University Council Recommendations
The University of Georgia

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To: President Michael F. Adams

Re: DOCUMENT NUMBER: 2005.9.22.04

Issue: A proposal for a Non-thesis Option for a Major in Exercise Science (M.S.).

Discussion: None

Action: The vote was called and the proposal was approved.

Submitted by: Rebecca L. Macon — 9.26.05

Rebecca L. Macon, Secretary — Date

- [x] Approved
- [ ] Reconsider
- [ ] Vetoed (see attached explanation)
- [ ] Received

M. F. Adams — 10-6-05

Michael F. Adams, President — Date

Attachment

Proposal to Add a Non-thesis Option to the M.S. in Exercise Science

Department of Kinesiology

Submitted to: Dr. Maureen Grasso
Dean, Graduate School
514 Boyd GSRC
University of Georgia

Prepared by: Dr. Kirk Cureton
Interim Head, Department of Kinesiology
Ramsey Center
University of Georgia

Basic Information:

College: Education
Department: Kinesiology
Name of Proposed Program: Addition of a non-thesis option to the M.S. in exercise science
Starting Date: Fall, 2005

Program Description:

A non-thesis option is requested for the M.S. degree with a major in exercise science. This option would be elected by students who do not plan to complete a Ph.D. and who are pursuing allied health careers that do not involve research, such as in clinical exercise physiology or athletic training. The programs of study of students electing the thesis and non-thesis option would include most of the same types of science courses, except that those in the non-thesis option would not complete a thesis, would not be required to attend a research seminar and would not be required to take a course in statistics. In place of a thesis, students will be required to complete 12 additional semester hours of graduate course work. Students also will be required to pass a final oral and/or written exam administered by the major professor and two other faculty.

General and Department requirements for the M.S. with thesis option will not change and will include:

1. Completion of 24 semester hours of graduate course work exclusive of thesis credit, including a course in research methods, one course in statistics, at least 6 semester hours with a specialized focus in the area of research and at least 2 semester hours of research seminar in exercise science. Prior to graduation students must have completed at least one undergraduate or graduate course in at least 3 of the 4 specialization areas (biomechanics, exercise physiology, exercise physiology, measurement).
2. Completion of a thesis with at least 6 semester hours of credit in EXRS 7300.
3. Pass a final oral examination over the program of study.

Requirements for the M.S. with non-thesis options will include:

1. Completion of 36 semester hours of graduate course work, including a course in research methods, with other required and elective courses varying by area of emphasis. Prior to graduation students must have completed at least one undergraduate or graduate course in at least 3 of the 4 specialization areas (biomechanics, exercise physiology, exercise physiology, measurement).
2. Pass a final oral examination over the program of study.

Faculty Vote:

The graduate faculty of the Department of Kinesiology voted 12-0 in favor of establishing the non-thesis option for the M.S. with a major in Exercise Science.

Justification and Need for the Non-Thesis M.S. Option:

There are several reasons why a non-thesis M.S. option is justified and needed. (1) Not all master's students in Kinesiology desire or benefit sufficiently from completing a master's thesis to justify the requirement. There are students who do not go on to complete a Ph.D. and do not desire a career that involves research. Many pursue careers in adult fitness, cardiac rehabilitation, athletic training or other allied health fields. For these students, the experience a completing a research study for a thesis is not as valuable as additional course work that better prepares them for their chosen career. Thus, a non-thesis option is needed. (2) Because a non-thesis option for the M.A./M.S. has not been available in the College of Education, we have used the professional educational degree (M.Ed.) that did not require a thesis for students who desired careers that did not involve research. However, the M.Ed. is not appropriate for our students, who obtain positions in allied health fields (clinical exercise physiology, athletic training, etc.) rather than in teaching. Master's students in M.Ed. programs in exercise science have consistently indicated they would prefer the M.S. degree. The M.Ed. degree has been a problem for some of our graduates who apply for positions in hospitals and clinics, where a science degree reflective of their program of study is expected. In addition, offering the two master's degrees has been confusing for prospective students, who do not understand why there are two degrees. The M.S. is the most appropriate degree for our students, all of whom pursue a science, research-based curriculum. (3) Offering an M.S. with thesis and non-thesis options will help us more-effectively compete for students with other kinesiology programs, especially those we consider our peers. Many of the best kinesiology programs in the country, including those with whom we directly compete for students, offer an M.S. in kinesiology or exercise science with thesis and nonthesis options, such as the University of Illinois, Indiana University, University of Iowa, Michigan State University, University of Florida, University of South Carolina, and University of Tennessee. For us to be competitive, it is important that we offer comparable options. (4) Finally, there is established precedent on campus for non-thesis M.A./M.S. degrees. There are non-thesis options for the M.A. in mathematics and the M.S. in statistics, and the Grady College is proposing a non-thesis option for the M.A.

Impact on Current Students:

There would be no adverse impact on current master's degree students in the Department. Students currently enrolled in M.Ed. degree programs would have the option of changing to the M.S. non-thesis option or completing the M.Ed. The programs of study would not change. We anticipate that if the program is approved for implementation in Fall, 2005, approximately 10 M.Ed. students will request to change from the M.Ed. to the M.S. non-thesis option. Future students will enroll in the M.S. non-thesis option instead of the M.Ed. If the non-thesis option for the M.S. is approved, the M.Ed. degree in exercise science will be terminated.

Financial Impact

No new courses, faculty, facilities or services will be required to implement a non-thesis option for the M.S. Thus, no new funds are required.