

Graduate Education Task Force  
Final Report

Background:

Early in the Fall semester of 2011, with the guidance of Provost Frank, a call was made for the creation of a task force with focus on Graduate Education at NEIU. The main goal of this task force was to follow up on action step 2.1.1 enunciated for FY 2011 in NEIU's strategic plan: "*Develop a Statement of Objectives for the Baccalaureate Degree and a Statement of Objectives for the Masters Degree at NEIU.*"

The task force was established under the direction of Theresa Segura-Herrera (Counselor Education – COE) and Marcelo Sztainberg (Computer Science – CAS). The following faculty members were selected as part of the task force:

- Essam Elshafie, Accounting – COBM
- Marian Gidea, Mathematics – CAS
- Dennis Grammenos, GIS – CAS (Representing FCAA)
- Craig Johnston, Counselor Education – COE
- Michele Kane, Special Education – COE (Representing FCAA)
- David Leaman, Political Science – CAS
- Shahrzad Mahootian, Linguistics – CAS (Representing Faculty Senate)
- Jeanine Ntahirageza, TESL – CAS (Representing Graduate Council)
- Jade Stanley, Social Work – CAS
- Moira Stuart, HPERA – COE
- Joaquin Villegas, Teacher Education – COE

Task force members helped with the collection of information through the organization of 18 focus groups that met with an overall participation of more than 100 members of NEIU community. This document presents a summary of the findings of the task force.

## Section 1: Original announcement and call for nominations

### **Task force on Graduate Education**

**Academic Excellence and Innovation** is the second goal of NEIU's Strategic Plan. Its first action step (2.1.1) aims to "Develop a Statement of Objectives for the Baccalaureate Degree and a Statement of Objectives for the Masters Degree at NEIU."

The Annual Workplan for fiscal year 2011, activity 2.1.1, corresponding to the action step enunciated above, states: "Establish a University-wide task force on graduate education to develop the Statement of Objectives for the Masters Degree, determine workforce demand and interest for current and future programs, examine the organizational structure, and explore the feasibility of doctoral degree programs within the College of Education."

In accordance with this plan, the Provost's Office calls for the creation of a task force that will work towards the following:

#### Goals:

- Identify the core mission of graduate education at NEIU.
  - Professional programs vis-à-vis "pre-doctorate" programs
- Define a set of metrics that can help determine the viability of a graduate program
  - Human resources needed (Faculty and Staff)
  - Minimum number of students
  - Overall cost of the program
- Perform an environmental scan
  - Determine work force demand (associated to current and future programs)
  - Compare to peer-institutions (benchmarking)
- Determine a good organizational structure to manage NEIU's graduate programs
  - Management structure / hosting office(s)
  - Formulation of a "graduate faculty member" profile
- Explore the feasibility of a doctoral program(s) to be hosted in the College of Education
  - Determine possible areas of concentration
  - Look at what other universities are doing (environmental scan)
  - Evaluate resources and cost (metrics)

## Section 2: Focus group announcement

### Graduate Education Task Force

#### Focus Groups Announcement and Schedule

The Graduate Education Task Force likes to extend an invitation to our NEIU community and strategic partners to participate in the conversations that will help shape the future of graduate education at NEIU. To that extent we will be hosting focus groups during the month of November. We have defined our groups in accordance to our six goals:

1. Identify the core mission of graduate education at NEIU.
2. Define a set of metrics that can help determine the viability of a graduate program
3. Perform an environmental scan
4. Determine a good organizational structure to manage NEIU's graduate programs
5. Explore the feasibility of a doctoral program(s) to be hosted in the College of Education
6. Explore the option of Dual Degree programs

A more descriptive presentation for each group follows, with designated meeting times. If you are interested in participating in a group but you cannot attend a particular meeting please contact the group's leadership for alternative ways of participation.

## **Focus Group 1: Core Mission of Graduate Education at NEIU**

*Co-Chairs:* Shahrzad Mahootian – Joaquin Villegas

*Meeting #1:* 11/11 noon-1pm SU 214

*Meeting #2:* 11/17 noon-1pm SU 215

*Meeting #3:* 11/24 noon-1pm SU 215

*Description:* The goal of this group is to determine the scope, objectives and goals of current and future graduate programs with the purpose of enhancing academic achievement across the disciplines and preparing students professionally.

Possible discussion topics include:

1. What should the core mission of a graduate education be?
2. What do you think your students expect to get from a graduate education?
3. What are your program goals and objectives for your students?

## **Focus Group 2: Metrics for Viability of Programs**

*Co-Chairs:* Dennis Gramenos – Marcelo Sztainberg

*Meeting #1:* 11/15 11:30am-12:30pm SU 215

*Meeting #2:* 11/23 11:30am-12:30pm SU 216

*Meeting #3:* 11/30 11:30am-12:30pm SU 216

*Description:* The goal of this group is to define a set of metrics that can help determine the viability of a graduate program and NEIU. We will study and compare variables that could help the success and sustainability of our programs.

Possible discussion topics include:

1. Faculty a staff needed to run a Masters program
2. Number of students that would make a program sustainable
3. Course offerings and other resources needed
4. Comparison with other institutions and programs

### **Focus Group 3: Work Force Demands and Peer Institutions Implications for Graduate Studies at NEIU**

*Co-Chairs:* Jeanine Ntahirageza, Craig Johnston

*Meeting #1:* 11/16 1:45pm – 3pm SCI 364

*Meeting #2:* 11/23 2pm – 3pm SU 216

*Meeting #3:* 11/30 1:45pm – 3pm SU 216

*Description* The mission of this group is to identify the need for existent, new, and emerging programs in light of current and future labor force demands. The group will identify areas of study that will enhance the university by building upon current departments as well as the potential need and feasibility of new college/departments through analysis of supply and demand among peer institutions.

Possible topics of discussion include:

1. Review of labor market data both in the Chicago Metropolitan Area as well as the Nation
2. Identification of emerging areas of study
3. Analysis of presence of these study areas among peer institutions in the Chicago Metropolitan Area
4. Preliminary discussion on the feasibility of such programs
5. Analysis of existing areas of study in peer institutions and evaluation of whether or not they are thriving, managing or failing

### **Focus Group 4: Organizational Structure of the Graduate College**

*Co-Chairs:* Jade Stanley, Marian Gidea

*Meeting #1:* 11/15 12:30pm-1:30pm SU 215

*Meeting #2:* 11/18 12:30pm-1:30pm LWH 1002

*Meeting #3:* 11/22 3pm-4pm SU 215

*Description:* This focus group aims to review the structure of the Graduate College and to make recommendations regarding an organizational model that supports academic achievement and professional growth, efficient implementation of procedures and policies, recruitment, and program development.

Some possible topics of discussion include:

1. Review past and current functions in the organization and administration of the Graduate College.
2. Examine graduate college models maintained by institutions in the peer group.
3. Make recommendations for possible enhancements in the areas of recruitment, admissions, development, and public relations
4. Evaluate services for students and faculty that could be provided by the Graduate College.
5. Formulate a profile for a “graduate faculty” member.

## **Focus Group 5: COE PhD Program Feasibility**

*Co-Chairs:* Moira Stuart, Theresa Segura-Herrera, Essam Elshafie

*Meeting #1:* 11/16 4pm-5:30pm           SCI 364  
*Meeting #2:* 11/18 1:45pm-3:15pm       LWH 1002  
*Meeting #3:* 12/1 5pm-6:30pm           SU 215

*Description:* The objective of the focus group is to explore the feasibility of offering doctoral studies within the College of Education at NEIU. To this end, the focus group will seek to determine potential student interest and factors that influence the decision making process to enter a doctoral program. Along with focus groups this subcommittee will review prior related reports, evaluate input from College of Education faculty, consider whether other peer institutions are offering similar PhD programs, investigate the demand for the degree, and evaluate resources to sustain a doctoral program at NEIU.

Possible topics of discussion include:

1. Disciplines or areas of concentration for the program
2. Factors that would attract students to pursue a PhD program at NEIU
3. Analysis of similar programs in our region

## **Focus Group 6: Feasibility of Dual Degree programs at NEIU**

*Co-Chairs:* Michelle Kane, David Leaman

*Meeting #1:* 11/9/10 3-5pm               SU 214  
*Meeting #2:* 11/19/10 10am-noon       SU 003  
*Meeting #3:* 11/23/10 1-3pm           SU 216

*Description:* This focus group on Dual Degree Programs seeks to examine the feasibility of initiating dual degree programs (undergraduate/graduate) at Northeastern Illinois University. Additionally, the pros and cons of adopting a dual degree program model will be explored during this session. All members of the university community are encouraged to participate to provide input.

Possible topics of discussion include:

1. Common set of requirements for student eligibility
2. Analysis on quantity and requirements for courses that could be applied for a dual degree
3. Review of similar programs at other institutions
4. Advantages and disadvantages of dual degree programs at NEIU

### Section 3: Summary of Findings by Focus Group

#### **Focus Group 1: Core Mission of Graduate Education at NEIU**

*Co-Chairs:* Shahrzad Mahootian – Joaquin Villegas

*Description:* The goal of this group is to determine the scope, objectives and goals of current and future graduate programs with the purpose of enhancing academic achievement across the disciplines and preparing students professionally.

#### **Key Questions:**

- **What should the core mission of a graduate education be?**
- **What do you think your students expect to get from a graduate education?**
- **What are your program goals and objectives for your students?**

Should graduate education focus on practical skills or just on philosophy of education? In general we envision our students to get:

- Rigorous training to develop skills, dispositions, knowledge for career advancement
- Advance knowledge base to enhance career paths/choices
- Bring a broader perspective to students in general & specifically
- Contribute to our students' personal growth

What are our student common needs?

- Get a first job or move ahead on a career path
- A rigorous and reputable curriculum
- Active advising in the discipline

Profile of our graduate students:

- Some come from our own undergraduate programs
- Most look for evening courses
- Most look at the MA/MS as a terminal degree
- Some disciplines have a strong international presence.

Does NEIU want to have a common set of goals (brand) for all our graduate programs? While each program has its particular needs and requirements we recognized the following common needs:

- Situating discipline in larger discourse
- Understanding or international/global community
- Students graduating from our programs should have a graduate capstone/portfolio

- Programs should have faculty with defined areas of expertise with expressed availability to students (either for mentoring, guidance, advising in masters capstone)
- There should be a “graduate faculty” criteria that could strengthen credibility for each program

#### Redefining advising at a graduate level:

- Give career advice looking at placement /advancement options
- Recognize that PhD programs might be an option for some of our students either right after obtaining the degree or after some professional experience
- Work on creating/supporting a Graduate Student Network
- Define options for research and service
- Utilize the advantages of social networking to connect with students
- Understand the complexity of globalization and its effects on our graduate programs

#### Major structural commonalities:

- Access and flexibility for our programs.
- Have a Graduate Coordinator / Program Director
- Define the notion of graduate faculty
- Define areas of expertise within the program and graduate faculty
- Showcase areas of expertise and research accomplishments
- Develop connections to alumni

#### Major programmatic commonalities:

- There should be defined sequences of courses that enable students a clear path for graduation since acceptance to it. Sequences should take into account full and part-time options
- Students must show ability to perform. This requirement should be clearly stated and have benchmarks through the program.
- Distinctions between MA, MS and professional degrees should be clearly defined
- Writing, speaking, analytical, and technological skills should be defined as critical skills across programs.
- Programs should have a set of competencies required for graduation

#### Graduate College support:

- Set up workshops for students on graduate studies and research. These workshops could be lead by advanced graduate students
- Conduct a graduate orientation at the beginning of each semester.
- Host a graduate program showcase/open house

## **Focus Group 2: Metrics for Viability of Programs**

*Co-Chairs:* Dennis Gramenos – Marcelo Sztainberg

*Description:* The goal of this group is to define a set of metrics that can help determine the viability of a graduate program and NEIU. We will study and compare variables that could help the success and sustainability of our programs.

### **Key Questions:**

- **Faculty and staff required to run a Masters program**
- **Number of students that would make a program sustainable**
- **Course offerings and other resources needed**
- **Comparison with other institutions and programs**

Number of students in a program:

- There should be parameters to define programs as “small” or “large”
- Smaller programs might work better on a “cohort” system

Program mission:

- A program’s mission should align with the Graduate College mission
- Try to create “distinctive” missions for our departments as the State does not want to duplicate missions with other schools
- Focus on degrees/opportunities for Teachers.
- Overall, “we cannot do everything,” as in catering to all possible students/programs
- Find our niche(s) both in foci and demographics (see also ‘strengths’)
- Departments should formulate a vision and plan for their programs that will allow them to grow or be consistent with the set of metrics defined by them.

Focus on our strengths:

- Compare parameters with peer institutions
- We are good at producing and serving teachers
- Work with minority students
- Make our programs more efficient to serve our population well

Working on a Metrics template:

- Availability of faculty (bodies and courses)
- Advising (students per advisor)
- Supply of courses
- Enrollment and degrees conferred (over a three year period)
- Marketing efforts
- Other needs
- Pay attention to special cases (either by discipline or students)

Program structure:

- Should departments have a graduate program coordinator / chair / advisor model or have a graduate committee instead?
- Programs should consider a cohort system to simplify planning of coursework.
- Programs could consider concentrating course work around particular days and times (ie courses only at night twice a week)
- Programs should include extra curricular activities (ie coffee hour)
- Departments should have websites that are maintained on a timely basis.
- Faculty profiles and research information should be available to current and prospective students
- Departments need an intro course/seminar to their programs

Define the role of advisors:

- Must be dynamic and current within the field
- Appropriate time/dedication to advisees
- Help with “intro to research”
- Help with students’ preparedness
- Measure the impact of dedicated advising (ie English)
- Make a distinction between the general advisor (“de facto”) and the thesis/project advisor (“elected”). Students should be directed to elect an advisor early on their programs

Interaction with Graduate College:

- Programs should get support from the College to work on course planning based on previous and current enrollment figures.
- The Graduate College should provide an environment where programs could share data and experiences to assess progress or to work on ideas that are successful within NEIU
- Departments should develop recruitment plans and work on resources, with the collaboration of the Graduate College.
- Some variables to consider for the recruitment component:
  - o Timeliness of the process
  - o Information about the program
  - o Financial incentives:
    - stipends and assistantships
    - scholarships
- The Graduate College should encourage and support departments to work on cross-disciplinary initiatives.

### **Focus Group 3: Work Force Demands and Peer Institutions Implications for Graduate Studies at NEIU**

*Co-Chairs:* Jeanine Ntahirageza, Craig Johnston

*Description* The mission of this group is to identify the need for existent, new, and emerging programs in light of current and future labor force demands. The group will identify areas of study that will enhance the university by building upon current departments as well as the potential need and feasibility of new college/departments through analysis of supply and demand among peer institutions.

#### **Key Questions:**

- **Review of labor market data both in the Chicago Metropolitan Area as well as the Nation**
- **Identification of emerging areas of study**
- **Analysis of presence of these study areas among peer institutions in the Chicago Metropolitan Area**
- **Preliminary discussion on the feasibility of such programs**
- **Analysis of existing areas of study in peer institutions and evaluation of whether or not they are thriving, managing or failing**

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats at NEIU (SWOT Analysis):

- Strengths
  - o Good anecdotal track record for some programs.
  - o Location: Proximity to North side of the city
  - o Cost of education lower than neighboring peer schools
  - o Culturally diverse and safe environment
  - o Expertise on Teacher Training
  - o Flexible admission requirements
- Weaknesses
  - o Program curriculum does not necessarily correlate to current labor market need.
  - o Commuter (non-residential) school
  - o Low profile regarding our local community
  - o Known as the Teacher's college, whereas the university offers much more
  - o We don't advertise enough
  - o We don't cater to our student population
  - o Diversity on paper, not in classroom
  - o Marketing issue
- Opportunities
  - o Rebrand ourselves
  - o Work on more professional degrees
  - o Expand our image beyond the "teaching institution" label
  - o Use the strengths of the faculty we have
  - o Pay more attention to labor stats. Adapt programs to areas of need.
  - o Design certificate programs that are cross-cultural, cross-discipline

- o Create “Fast tracks” for some programs
  - o Cultivate Alumni as a source of support and networking
- Threats
  - o Need more faculty

#### Definition of priorities

- Invest in professions with low minority presence
- Focus our advertising in the programs that we want to be known for
- Use certifications as other ways to attract students into our programs
- Align specialties to student demand
- Program “Career Days” and bring Alumni to talk to our students

#### Ideas for maximizing our strengths

- Offer more hybrid programs (onsite and online)
- Program strengthening: Build on what we already have. We can start new programs, or modify existing ones using some of the courses that are already established and successful.
- Look at prestigious programs and professions that underrepresented minorities focus on.
- Identify potential for partnerships and collaborations within departments

#### Suggestions to overcome identified threats

- Determine a set of skills that our students need before graduating. Address these needs through seminars, workshops that could complement our curricula.

#### Possible approaches to deal with our weaknesses

- Practice a shopping mall approach: local shopping mall, local grocery store kind of contact
- Blending, work to “sell our offerings” to the community
- Look at the naming of our departments and programs to find ways to help students and employers to associate programs to jobs

#### Taking advantage of our opportunities

- Identify programs/concentrations that are in high demand
- Consider offering courses at a time of high demand especially for particular groups (teachers, professionals)
- Offer programs in a variety of formats:
  - o Traditional: twice a week, once a week,
  - o Hybrid and Online
  - o Semi-presence: start onsite, continue online; finish onsite with presentations and exams.

#### Examples of programs in high employer demand

- Start a child family and school social work program within the Social Work department
- Health related programs: communication, administration
- Interdisciplinary studies
- Writing programs: Professional and technical and scientific writing

#### Notes from the Hanover Report

- Focus of the study: student and workforce demand. The ideal scenario is to have programs that meet both.
- We need to strengthen the programs that we have that match the findings and focus on creation of new programs that could address student and workforce demand.
- Degree and certificate programs that do not address student not workforce demand need to be evaluated in order to assess the distribution of resources within the departments that host these programs.
- Fields identified as “hot” by student and work-force demand:
  - o Computer Specialists (Computer Science, General)
  - o Computer Systems Analysts (Computer Systems Analysis/Analyst)
  - o Network Systems & Data Communication Analysts (Computer Systems Networking and Telecommunications)
  - o Registered Nurses (Nursing)
  - o Licensed Practical Nurses (Nursing)
  - o Primary and Secondary Special Education Teachers (Special Education)
  - o Business Operations Specialists (Business Administration)
  - o Counselors/Soc Workers/Community Service Specialists (Social Work, Counseling, Community Service Managers)
  - o Civil Engineers (Civil Engineering)

#### Suggestions for Department’s evaluation of programs

- Review of labor market data both in the Chicago Metropolitan Area as well as the Nation
- Identify emerging areas/fields of study
- Determine presence of these study areas among peer institutions in the Chicago Metropolitan Area and consider the situation of these programs (thriving, managing or failing)
- Analyze the feasibility of such programs taking into consideration existing resources and needs.

## Focus Group 4: Organizational Structure of the Graduate College

*Co-Chairs:* Jade Stanley, Marian Gidea

*Description:* This focus group aims to review the structure of the Graduate College and to make recommendations regarding an organizational model that supports academic achievement and professional growth, efficient implementation of procedures and policies, recruitment, and program development.

### Key Questions:

- **Review past and current functions in the organization and administration of the Graduate College.**
- **Examine graduate college models maintained by institutions in the peer group.**
- **Make recommendations for possible enhancements in the areas of recruitment, admissions, development, and public relations**
- **Evaluate services for students and faculty that could be provided by the Graduate College.**
- **Formulate a profile for a “graduate faculty” member.**

Functional components needed in any organizational structure that would oversee Graduate Education:

- Oversight of academic and curricular elements to ensure consistency of programs within departments and colleges
- Management and/or coordination of student services
  - o Recruitment
  - o Admission
  - o Transfer services
  - o Enrollment
  - o Financial Support: financial aid, tuition waivers, teaching and graduate assistantships
  - o Advising
  - o Graduation
- Programming activities
- Development through fundraising and exploration of grants
- Research support for faculty and students
- Faculty and professional development

General recommendations:

- There are numerous models for the structure of graduate education and the functions and services that pertain to graduate education. These models can be placed on a continuum representing opposing end points from highly centralized to highly decentralized.
- In order to have an effective and healthy organization a structure must be developed that would support the functions listed above.

- Each College at NEIU should be fairly represented within the organizational structure at the decision making level.
- The organizational model for Graduate College should be endowed with structures, tools, staff, and financial support necessary to advance its mission.

## **Focus Group 5: COE PhD Program Feasibility**

*Co-Chairs:* Moira Stuart, Theresa Segura-Herrera, Essam Elshafie

*Description:* The objective of the focus group is to explore the feasibility of offering doctoral studies within the College of Education at NEIU. To this end, the focus group will seek to determine potential student interest and factors that influence the decision making process to enter a doctoral program. Along with focus groups this subcommittee will review prior related reports, evaluate input from College of Education faculty, consider whether other peer institutions are offering similar PhD programs, investigate the demand for the degree, and evaluate resources to sustain a doctoral program at NEIU.

### **Key Questions:**

- **Disciplines or areas of concentration for the program**
- **Factors that would attract students to pursue a PhD program at NEIU**
- **Analysis of similar programs in our region**

Preliminary notes:

- A lack of attendance during the announced/advertised focus groups meeting required this group to use alternate strategies to begin exploring key questions.
- A focus group discussion was held during a CESA (Counselor Education Student Association) meeting
- This topic still needs more participation from students, faculty, administration, and other stakeholders to more accurately explore the viability and interest for a PhD/EdD program at NEIU

Possible disciplines or areas of concentration that could be a good fit for a PhD or an EdD program at NEIU:

- Counseling
- Counselor Education
- School Counseling
- Higher Education
- Higher Education Administration

Resources needed to make a PhD/EdD program successful at NEIU:

- A PhD/EdD program would have hard time recruiting students without available funding for scholarship and research
- Flexible scheduling of courses
- Attention to individual and group mentorship
- Individualized advising is required to direct a PhD thesis
- Focus on student need: professional or academic orientation?
- Programs would benefit by obtaining accreditation (CACREP, CORE)

### NEIU Strengths:

- Core courses are taught “in person” (not online)
- Culturally diverse environment
- As a public institution NEIU is seen as affordable while keeping its quality education
- Transition would be easy for current and former students of the Masters program

### NEIU Weaknesses:

- There is no indication of where the funding needed for a PhD/EdD program would come
- There seems to be low commitment level from faculty at the College of Education regarding this type of program
- NEIU should focus first on the current programs at the Masters level before thinking on PhD/EdD options
- Students feel that advising would have to improve greatly from the current model if we would want a successful program
- PhD/EdD programs are built around credibility of their faculty. Programs would have to improve their records of publications and partnerships with other institutions
- Programs are not up to date with current technological advances on the field

### Similar programs offered locally:

- Loyola and Governors State have programs in Counseling related fields
- UIC, DePaul, Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Adler, Argosy have programs in Psychology related fields

## **Focus Group 6: Feasibility of Dual Degree programs at NEIU**

*Co-Chairs:* Michelle Kane, David Leaman

*Description:* This focus group on Dual Degree Programs seeks to examine the feasibility of initiating dual degree programs (undergraduate/graduate) at Northeastern Illinois University. Additionally, the pros and cons of adopting a dual degree program model will be explored during this session. All members of the university community are encouraged to participate to provide input.

### **Key Questions:**

- **Common set of requirements for student eligibility**
- **Analysis on quantity and requirements for courses that could be applied for a dual degree**
- **Review of similar programs at other institutions**
- **Advantages and disadvantages of dual degree programs at NEIU**

#### Common set of requirements for student eligibility

- Admission into a Dual Degree Bachelor's/Master's program should be considered only once the student has completed at least 75 total undergraduate credits with at least 15 credits in the major
- The overall GPA should be at least 3.25 with a GPA of at least 3.5 in the major.
- Requirements for the Dual program might be more strict than requirements for the corresponding graduate program.
- For undergraduate programs with capstone courses, successful completion of the capstone should be a requirement for dual admission.

#### Analysis of quantity and requirements for courses that could be applied for a dual degree

- The consensus among focus groups participants was to determine a range from two to four courses that could be counted towards both bachelors' and masters' degrees.
- Programs could decide between allowing undergraduate courses to count towards both degrees or allowing Dual program students to take graduate courses instead.
- For programs where work experience is critical for graduate level courses Dual Degree implementation would need to be analyzed on a course basis.

#### Review of similar programs at other institutions

- Similar programs were mentioned at Loyola, DePaul, University of Illinois, Wayne State University, Rutgers University-Camden, Stockton College and Seton Hall University.
- Rutgers' program allows student to take masters-level courses in their last term of their senior year.

- There are some “3+2” programs with the University of Illinois that allow students to transfer while earning a BA or BS from a foreign institution and a MA or MS from U of I.
- Some schools do partnerships with foreign universities that allow students to obtain degrees in both institutions while sharing some of the course load.

### Advantages and disadvantages of dual degree programs at NEIU

- Advantages:
  - o NEIU would be able to keep some of our very good students by offering them the chance to finish their master’s degree in a more efficient manner.
  - o NEIU would be able to compete with institutions such as Loyola, DePaul, and University of Illinois that are offering dual degree programs and (for HRD) on-line majors.
  - o Dual degree programs with foreign schools may allow NEIU to build a greater number of strong international partnerships.
  - o Departments would be able to pursue dual degree programs if they wished but would not be required to do so.
- Disadvantages:
  - o Concern about allowing overlap between undergraduate and graduate credits for some departments.
  - o This program might be difficult to implement in certain majors where field/career experience is critical for graduate studies.

### Other findings

- As of now, Human Resource Development in the College of Education is the only NEIU major to have proposed a dual degree program.
- Regarding dual degree partnerships with other institutions, John Marshall Law School has approached NEIU about the possibility of a “3/3” B.A./J.D. dual degree program for select NEIU pre-law students. A few NEIU majors with a large number of pre-law students have begun exploring this possibility.
- There was a suggestion to make graduate tuition awards available to dual degree students in their first term of graduate school to show how much we value these students.
- Offering certificate programs might be a good way to attract students and to help students compete on the job market, e.g. a master’s degree plus a professional (technically-oriented) certificate..
- Dual degree programs at NEIU would need to be at least partially tailored to the distinctive needs and the particular competitive markets faced by specific programs so that having common standards across the university might be difficult.
- Programs should survey juniors and seniors to assess student needs.
- Programs could look for business partners to align their curriculum so that NEIU grads would leave with experience and job skills.
- There seems to be some institutional history that under previous grad school leadership that all dual degree courses were eliminated. It may be informative to learn more about the reasons behind this decision.