SPECIAL REPORT

OF THE

GRADUATE COUNCIL

concerning a

REVISION OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE M.S. DEGREE
IN LABOR STUDIES

Presented at the
752nd Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
November 12, 2015

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Neal Abraham        Cynthia Jacelon
Jane Baran           A Yemisi Jimoh
Maria Barbon         Arthur Kinney
Lori Baronas          Kevin Klement
D. Anthony Butterfield  David Kotz
Leslie Button         Beth Lang
Javier Campos         John Lopes
Carey Dimmitt        Michael Malone
David Ford            John McCarthy
Rachel Friedensen    MJ Peterson
Adina Giannelli       Frederic Schaffer
Steve Goodwin         Patrick Sullivan
Linda Griffin, Chair  Nathan Therien
Mark Hamin            David Vaillancourt
Neil Immerman         Tilman Wolf
The Academic Standards and Curriculum Committee (ASCC) of the Graduate Council met on October 7, 2015 and reviewed the proposal for a Revision of the Requirements for the M.S. Degree in Labor Studies. The ASCC recommended this proposal for approval.

On Wednesday, October 13, 2015, the Graduate Council unanimously approved the Revision of the Requirements for the M.S. Degree in Labor Studies, proposal #1770 in the Course and Curriculum Management System.

MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the Revision of the Requirements for the M.S. Degree in Labor Studies, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 16-013.
Please describe your proposal.

Revise requirements for the M.S. Degree in Labor Studies to require 36 graduate credits.

Please describe the existing program requirements, listing all required courses and available electives, as well as any additional requirements, and continuation or admissions policies.

Master of Science in Labor Studies Degree Program:
This unique program is designed to equip students for careers in the labor movement, related social justice organizations, or further academic work. The multidisciplinary program combines coursework, labor research, and an internship in which students gain experiential knowledge of the field. Graduate courses provide not only the skills necessary to work in and with the labor movement—expertise in research, organizing, collective bargaining, and union leadership—but also an opportunity to examine the larger theoretical and strategic issues confronting workers. Students may focus their research in areas including globalization, labor and communities, women and work, labor education, and strategic corporate research, in order to explore in depth these cutting-edge issues.

The requirements for the degree are:

1. Forty-two graduate credits of which no more than six may be transferred from other accredited institutions.

2. An internship with a labor organization, non-governmental organization, or agency, usually in the summer between the first and second year.

3. A research and writing seminar. Six credits are granted upon completion of the final paper, related to the internship or another topic.

Students admitted to the Master of Science in Labor Studies degree program come from a wide range of undergraduate majors in the social sciences and humanities. They bring different kinds of experience, including work in the labor movement, campus organizing, organizing against sweatshops, and other types of community-based work experience.

The core curriculum includes the following required courses: 605 Labor Research, 741 Introduction to Labor Studies, 742 Labor Law, 697 Special Topics — U.S. Labor History, Labor in the U.S. Economy, Organizing, and Collective Bargaining. Electives are offered in a wide range of fields within Labor Studies. In addition, many students take related courses with affiliated faculty in Economics, Sociology, History, Public Health, and other departments and programs within the University. Full-time students typically complete the program in two years. Students’ courses of study are planned in consultation with their advisors, to fit their individual needs and interests.

Please describe the requirements that you are proposing, listing course requirements, elective options, as well as any additional requirements, and continuation or admissions policies.

The department is not changing the requirements for required courses. The department currently has seven required courses, plus a six-credit research and writing seminar, for a total of 27 required credits. The department currently requires students in our full-time graduate program to take 15 credits of electives in addition to these required credits. The department proposes to require nine credits of electives (three courses), for a total of 36 graduate credits. Other than lowering the number of electives by two courses, we do not propose any other changes to the curriculum or course requirements.
Please provide the rationale for these revisions.

The department offers the M.S. degree in Labor Studies in two formats: full-time and part-time. The part-time program is offered through CPE and requires 36 credits. The full-time program requires 42 credits, with the only difference being the number of electives. Part-time students need only 9 credits of electives; full-time students need 15. There is no academic or intellectual justification for the two programs -- which offer the exact same M.S. degree in Labor Studies -- to have different requirements for the number of credits. This is an historical artifact and has no rationale in the current system. Furthermore, in the past few years, the Labor Center has not had a large enough budget to offer many elective courses. The department is therefore in the position of requiring our students to take 15 credits in other graduate programs. This is not an essential part of the curriculum and so it makes to trim the requirements to three elective courses. Finally, as more of our students transfer back and forth between the two programs, or combine CPE courses with on-campus courses as they complete their degrees, it makes no sense for the two programs to have different requirements.

Academic Requirements Review

Requirements Not Available At This Time

Resources:

If this proposal requires no additional resources, say so and briefly explain why. If this proposal requires additional resources, explain how they will be paid for. For proposals involving instruction, indicate how many new enrollments are expected and whether the courses have room to accommodate them.

No additional resources are required. The department hopes to save resources by lowering the number of required courses and will use any saved resources to build a new five-year BA/MS program.