DATE: March 22, 2010

TO: Tih-Fen Ting
    Chair Campus Senate
    Tena Helton
    Director of Graduate Studies, English Department

FROM: James Hall
    Graduate Council (Sharron LaFollette, Chair)

RE: Department of English Graduate Certificate in Teaching English

Graduate Council met on Monday, March 8, 2010, to review the request from the Department of English to approve a Graduate Certificate in Teaching English. This Certificate develops the analytic and practical skills necessary for successfully teaching English Studies in post-secondary institutions.

The Certificate would attract both non-M.A. and M.A.-seeking students who wish to teach at the college level or who wish to pursue a Ph.D. Past graduate students in the English M.A. have expressed concern that a lack of experience in teaching has inhibited their efforts to find employment or to gain admission to doctoral programs.

The Graduate Council believes the English Department has presented a well-developed certificate and delivery model. The proposed certificate consists of four four-credit hour courses and a two-credit hour practicum. Two of these courses already exist in the Department and two new courses have been developed. Courses will be sequenced for a fall and spring delivery and will be offered in an on-ground or blended format.

The Graduate Council considered the issue of staffing and resource requirements. The English Department has indicated it will be able to deliver the certificates using existing tenured and tenure-track faculty due to a more structured scheduling of graduate courses. The practicum component can be readily accommodated for students given that there are 12 sections of Composition offered each semester.

The Department also makes a compelling argument for the attractiveness of the certificate program in alignment with teacher recertification requirements in the State of Illinois. The Graduate Council believes that the combination of this certificate with the ability to award Advanced Teaching Assistantships (see separate memo) will attract high-quality students to the English Graduate program.

Therefore, Graduate Council recommends the approval of the attached resolution for the Graduate Certificate in Teaching English.

cc: Harry Berman, Provost & Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
    Lynn Pardie, Associate Vice Chancellor for Graduate Education & Research