MINUTES
UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COMMITTEE
January 20, 2016

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**Members Present:** Michael Amundson (History), Karen Applequist (Educational Specialties), Emily D. Babcock (Physician Assistant Studies), Steve Brown (Music), Colleen Byron (Administration), Angelina Castagno (Educational Leadership), Cornel Ciocanel (Engineering), Joe Collentine (Global Languages), William Crawford (Chair, English), Mary DeJong (Ex-officio: Cline Library), Evie Garcia (Educational Psychology), Ann Huffman (Psychological Sciences), Stephanie Hurst (Chemistry), Lynn Jones (Criminology and Criminal Justice), Brenda Loritz (Graduate Student Government), Kooros Mahmoudi (Sociology), John Masserini (Ex-officio: Graduate College), Gretchen McAllister (Teaching and Learning), Marcia Metcalf (College of Business), Linn Montgomery (Biological Sciences), Rich Rogers (Communication), Derek Sonderegger (Mathematics and Statistics), Anna Sosa (Communication Sciences and Disorders), Diana Stuart (School of Earth Sciences and Environmental Sustainability; Sustainable Communities), Barbara Tomlinson (Nursing), Kerry Thompson (Anthropology), David Trilling (Physics and Astronomy), Maribeth Watwood (Ex-officio: Graduate Dean), Petra Williams (Physical Therapy).

**Members Absent:** Fred Hurst (Ex-officio: Extended Campuses), Tom Kolb (Forestry), Stephen Nuño (Politics and International Affairs), Patricia Peterson (Faculty Senate Representative), Erik Schiefer (Geography, Planning & Recreation).

**Guests:** Sharon Cardenas (CSTL), Norbert Francis (Educational Specialties), Angela Hansen (English), Patricia S. Polh (Physical Therapy), Jenny Scott (Extended Campuses), Robert Trotter (Vice President for Research), Lisa Wischmeier (Extended Campuses).

**Graduate College:** Alex Coleman

The meeting came to order at 3:01pm.

I. Welcome, Announcements, and Brief Reports

1. **Approval of the Minutes of the November 18, 2015 Meeting – William Crawford**

A motion to approve the [November 18, 2015 Minutes](#) passed without discussion.

2. **Graduate Student Government – Brenda Loritz**

The GSG has a newly opened space for a representative-at-large. Members were asked to encourage interested candidates to contact the GSG. Funding remains for graduate travel; students in research-based programs are encouraged to apply.

3. **Associate Dean’s Remarks – John Masserini**

The Graduate College was pleased to inform the committee that as of January 20th, roughly 80% of graduation applications for the Fall 15 semester had been resolved. Megan Ruiz, [Graduation Coordinator](#), expected the remainder to be resolved by Friday, January 22nd. As we typically complete graduation applications within 4-6 weeks of finalized grades, this represents a notable success in graduation processing, and the Graduate College hopes that processing will only improve with the new online graduation application. Instructions for the online grad app remain [online](#).

Dr. Masserini reminded the committee that 3MRP (3 Minute Research Presentation) abstracts are due on January 25th. The online training module through blackboard learn has been waived as a requirement, and students should feel free to apply through the deadline.
Alex Coleman, **ETD Coordinator**, will present a “brown-bag” seminar on ETD processes and requirements on January 11 at 11am in the Graduate College conference room. All staff or faculty stakeholders are encouraged to attend. Invitations are forthcoming. Also related to theses/dissertations, members can expect some new video-based resources for formatting and layout by the first week of February.

The Graduate College has received new guidance on international admissions, and is adjusting approaches accordingly. Where conditional admissions were previously strictly inaccessible to foreign students, programs may recommend regular admission status to students with remedial or conditional coursework incorporated within their Program of Study. Also, where students with insufficient TOEFL scores have previously been excluded from conditional admittance due to visa restrictions, the Graduate College supports conditional admission to the program with a regular admission to the [Program in Intensive English](#), as this may improve a student’s application for a student visa.

The Academic Appeals and Dismissal policies remain under review. Dr. Masserini informed the committee that he would soon meet with the university counsel, and that members should expect the policy to appear for action in February or March. Members should also expect at least 3 to 4 new policy revisions before the end of the academic year. Regarding policy, the Higher Learning Commission expectation of consistent review and revision will require the committee to develop a system of review in order to meet expectations.

Members were reminded that they are asked to sit as UGC Representatives on at least four dissertation defenses per academic year. That said, the ETD Coordinator noted that if each member were to sit on only one, then the needs for defenses would be adequately filled.

Finally, Dr. Masserini attended the Council of Graduate Schools December conference and left with a great deal of new knowledge and ideas. Inter-disciplinary approaches and review of master’s programs were of particular emphasis, and Dr. Masserini will put himself as the disposal of departments wishing to discuss national trends or developments in graduate education.

### 4. Dean's Remarks – Maribeth Watwood

Dr. Watwood informed the committee that the [Presidential Fellowship](#) has, so far, been a resounding success. Several awards have been offered and accepted (as many as 7 offered). As expected, deadlines for application are flexible and departments are encouraged to interview candidates and push forward applications. Travel funds remain available for the purposes of bringing in top recruits, and programs are encouraged to apply.

The president continues her commitment to better funding for graduate studies. Departments can expect the master’s stipend for Graduate Assistants to increase to $10.5k next year, and $12k the following year.

Last year, Dr. Watwood asked departments to provide reviews of comparative stipends at competing institutions, in order to assess how and why NAU programs might be losing prospective students to other institutions. The dataset was “messy” and it difficult to control for all relevant factors, such as cost of living at other institutions. However, the gross data was useful and the president does hope to help make PhD programs more competitive. Biology, for example, now offers a $20k stipend. All programs that have not met the $15k minimum PhD stipend established last year will soon be brought to standard. By design, the president will provide 50% of the PhD stipend and the department the
remaining balance. Understanding that some departments struggle to allocate the funding, the Provost will meet with such departments to address deficiencies.

Also related to graduate funding, the president made $15k available toward the GSG travel fund for Spring 2016. As a whole, this is all very good news. The president continues to demonstrate her commitment to graduate education and graduate funding.

In response to a member’s query, Dr. Watwood reminded the committee that stipends may be drawn from any available sources, including grants.

Finally, Dr. Watwood informed the committee that the NSF ADVANCE Proposal had been submitted, with specific thanks to Dr. Ann Huffman for her contributions to the Social Sciences component.

II. Consent Items

No consent items were considered at this meeting.

III. Curricular Items for Review

A. College of Arts and Letters

1. English
   a. English 582; “Approaches to Teaching Grammar”, Fall 2016 – New Course
   b. English-Secondary Education; MA, Fall 2016 – Major Reqmts-Course(s) Added

Dr. Angie Hansen (English) presented the proposed new course and change to program requirements. The course fills the need for a pedagogical grammar class. Where other courses offer instruction on the conventions of grammar, there has been no permanent course on the teaching of grammar. NCTE standards specifically emphasize content and pedagogical knowledge. Students in the MA English/Secondary English program must meet these standards for the program to achieve NCATE recognition through NCTE. This course fulfills the pedagogical requirement. The subject has been taught in three iterations of a topics course, and has been extremely popular, suggesting the proposed course will be well attended.

A member noted that the proposal distinguishes between ENG 582 and ENG 528, which had been previously used to provide pedagogical content, and asked whether both would continue to be available. Dr. Hansen explained that the program would like to strike 528 once adequate staffing is available to provide a sufficient offering of ENG 582 (ENG 528 will also satisfy program requirements until then).

A motion to approve the proposals passed unanimously.

2. History
   a. HIS 603; “Writing the Prospectus”, Fall 2016 – New Course
   b. History; MA, Fall 2016 – Major Reqmts-Course(s) Added, Major Reqmts- Unit Change

Dr. Michael Amundson (History) presented the proposed new course and change to program requirements. Several years ago the Master of Arts in History dropped from a 39-hour minimum to 30. Subsequently, the program has observed that students are falling short of learning outcomes and are
not as well prepared as the should be upon exit from the program. As such, the proposal increases the
degree minimum to 36 hours by adding a several new requirements. Students would thus be given
credit for formal work previously not reflected in record, faculty would be allowed to further develop
students, and enrollment within the program would increase.

Under the proposal, the field of Global/Comparative History will be added as an optional area of Primary
Field Coursework. Furthermore, the new course HIS 603 will be a requirement of the theses/project
tracks, requiring students to formally develop a thesis or project prospectus. Finally, students preparing
for comprehensive exams under the extended coursework track will be required to register for HIS 597,
thus accruing credit for their preparatory efforts.

The new course proposal, HIS 603, formalizes the development of a thesis prospectus. In the past,
students have carried independent study to fulfill this purpose, but the History program limits the
amount of independent study that can be applied toward the degree. In HIS 603, students will meet
with their academic advisor to develop an appropriate workload, charting out readings, writing
requirements and meeting times (to be approved by the department). The student will also meet with
their thesis/project advisor at regular intervals during the section in order to produce the draft
prospectus. Students are expected to produce an approved prospectus within three semesters, lest they
be diverted to the extended coursework plan as per the associated proposal for Major Requirements.

A member suggested that the HIS 697 course might be sufficient to achieve the same goals. Dr.
Amundson reiterated that there are limits on the hours of 697 that may be applied to the degree (both
by department and Graduate College policy), and that to apply these credits to the purposes of
prospectus development limits the department’s ability to apply independent study toward other
requirements of the degree.

Another member, regarding general limitations on the use of any 697 credit, mentioned that the
member’s department might like to see the policy revisited given the particular applicability/importance
of independent study within the member’s field.

Dr. Masserini reminded the committee that independent studies, in general, should be very carefully
used and completely student-driven (as faculty do not get course load credit). If independent studies are
used as stop-gaps to meet curricular needs, then there might be an opportunity to review the
department’s curricular structure (as in this instance).

A third member asked whether the proposed course would meet as a cohort or one-on-one. Dr.
Amundson explained that the course is designed for one-to-one meetings, tailored to individual
students (including a reading list, specific historiographies etc. and resulting in an individual, final
prospectus).

A member suggested that a cohort or seminar format might be effective, offering advantages in shared
purposes between students and an opportunity to prepare prospectuses together. There are a variety of
approaches and strategies at the university, including seminar or cohort based thesis/dissertation prep.
For example, one department plans on striking the dissertation seminar in favor of a research colloquia,
having found that the seminar poses certain practical challenges. While the seminar is a clean
administrative solution to differentiating between thesis/dissertation prep and writing, it results in
students paying for course hours while faculty receive no course load credit.
Dr. Amundson noted that as history students are regularly carrying nine hours in their last semester in order to meet Graduate Assistantship requirements, the added course requirement should be more or less tuition neutral. He also noted that, given the small size of the program, most students are receiving funding and will not face great financial burdens from the new requirements. He also suggested that, regardless of the financial implications, students have exited the program falling short of the learning outcomes, and that the additional seminar will be instrumental in addressing the problem. That said, he recognized the merit of the members’ concerns and suggested that the program may wish to revisit the proposed requirements following sufficient time to assess their efficacy.

A member noted that where the seminar has not worked for certain programs, others have found highly effective. In one such program, students all but demanded thesis/dissertation prep as peers in an alternative, internship based track appeared much better prepared at the conclusion of their program. Students in the research track saw the need for a structured, course-based approach to thesis/dissertation development. In this instance, the appointment of the thesis chair is incorporated within the course, and the chair remains intimately involved in the course until completion.

Another noted that structured approaches may help push theses and projects through, rather than languishing in the final stages of progress to degree.

Conversely, a member observed that the member’s program found a course similar to HIS 603 difficult to administrate given the sometimes divergent requirements of the academic advisor and thesis/dissertation chair. Dr. Amundson explained that the onus will be upon the relevant faculty to very deliberately shape the specific courses.

Dr. Amundson thanked the committee directly for its input, agreeing that a cohort or seminar format might be an effective and useful approach, worthy of future consideration. He also emphasized his appreciation for the venue that the UGC provides for cross-disciplinary discussion of curricular issues, and articulated his hope that the UGC will remain involved in curricular decisions.

Dr. Amundson also announced that the NAU Public History project, Louie’s Legacy, will be completed on April 28th, marking the semi-centennial anniversary of this institution’s university status.

A motion to approve the proposal passed with one abstention, none against.

B. College of Education

1. Educational Specialties
   a. BME 538; “Linguistics in Educational Contexts,” Fall 2016 – Catalogue Descr, Co-convene

Dr. Norbert Francis (Educational Specialties) presented the proposal. BME 538 has been offered over 15 years as the sole linguistics course specifically geared toward K-12 teachers, which is a requisite for both the English as a Second Language and Bilingual endorsements. For the purposes of licensing, undergraduates must also meet a linguistics course requirement (BME 438), but there has not been sufficient enrollment to justify the undergraduate-level course. The co-convene proposal would provide the course to both cohorts, where the undergraduate level course simply could not survive without co-convening.
The course and structure are quite similar to ENG 504/404, but distinct in several ways. BME 538 offers concepts from three other individual course subjects – the concepts of ENG 504, applied linguistics issues, and psycholinguistics. Generally, BME 538 is not about teaching, but about learning within the context of what teachers need to know about learning.

A motion to approve the proposal passed unanimously.

C. College of Engineering, Forestry, and Natural Sciences

1. Biological Sciences

The proposals were tabled due to absence of departmental representation.

2. CSTL
   a. SCI 508; “Science Teacher Practicum,” Fall 2016 – Catalogue Descr, Units
   b. Teaching Science with Certification; M.A.T., Fall 2016 – Admission Requirements, Major Reqmts – Course(s) Added, Major Reqmts – Course(s) Deleted, Major Reqmts – Unit Change

Sharon Cardenas, Assistant Clinical Professor, presented the proposal. The State of Arizona has changed teaching certificate requirements, requiring one less structural immersion course and now requiring an Arizona & US Constitution course before granting the Institutional Recommendation. The proposal reflects the changing requirements.

The proposals also change BME 508 to a variable credit course, allowing the department to offer it in an early, 3-week session during the summer and just prior to the K-12 academic year. Students will move from a 3 credit, summer 508 section to a 1 credit, fall 508 section as they transition into the K-12 academic year. This allows the department to offer the required content to students before and during their practicums while meeting the logistical requirements of students working in K-12 schools while attending graduate courses.

Finally, the proposal reduces the total hours toward degree from 39-36, striking a science content course in light of increasing difficulty in offering content course to students while better meeting state needs.

A number of members raised several concerns regarding the grading scale, grading structure, and course progression between the two variable credit sections of 508. Members found the language of the proposal does not adequately explain the allocation of course credit, did not find the differentiation between the two variable sections adequately explained, and suggested that the summer and fall sessions may be better structured as two separate courses with distinct outcomes.

The department was asked to meet one-on-one with the Associate Dean of the Graduate College to clean up language and address the committee’s concerns, after which the proposal can be revisited for action at the next meeting.

A motion to table the proposal passed unanimously.
D. College of Health and Human Services

1. Physician Assistant Studies
   a. PHA 511; “Human Physiology,” Fall 2016 – New Course
   b. PHA 512; “Human Pathology,” Fall 2016 – New Course
   c. Physician Assistant Studies; MPAS, Fall 2016 – Major Reqmts – Cours(s) Added, Major Reqmts – Course(s) Deleted, Major Reqmts – Unit Change

Dr. Emily Babcock (PA Studies) presented the proposals. To date, the two subjects have been captured by one course. In terms of sequencing, physiology aligns best with first (fall) semester coursework, while pathology is better suited to the body of second (spring) semester courses. The department has also found that a fair deal of review is required to bring an entire cohort up to speed, and the first semester physiology requirement fits well in the basic-science focus of the term. As such, the program requirements will change to 1 credit of physiology and 3 of pathology.

A motion to approve the proposal passed unanimously.

2. Physical Therapy
   a. PT 665; “Contemporary Wellness Models in Physical Therapy Practice,” Fall 2016 – New Course
   b. PT 657; “Prosthetics and Orthotics,” Fall 2016 – Catalogue Descr, Course Title, Units
   c. Physical Therapy; D.P.T., Fall 2016 – Major Reqmts – Course(s) Added, Major Reqmts – Course(s) Deleted, Major Reqmts – Unit Change

Dr. Petra Williams (Physical Therapy) presented the proposals. PT665 offers students essential instruction in preventative care, reflecting an overall trend in modern healthcare. It builds upon PT664, Clinical Epidemiology and Population Health, focusing on clinical application and business models of preventative care in physical therapy practice.

PT657 will shift to concepts expanded beyond prosthetics and orthotics, which are incorporated in the new course proposal. As physical therapy practice becomes increasingly technology and data driven, prosthetics and orthotics no longer represent the breadth of technology within practice. The new course will develop expertise in the latest advances in relevant technology, informing better practice in a rapidly changing professional environment.

Finally, the proposal adjusts course credit in the capstone project and electives credit to better reflect outcomes and contact hours, respectively. It also removes inefficiencies in the internship credit, in which students had previously completed four 8-10 week rotations (32 weeks) of clinical internship over 3 semesters. In the current approach, 45 semester-weeks are allotted for the completion of the clinical internship, leaving a great deal of superfluous time toward completion. The proposal reduces the load to 30 weeks over 2 semesters, aligning the rotational schedule with the academic schedule, and eliminating the extraneous time spent in academic credit while completing rotations. Overall, the proposals will reduce time to degree to a 100-104-hour range, or 7 semesters, benefitting the student and providing clinical sites with quicker access to practitioners.

A member inquired as to how time to degree now compares to other programs. Dr. Babcock noted that most programs are a three-year timeline, while with this proposal NAU will reduce to just two. The
department realized that if clinical partners are ready and able to accommodate students, then this approach is a “no-brainer.”

A motion to approve the proposals passed unanimously.

3. Health Sciences
   a. Clinical and Translational Sciences; GCRT, Fall 2016 – Delete Plan

Dr. Robert Trotter, Vice President for Research, presented the proposal. Originally, this program was a tri-institution endeavor in which students at other institutions essentially paid for NAU credit. The sister institutions abandoned the program, and without resources the department has found it unsustainable.

A motion to approve the proposal passed unanimously.

IV. Informational Items

   A. January 20, 2016 Fast Track Report

The item was reviewed with no comment by the committee.

V. Discussion Items

   1. Continuous Enrollment

Dr. John Masserini presented the Continuous Enrollment discussion item. As per policy, students enrolling in 699 or 799 are required to maintain enrollment through the successful defense, approval and publication of the thesis or dissertation. The Graduate College is now auditing enrollment early each semester, and students not in compliance are reminded to register. By policy, those who do not will face credit deficits at gradation that must be rectified before posting. Naturally, this has led to some confused and irritated stakeholders, students and faculty alike, and Dr. Masserini expressed concern that the policy is not meeting the needs or expectations of the university.

Members were asked to open dialogues with their departments over the next 1-2 weeks, specifically addressing what each department’s expectation of the policy might be. The policy must respect the nuances of discipline and practice, but ought to provide a basic foundation. Exceptions to policy usually provide the latitude to accommodate specific or extenuating circumstances.

Dr. Masserini would like to develop consensus on the intent of the policy so that expectations, policy and practice can be brought to conformity.

A member noted that part of the policy’s intent was to address the tendency of students to pay for credit in 699/799 in a strictly convenient manner – whether paying ahead without working on the research or working on the research without paying. The policy also encourages expedient completion.

Dr. Masserini acknowledged this aspect, and offered members several guiding thoughts. First, it is indeed good to encourage completion. It is also appropriate to capture compensation for the use of university resources, whether human or capital. Also, members should consider that the number of units must be tied to effort and thesis/dissertation credits cannot simply be used as placeholders or padding for a semester’s schedule.

The policy will be presented for vetting and action before the end of the academic year. Members were asked to provide feedback to Dr. Masserini as soon as possible.
VI. Action Items

1. **GPA Reset Policy**  
   **Clean Version**  
   **GPA Reset Form**

Dr. John Masserini presented the proposed policy change. The proposed changes to the GPA Requirements for Graduate Students would formalize in policy an established practice. In one of two circumstances, students may request their GPA be reset: 1) as a graduate enrolling in a new, second program 2) as a student previously in academic distress who is returning to graduate studies after a 2-year period of personal development. Resets may be granted strictly once.

In the former case, the Graduate College has reset GPAs in order for the student to reflect in record their academic achievement in the second program. In particular, this may allow a student to demonstrate on record an improvement in their academic achievement in the second program.

In the latter case, the Graduate College recognizes a need to accommodate students who have demonstrated significant personal and professional development since leaving a previous program in less than good academic standing. Resetting the GPA allows the student to reflect their development on record, and more importantly, makes it mathematically possible for a student with a previous low GPA to meet minimum GPA requirements.

Members expressed a number of concerns. The committee sought clarification on under which circumstances the GPA reset may be applied to previously struggling students. Dr. Masserini explained that the policy may be applied after discontinuation, dismissal or two years of non-enrollment. The student may then petition for reset.

Members inquired as to how students who fail following reset would be handled. Dr. Masserini noted that they may be treated as any other student, and would be required to establish an academic improvement plan. He reminded the committee that departments are free to revise academic improvement plans as often as they see fit, but should a plan fail they are free to move for dismissal. The Graduate College does not take action on dismissal at the level of the low-grade hold; it is the departments’ purview to begin such actions.

Members worried of the equity in resetting a low GPA. The concept of expunging a poor academic metric seems contrary to the practice and philosophy of academic records. Other members noted that this policy allows students to move between NAU programs as if moving between universities, while the deficient grades remain on the academic transcript.

Members noted that language regarding simultaneous programs, the application of credits applied toward previous GPAs, and the circumstances governing application of the policy need clarification. Dr. Masserini agreed to revisit the policy and presented it for action at a later date.

A motion to table the policy pending further review passed unanimously.

2. **Institutional Repository**  
   **IR FAQ**

Dr. John Masserini briefly presented the proposal, noting it was ready for immediate vote.

A member asked for justification for the general preference toward Open Access, as the member’s discipline actually discourages Open Access for new publications. Dr. Masserini agreed to explore and expound upon the issue when developing the support materials for the IR.

A motion to approve the proposal passed unanimously.
Final Comments

Dr. Sam Clifford has solicited the comments of the committee in regard to the training and development of Graduate Assistants. Recognizing that every department has a unique approach, Dr. Clifford has developed a very brief survey of practices and needs. The ETD Coordinator will distribute the survey to the membership, and the committee was asked to respond as soon as convenient.

The meeting adjourned at 4:56pm.