Change of Degree Program

Geography, MS

Rationale for the changes:

1. Change credit hours required from 33 to 32 for the MS. This aligns with our MA program.
2. Thesis will use the course numbers GEO679 and GEO681. GEO679 will consist of initial research and a proposal defense. Only after providing an acceptable proposal defense will students be allowed to continue with the thesis. This change provides quality control over theses and also guides students toward a non-thesis option in the event that their thesis proposal and initial research is deficient, since they can count GEO679 for the MA requirement.
3. Raise admission standards for MS students. We find that only strong students can successfully complete a thesis.
4. Delete the language in our admission requirements referencing the old GRE scoring system. The scores are only valid for five years and the new GRE scoring system began in 2011.
5. Among the options for the required statistics course, list our GEO540 Spatial Statistics and GIS as the first course with other courses acceptable with permission of the graduate adviser. We feel students should take the department’s statistics course where possible because it covers discipline-specific material. We will continue to allow (with permission) another statistics course to substitute to prevent delays in graduation.
6. Change the language about required 600-level courses to more simply reflect the Graduate College requirements.
7. Change the language about the minimum number of hours that must be GEO. The current language permitting electives outside the department exists because sometimes students would delay graduation if they couldn’t get enough Geography courses. However, we also believe that students should take Geography courses where possible. By changing the language, students would seek Geography courses first, although we will still allow an elective or two when necessary to avoid delays in graduation or where appropriate for a student’s interests or research.
8. Change list of courses based on what has been added or deleted since the last catalog update.