Skills;” Fall 2014 – Cross-list, Prerequisites

Kim VanDerLinden, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership, explained that the change is from 36 to 30 total credit hours. This program is completely online and is geared to assisting a diverse group of students learning to educate adults in a variety of settings, including community colleges, higher
educational institutions, and other associations geared towards teaching adults. Educational Leadership has evaluated the outcomes and courses to ensure they are up to date and current. She noted that each individual course was reviewed to determine the relevance and update the outcomes.

One member asked why the program was moving to 30 instead of 36 credits. Dr. VanDerLinden stated that they evaluated time to degree, which is especially important to working professional students. While looking at the timeframe for completion, they also evaluated whether there was any duplication between courses. Drs. Sosa and Mellott noted that there is a move across the board to decrease programs to 30 hours to make our programs more competitive. Dr. VanDerLinden noted that faculty had I programs at other universities and subsequently added a new course to be more competitive with other programs.

A motion was approved for the changes to the program, the addition of new courses, and the changes to existing courses.

III. Informational Items

A. September 25, 2013 FAST TRACK Report

Item was reviewed with no comment by representatives.

IV. Policy Items

A. Integrated Bachelor’s/Master’s Program Policy

Dean Mellott stated that the Integrated Bachelor’s/Master’s Program Policy first came before the UGC in 2009. She summarized the changes to the policy: 1) “Integrated” will change to “Accelerated” in the name of the program because “accelerated” is a common nomenclature across universities, and 2) when admissions will be considered. Dean Mellott noted that admitting incoming freshman into accelerated BS/MS programs is a new trend across the country. The decision to admit incoming freshman into the program would be program specific, and one program has already expressed interest in doing so. Interested programs would work with undergraduate admissions to facilitate this process for students who meet the established criteria. Dean Mellott explained that about half a dozen students may be interested in this earlier admission into the program. At other universities, once the student maintains their GPA and meets the other standards, they then move on to the graduate part of the program.

One member asked if interested freshman can apply and receive provisional admission status to the graduate program. Dean Mellott responded that students can receive provisional admission with either freshman or junior admission into the accelerated programs. The member then asked why students were not admitted once they completed 60 credits as undergraduates. Dean Mellott responded that students are not admitted until they have completed their undergraduate degree. After some discussion, it was determined that the second sentence after #1 should be added back into the policy. Dean Mellott furthered explained that the letter students receive is for conditional admission until they meet all the requirements, including the completion of their undergraduate degree. “Conditional” is used instead of “provisional” for admission status because it is the official language used in the Graduate College admission letters.
Another member asked about transfer students and whether they would apply to the accelerated program when or after they apply to transfer to the university. Dean Mellott responded that currently they cannot apply after they are admitted to the university because they often already have 60 credit hours. Students can apply as freshman, but if they do not choose to apply then, they can still apply later on during their junior year. She also noted that programs can specify requirements related to transfer students and the requirement of credits completed at NAU would be similar to freshman admits.

A third member asked if there was a body of research on how well a student does in these programs when they are accepted in as freshman. Dean Mellott did not know of any current research on this, as it is a new trend in accelerated programs.

Dean Mellott explained that from an undergraduate perspective, this is the best time to attract students into our programs. If they have the option of entering into a BS/MS program, they may decide to come to NAU and then do not need to worry about applying to the graduate program because they are already conditionally admitted. Students can always be discontinued if they fail to meet the program’s requirements.

There are approximately 8 integrated programs at NAU, and more programs were interested after the Graduate Coordinator Training in August. It is not unusual to see half of the graduate programs with this option at other schools. In response to questions, Dean Mellott stated that these programs are often not thesis-based and are meant to fast track students in the same field, although students can still apply during their junior year.

After some discussion, it was determined that some medical schools and physical therapy programs have admitted students at the time of undergraduate admission for 10-15 years now, and Dean Mellott would look into this body of research.

This policy will be voted on at the October meeting.

B. Dismissal Policy

Dr. Garcia gave a brief overview of the feedback she received on the Dismissal Policy. Departments have until October 14, 2013, to submit their comments, which will then be distributed to the UGC members.

V. Discussions Items

A. Thesis and Dissertation Committee Roadmap

Dr. Garcia discussed the purpose of the Thesis and Dissertation Committee Roadmap document to help dissertation and thesis committee members, including students, understand what is expected in the process. The common problem regarding disputes and termination of the committee is addressed in Section 4 and 5. This often happens in different ways with no governance of the process. This is not a policy, but rather a document to assist faculty and students that would be housed on the UGC website.

One member suggested adding a statement to the first paragraph stating this is not a policy and students should refer to their department’s student handbook. Another member noted a word was missing in Section 5, Part 2, in “fails to make adequate progress.” A third member questioned the
statements about attending dissertations in person. Dr. Garcia responded that this is addressed in a separate policy, but she will update the text in Section 2.

A member suggesting giving this to new students at orientation, so students also know what is expected of them. Another member stated that by providing students with this document at orientation, students may think this is a policy. Dean Mellott noted that these are generic guidelines, and students should check their department’s handbook for specifics. A third member suggested adding text about how students should refer to their department’s handbook for specifics, perhaps in the first bullet point. Another member suggested that this document is most valuable if departments draw from it to supplement their own policies and guidelines.

One member noted the positivist tone to methodology on page 3, which might include a broader variety of research methods.

Another member expressed concern about the thesis chair becoming the principal investigator and legal responsible for the research. Dr. Garcia responded that chairs are responsible, to an extent, for their student’s approved research.

One member suggested breaking the document into stages for dissertation writing: before defending the proposal, while writing the dissertation, and after defending the dissertation. Dr. Garcia noted the policy was divided into responsibility of the student, chair, and committee members. Dean Mellott added that dividing the document into stages does not account for different disciplines and what is required at different stages. It was suggested that if departments do not have any guidelines, this document would be a good start. It was also suggested that departments with guidelines in place, should take the best practices and add to their own policies.

The committee approved the document, pending changes. Once the changes are made, the document will be posted to the website.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 pm.