1967

Committee on Curricular Affairs - 35th Full Report - Non-Thesis Option for Master of Arts Degree in Elementary and Secondary Education

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
FACULTY SENATE

BILL

Adopted by the Faculty Senate

TO: President Francis H. Horn
FROM: Chairman of the Faculty Senate

1. The Attached BILL, titled Committee on Curricular Affairs - 35th Full Report - Non-Thesis Option for Master of Arts Degree in Elementary and Secondary Education is forwarded for your consideration.

2. The original and two copies for your use are included.

3. This BILL was adopted by vote of the Faculty Senate on January 19, 1967.

4. After considering this bill, will you please indicate your approval or disapproval. Return the original or forward it to the Board of Trustees, completing the appropriate endorsement below.

5. In accordance with Section 8, paragraph 2 of the Senate's By-Laws, this bill will become effective on February 16, 1967, three weeks after Senate approval, unless: (1) specific dates for implementation are written into the bill; (2) you return it disapproved; (3) you forward it to the Board of Trustees for their approval; or (4) the University Faculty petitions for a referendum. If the bill is forwarded to the Board of Trustees, it will not become effective until approved by the Board.

February 1, 1967
(date)

William R. Fernandes /s/
Chairman of the Faculty Senate

ENDORSEMENT 1.

TO: Chairman of the Faculty Senate
FROM: President of the University

1. Returned.

2. Approved  Disapproved.

3. (If approved) In my opinion, transmittal to the Board of Trustees is not necessary.

(over)
ALTERNATE ENDORSEMENT 1.

TO: Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

FROM: The University President

1. Forwarded.
2. Approved.

(date) /s/ President

ENDORSEMENT 2.

TO: Chairman of the Faculty Senate

FROM: Chairman of the Board of Trustees, via the University President.

1. Forwarded.

(date) /s/ (Office)

ENDORSEMENT 3.

TO: Chairman of the Faculty Senate

FROM: The University President

1. Forwarded from the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

(date) /s/ President

Original received and forwarded to the Secretary of the Senate and Registrar for filing in the Archives of the University.

(date) /s/ Chairman of the Faculty Senate
The Faculty Senate approves the Non-Thesis Option for the Master of Arts Degree in Elementary and Secondary Education proposed by the Department of Education. Explanation of the program is contained in the attached memorandum from the Department of Education dated November 1, 1966.
OFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Peter Nash, Dean of the Graduate School
    DATE: November 1, 1966

FROM: Thomas E. Moriarty

SUBJECT: Non-Thesis Option (Plan E) for the Master of Arts Degree in Elementary and Secondary Education

The Education Department requests the approval of the Graduate Council to offer both the thesis (Plan T) and non-thesis (Plan E) to candidates for the master of arts degree in either elementary education or secondary education. The existing programs and the proposed options are outlined on pages 2 and 3 of this memorandum.

RATIONALE FOR GRADUATE STUDY AND OPTIONAL PROGRAMS

Aims of Graduate Study in Teacher Education. The aim of graduate study in secondary and elementary education is to provide the means whereby the student can improve and extend his or her formal education in a manner which will enhance teaching competencies. Normally participants in the master's degree programs remain as classroom teachers after the degree is awarded. However, some individuals desire graduate study as a basis for seeking positions as supervisors or departmental chairmen. In either case, flexibility must be provided in order to enable teachers to enhance their capabilities and opportunities in the field of education.

In keeping with this general aim, the Education Department believes that the goals of each graduate student should be an extension of undergraduate education in terms of developing:

a. Precision of thought and expression.
b. Knowledge of the methods of research and investigation.
c. Discipline in logical methods of thought.
d. Skill in the critical appraisal of his own work as well as that of others.
e. Enlarged mastery of the subject matter of a defined field.
f. A well-defined philosophy of education.
g. Ethical standards of conduct.

In support of these purposes, the graduate program should provide training and practice in experiences which will enable the student to perform the following skills:

a. Stating problems clearly.
b. Analyzing problems and testing hypotheses.
c. Locating material efficiently.
d. Reading effectively - both extensively and intensively.
e. Evaluating evidence critically.
f. Making clear, correct, and effective statements - both oral and written.

In specific terms, the program should contribute to the following competencies:
Graduate Study in Elementary Education
Options -- Plan T and Plan E

**Thesis Option (Plan T) (Example of Plan of Study)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education 303 Education in a Contemporary Society</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education 370 Foundations of Educational Research</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Methods Course</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Curriculum Course</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration/Supervision Course</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Arts Elective</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Elective</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Non-Thesis Option (Plan E) (Example of Plan of Study)**

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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Elective</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Required Sequence</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education 314 Recent Trends in Elementary Education</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education ____ Curriculum Field Study and Seminar</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graduate Study in Secondary Education
Options -- Plan T and Plan E

Thesis Option (Plan T) (Example of Plan of Study)

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<tr>
<td>Education 370</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education 365</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>0-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Matter Concentration</td>
<td>12-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-Thesis Option (Plan E) (Example of Plan of Study)

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<tr>
<td>Required Sequence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Course in Research and Curriculum</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development in Their Field of Concentration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Field Study and Seminar</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Presently the Education Department has special curriculum area courses in mathematics, social studies, and English. It is anticipated that courses involving other curriculum areas will be developed in accordance with demand and staffing considerations. A special area course will be a prerequisite to and serve as a basis for the field study and seminar.
1. Knowledge of the important concepts in the field in which he or she is now engaged in teaching or plans to teach.
2. Knowledge of the important concepts in other fields especially those that have relevance to the area now taught or to be taught - for example, a knowledge of economics, geography, political science for the history teacher.
3. A continued interest in obtaining new insights into the area now taught and a skill in revising the curriculum in concert with these new insights.
4. A knowledge of the factors which affect learning, e.g., sociological, philosophical, psychological.
5. A knowledge of how to use information about a child's characteristics to the child's advantage in the learning process.
6. Ability to understand and use the insights about the factors affecting learning as they appear in research reports and the experiences of others.
7. An ability to excite students about the content being taught whether the student be average, below average, or above average in ability.
8. An ability to set realistic goals for the students.
9. An ability to evaluate the interaction of the child, the curriculum, the teacher, and their goals.
10. An ability to evaluate and use the experiences of others, contemporaries and others.
11. An understanding of the organization and administration of the school.
12. An understanding of the role of the school in society.

Options Proposed. To assist the student to achieve the goals as stated, it is proposed that a thesis and non-thesis option be available to the student. Each option involves the completion of a thirty-credit program which includes an independent project for each student, the major difference being one of emphasis. The thesis option would continue to be oriented toward laboratory and field experiment while the non-thesis option would deal primarily with the implementation of experimental research already conducted. Evidence to support a decision to propose optional programs may be found by a review of curricula at other colleges and universities offering master's degree programs in teacher education. In our region, for example, the non-thesis option is available at Boston University, Harvard, Rutgers, Syracuse, Columbia, University of Connecticut, University of Maine, University of Massachusetts, and Rhode Island College. In fact, a survey of major institutions throughout the country failed to identify one university which did not provide an option.

The Thesis Option. This program, currently in operation, requires the successful completion of an approved program of thirty credit hours. Six credit hours are assigned the thesis. The thesis is commonly oriented toward laboratory and field experiment in search of new knowledge concerning content, organization, or administration of the curriculum for general or for specific groups of students. Occasionally, the thesis is organized to discover evidence of a philosophical and historical nature as it pertains to the public schools.

The Non-Thesis Option. The non-thesis option would demand the successful completion of an approved program of thirty credits. Each student would be required to participate in a two-semester sequence (6 credits) involving the study of research in specific areas and field production and evaluation of a project oriented to the administration and organization of the curriculum. The topics for such projects might include the preparation of curriculum materials according to dictates of research, the integration of new materials and current trends in curriculum, the construction of a curriculum according to the dictates of a certain philosophy, the preparation of materials for a special group of students, e.g., the gifted.
In essence, the major project or field study under the auspices of the graduate adviser may pertain to organizing, executing, and evaluating curriculum innovation or revision, extracurricular activities, in-service education, or community and public relations programs. In every case the project must involve field study and run concurrently with a seminar.

The basic difference between the project and the thesis would be one of application. That is, this project would be an attempt to draft innovations and revisions in accordance with the evidence of research already conducted—the assimilation of research findings into the field setting.

The rationale for this option is that teachers and supervisors as practitioners are consumers of research rather than technical producers of it, and their skill in teaching will be enhanced by understanding the findings of research and application of it to their work. A knowledge of the findings of professional researchers based upon dependable generalizations from well-designed projects, an appreciation of the implications for such findings for teaching, and an understanding of ways to apply the findings to the classroom better serve teachers than struggling to write theses which purport to be original works.

ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAMS

The candidate who wishes to elect the non-thesis program must make application for that option. His acceptance into the program will be conditioned by the requirements of the Graduate School, the requirements of the Education Department, and the availability or space in the selected program.

Upon admission to the thesis option, a major adviser is appointed whose duties are to (1) set up the plan of studies; (2) assist in writing the proposal for the thesis; (3) act as chairman of the graduate thesis committee when it is appointed. (This policy is in accordance with existing procedures for thesis programs.)

Upon admission to the non-thesis option (Plan E), a student would be assigned a graduate adviser, whose duties would be:

1. to file a plan of studies approved by the Chairman of the Department and the Dean of the Graduate School;
2. to approve the proposal of the field study;
3. to seek whatever other resources (in or outside the Department of Education) necessary to assist the student in the conduct of the field study;
4. to supervise field studies and conduct seminars for the students assigned to him;
5. to evaluate the validity and feasibility of the field study on the basis of the final report of the project as prepared by the student.

The candidate for the master of arts degree (Plan E) must submit a final report, prepared under the supervision of his graduate adviser, and growing out of his participation in the required coursework and seminar.

The final report of the field study and project must be approved by the graduate adviser. In addition, the report must be approved by the Chairman of the Department of Education.
Written Report of Plan E. The final report will be critically evaluated for standards of writing and evidence of scholarship. The format will follow the regulations for reporting set out by the Graduate Office. Upon receipt of a certificate of approval from the readers, the Chairman of the Department of Education will attest to the Dean of the Graduate School that the student has satisfactorily completed the project and field study.

The candidate will prepare three typewritten copies of the final report, the first on high-grade bond paper, the second on second-grade bond paper, and the third on onion skin. The format of the report shall comply with standards for the preparation of theses and written work available in the Graduate School. The first two copies will be bound and deposited in the Department of Education. The candidate will prepare twenty-five (25) single-spaced, typewritten copies of an abstract of his report not to exceed 600 words or one page. Its title will include the title of the project, name of the student, name of graduate adviser, and the date filed. One copy of the abstract will be deposited in a file of abstracts of projects of Plan E, Education Department, in the University Library, one in the Graduate School, and one in the Department of Education. Copies shall be distributed to all members of the Education Department.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION

The proposal should become operational on June 1, 1967. Upon approval by the Graduate Council, students who are currently candidates for the master's degree should have the privilege of choosing the non-thesis option providing they resubmit a plan of studies satisfactory to the Education Department and to the Graduate School.

Examinations. Each candidate for the degree must satisfactorily pass a terminating subject matter written examination. In either option, the written examination will cover the coursework in the plan of studies. Candidates completing Plan T must satisfactorily pass an oral examination in defense of the thesis. In Plan E, the seminar in connection with the field study will serve as a substitute for the oral examination.