DATE: April 27, 2012

TO: Lori Giordano
UIS Admissions Office

FROM: Sharron LaFollette, Chair
Graduate Council

RE: Admission policy for students holding a master’s degree with the same title from another institution

The Admissions Office requested that Graduate Council (GC) discuss and give guidance regarding how it should respond to requests for admissions into a master’s degree program at UIS from students who already hold a master’s degree with the same title from another institution. GC unanimously recommended allowing graduate academic programs to have final authority to admit or deny these students.

In review of this issue, GC consulted UIUC and UIC catalog language, the Council of Graduate Schools List Serve, the UIS Office of Records and Registration, and the UIS Financial Aid Office (Gerald Joseph). The above policy is consistent with the other campuses. In making the decision, GC agreed the following supported our position:

- Degree titles are not necessarily uniquely linked with a particular body of coursework. GC discussed examples where degree titles (e.g., MS Biology) may be used for a variety of study areas (e.g., botany, cell biology, ecology, etc.) representing distinct coursework.
- Graduate academic programs are uniquely positioned/qualified to review applicant transcripts to determine whether or not a duplication of academic degree programs might occur.
- UIS students cannot retake a degree with the same title from UIS.
- Although they do not readily market this option, other universities permit applicants to request consideration for admission into a second degree with the same title.

GC recommends that the Admissions Office not serve as primary screener of these students. Instead, after initial review of application materials by the Admissions Office, the application material should be flagged noting an existing duplicate degree title. The academic program shall determine whether the existing degree is significantly different from the UIS degree of the same title.

Both the Admissions Office and the academic program should notify the student that a second degree with the same title does not qualify for financial aid, as the U.S. Department of Education
does not permit financial aid for duplicate degree titles. Qualification for financial aid shall not be the primary determining factor for admissions of the student into the academic degree.

According to the Governance and Administration Approval Chart for curriculum review, and in consultation with the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, this issue does not require additional governance review. Therefore, this memo will be shared as a report to the Campus Senate reflecting the guidance given to the Admissions Office by the GC.

cc. John Martin, Campus Senate Chair
    Cecilia Cornell, Faculty Associate in the Provost’s Office
    Campus Senate Office