

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

ACADEMIC SENATE

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

REPORT TO

THE ACADEMIC SENATE

AP-034-212

Establishment of a Required Graduation Course for all Graduate Students

Academic Programs Committee

Date: 11/16/2022

**Executive Committee
Received and Forwarded**

Date: 1/25/2023

Academic Senate

**Date: 2/15/2023
First Reading**

BACKGROUND: The Library, the Registrar, and the Graduate Studies Office report significant delay times in graduate student's graduation mainly due to student's unfamiliarity with the graduation process. The graduation process involves several steps, including applying for graduation, completing a comprehensive exam, defending a thesis/project, acquiring signatures from committee members, and faculty submitting a report of culminating experience. In addition, when students submit documents to BroncoScholar Works, they must also complete a library formatting review before uploading their work.

Even though the graduation process is well described online, and the University Library and Registrar's Office provide several workshops, these efforts are insufficient as many students overlook the training and are unaware of these steps when they try to graduate. In addition, many times the faculty advisors do not tend to be knowledgeable of the details of each step in the process as they rely on staff in the responsible offices to get students through the process. Explaining these processes to each unprepared student creates an undue workload burden on various University offices.

It is proposed to create a required zero-unit online asynchronous graduation course that will help reduce students' gap knowledge on the University graduation policies. A class is being proposed because it was concluded that this is the only effective way to ensure a common requirement to all graduate students. The class would be hosted in the University's LMS (currently Canvas), and its completion would be part of the student's requirements towards graduation. The class would be automatically graded with quizzes that can be taken multiple times without penalties and carry no GPA effect. There would be no financial cost for students to take this class. Also, the content would be available to them as long as they are an active student at CPP.

RESOURCES CONSULTED:

Associate Deans, all colleges
Graduate Coordinators, all graduate-level programs
Dr. Salomón Oldak, Director of Graduate Studies

DISCUSSION:

After receiving this referral, the Academic Programs Committee conducted campus-wide consultations. The Committee members reached out to all the graduate coordinators on campus and received a lot of feedback. Most of the feedback was positive with agreement that both students and faculty would benefit from this course. The Committee members, and most graduate coordinators, liked the flexibility of the asynchronous mode of instruction, and that each graduate program would have the option to implement the course as they see it best fits in their program. Also, many see the value in the content being made available as a resource for students (and faculty).

There were some programs that were hesitant with requiring this course because graduate programs operate differently, so they don't know how one course could fit all.

The Director of Graduate Studies (currently Dr. Salomón Oldak) assured the Committee that the course would provide general information about the different types of requirements in different programs. In addition, the course would be designed so graduate students would not need to complete the sections that are not relevant to their program.

The AP Committee members were concerned with the additional workload that will be placed on the Director of Graduate Studies (currently Dr. Salomón Oldak) who will be responsible for creating, managing, coordinating, and updating the course. Dr. Oldak informed the Committee that the course will be created by a committee with staff from the Registrar's Office, Library, and faculty members. Once the course is created, the content will be made available to graduate coordinators who can share the content with faculty. The Committee agreed that once the course is created and implemented, it will likely be a cost-reduction to the University as it will hopefully reduce the amount of time staff from the Library and Registrar's Office will need to spend helping students.

Overall, the Committee is in support of the requirement of such a course that will hopefully reduce the burden on staff from various University offices. The Committee members agreed that this course is worth creating to see if this helps graduate students with their graduation requirements.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Academic Programs Committee unanimously recommends approval of the establishment of a required graduation course for all graduate students.