UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT SPRINGFIELD
CAMPUS SENATE AY 2009/2010
RESOLUTION 39-19

Clarification of the Use of 400-level Undergraduate Courses for Graduate Credit

WHEREAS, the University of Illinois Springfield recognizes that 500- and 600-level courses are graduate courses and may be used toward graduate credit; and

WHEREAS, courses numbered 400-level and below are recognized as undergraduate courses; and

WHEREAS, campus policy allows 400-level courses to be offered as both undergraduate and graduate courses; and

WHEREAS, it is recognized that not all 400-level courses are necessarily structured to support graduate-level learning and, therefore, should not be allowed for graduate-level credit;

THEREFORE, program faculty shall determine whether and how many 400-level courses can be counted toward the program’s graduate degree and develop a written policy so indicating, which shall be placed in the program catalog copy; and

FURTHERMORE, faculty who teach 400-level courses that are structured to support graduate credit must indicate the course components and learning outcomes that are specific to graduate students within the syllabi for 400-level courses allowed for graduate credit; and

FURTHERMORE, in catalog copy, 400-level courses that can be taken for graduate credit shall carry a notation indicating whether they are available for graduate credit; and

FURTHERMORE, only 400-level courses designated as structured to accommodate graduate student learning experiences and outcomes by the programs shall be used for graduate credit.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the University of Illinois at Springfield Campus Senate approve the Clarification of the Use of 400-level Undergraduate Courses for Graduate Credit

Rationale:

Graduate Council is very cognizant of the challenges individual departments face in offering courses at a variety of instructional levels with limited instructional resources. In its role to ensure the high quality and consistency of graduate education at UIS, the Graduate Council administered a survey in
spring 2009 that, in part, asked graduate programs at the University of Illinois at Springfield to
describe their processes and procedures for identifying those 400-level courses that may be taken for
graduate credit. The response rate for the series of questions was 74 percent (14/19). The responses
themselves were highly variable with some programs allowing 400-level courses for graduate credit
and some programs only allowing 500-level courses and above for graduate credit. There seemed to
be no clear standard across disciplines

Given this variability across disciplines, Graduate Council found that determining a set of university
criteria for differentiating courses for graduate level credit is impossible and unnecessarily intrusive.
Nevertheless, Graduate Council believes the goal of consistency of expectations for those courses is
important. Such consistency provides clarity for students both within and outside home departments,
and demonstrates coherence for our accrediting bodies. The Graduate Council believes departments
should be transparent in their policies and procedures regarding 400-level courses for which students
may receive graduate credit.

Thus, the Graduate Council is recommending that clear and consistent procedures be developed at the
department level for evaluating the potential of 400-level courses to serve as a foundation for graduate
credit. Departments should institute a process by which the department faculty will collectively
determine which of their 400-level courses can be effectively augmented in order to provide a high-
quality, challenging experience for graduate students, consistent with university guidelines for
graduate education. Further, we recommend that departments carefully articulate the type of work that
needs to be done by graduate students in those 400-level courses that they deem qualified as a
foundation for graduate credit. Departments should review current 400-level course syllabi to
determine, as a department, which 400-level courses can effectively serve as the foundation for a
graduate-level learning experience, and therefore, can be taken for graduate credit. We also
recommend that whatever additional course components (e.g., readings, assignments, consultation with
the instructor of record) are needed to augment the undergraduate course for graduate-level study
should be highlighted in the syllabus under a heading addressed to graduate students. Then,
departments should indicate, within their course catalog descriptions, those 400-level courses that they
have determined can be used for graduate credit. A brief statement regarding the department’s overall
philosophy regarding graduate students taking 400-level courses for graduate credit would also be
helpful in maintaining clarity and consistency.