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# University of Northern Iowa Graduate Council Minutes, January 14, 2016

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# UNI Graduate Council Minutes #1052

## UNI Graduate Council Minutes from January 14, 2016

**Present:** Amin, Beall, Berendzen, Brown, Calderon, Clayton, Cutter, Deemer, Dhanwada, Hanson, Juby, Kucuksari, Pohl, Power, Schwieger, Teske.

**Absent:** Calderon & Hanson.

Chair Pohl called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes** from December 12, moved by Kucuksari, seconded by Fontana, minutes were approved.

### **Announcements:**

Chair Pohl welcomed new Graduate Council member Dr. Peter Berendzen, Associate Professor of Biology, to the group. Dr. Berendzen replaces Dr. Maureen Clayton who left the committee to take over the role of Associate Dean of the College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences.

### **Graduate College Reports:**

#### **Report from Dean Dhanwada:**

The Graduate College will hold an Assessment Workshop on April 1, 2016 to assist faculty from UNI's graduate programs and the Graduate Council to refine, revise and review assessment reports as the Graduate College will start the assessment of graduate programs beginning this year. An assessment expert from Southern Illinois University (SIU) will give a presentation on this topic.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Graduate Student Symposium is coming up on April 6, 2016. Dr. Dhanwada mentioned that for students to feel more prepared and comfortable in presenting their work, there will be two workshops for students in January to show them how to prepare a poster presentation and how to give an oral presentation.

The Annual Graduate Faculty Meeting will be on April 28, 2016.

Dr. Dhanwada requested the Council Members to encourage students and faculty in their constituency to attend the workshops, the Symposium as well as the Annual meeting.

#### **Report from Associate Dean Cutter:**

Dr. Cutter informed the Council Members that she has invited Dr. Douglas Eder, an Emeritus Professor at SIU, Edwardsville, to present at the Assessment Workshop on

April 1. He will run two workshops, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The morning workshop is designed for the Graduate Coordinators and faculty who write/complete the graduate departmental annual assessment reports; the afternoon workshop is for those that will evaluate assessment reports. We have asked the Graduate Council members to take on the role of reviewing the assessment reports and so they are asked to attend so that they know what to look for in assessment reports and what to do with the assessment data. Lunch for the attendees will be provided. Details are forthcoming.

The Graduate College is currently working on Summer Fellowship applications and letters will be sent out shortly.

### **Report from Director Schwieger:**

The January issue of the UNI Graduate Student News is scheduled to be released next week.

UNI Day at the Capitol is on February 22. There will be a table to showcase UNI's graduate programs with promotional brochures and program information. The 9th Annual Graduate Student Symposium is on April 6. Council members are encouraged to ask their students to sign up for the Symposium by email by the registration deadline of February 12, 2016.

### **Report from Graduate Faculty Chair Beall:**

This semester, there are 7 Brown Bag seminars scheduled, including one by the Provost. Dr. Jim Wohlpart is invited to talk about his ideas/perceptions of graduate education at UNI. The meeting with the Provost will not be a lunch meeting, details coming soon.

### **Report from Graduate Council Chair Pohl**

After welcoming members back from break, Chair Pohl mentioned that as she had moved from Vice-Chair to Chair, the Council needed a new Vice-Chair. She asked for nominations for Vice Chair of the Graduate Council; after several minutes, Dr. Sadik Kucuksari was nominated and he accepted. By a unanimous vote, Dr. Kucuksari agreed to serve as Vice-Chair of the Graduate Council for the completion of the academic year.

### **Old Business:**

Discussion occurred regarding the role of the Graduate Council in reviewing graduate curriculum. The Graduate College Curriculum Committee (GCCC) meets weekly over the fall semester to review the graduate related curriculum and then send the approved proposals to the Graduate Council, who also review and give final approval before sending the package on to the Faculty Senate.

Cutter suggested that because we now have a one-year curricular cycle, the Faculty Senate needs the documents a lot sooner than before and that Graduate Council will also need to meet more frequently and devote a significant amount of meeting time to approve the graduate curriculum. It was also suggested that the Graduate Council's role in curriculum review has duplicated what the GCCC already does. The Graduate Council has not made any changes to the GCCC's decisions on curriculum proposals during the last three curriculum cycles, as the GCCC conducts a very in-depth review. If the Graduate Council delegated curriculum review to the GCCC it could devote more time to discussing broader issues in graduate education at UNI. It was suggested that the curriculum packages be fully delegated to the GCCC who can approve them their review and send directly to the Faculty Senate. The Council members will not conduct additional reviews of these materials UNLESS there are proposals that have a split vote at the GCCC level and have questions come up during the review process. Motion by Teske, seconded by Beal? So that the Graduate Council will not need to approve curriculum proposals unless there is not unanimity at the GCCC level. The motion was approved.

### **New Business:**

To address the question of "What is the vision we have for graduate education at UNI and the role of the Graduate College", discussion occurred on the present and future image of the Graduate College. Some of the questions asked included: What is the vision of the role for the Graduate College? In what manner does the Graduate College "fit" into the developing Academic Master Plan? What suggestions do we have to address questions as to where we as a college want to be, how we want to achieve it, and how we want to help the graduate programs? Dhanwada said that the recently developed mission and vision statement for the Academic Master Plan was released and now the committee was working on a framework for a set of goals. This would be a good time to think about how graduate education fits into the university's academic (strategic) plan and to include graduate program goals and aspirations into the Academic Master Plan.

Pohl asked the group if people (faculty) think that graduate education at UNI has a solid image or was properly presented regarding its strengths? Because as she put it "Language is a keystone of the image" and how we talk about it, how we describe is the key. We need to look how we are supporting graduate education at UNI.

In last year's survey of graduate coordinators on how the Graduate College can help UNI's graduate programs to grow, three main issues surfaced: the need for additional faculty for graduate programs, the need for additional assistantships and having additional resources for promotion of their programs at conferences and college fairs. Dhanwada suggested that the first need (additional faculty) was not possible through the Graduate College at this point because all graduate programs are housed in

academic departments, hiring is done within the academic colleges. Assistantships are given but there are a limited number and the importance of giving these for recruitment of new students needs to be a priority.

Enhanced promotion of programs was discussed and the Graduate College wants to work with departments to improve communications. Although both departments and the Graduate College are doing their best to improve, there is a sense that there is a feeling of disconnect between the two.

Several suggestions from the Council members were suggested to improve promotion include:

- Design common brochures for broader areas, such as education, sciences, humanities, etc.
- Design a brochure with a couple of paragraphs to define graduate education at UNI (vision). These brochures may be taken to conferences for distribution along with program brochures.
- There should be active communications with the academic departments at UNI and get their inputs on how to elevate graduate programs at UNI.

Power said we should take a good look at the types of programs we have and to offer programs that can serve a unique niche. One idea he suggested was to think about how we can utilize our current programs and market them with an eye toward enhanced economic development. He also suggested marketing certain programs that can attract students who may be ready to change their careers.

Discussion continued and many said that we need to find a new way to help/provide benefit to our graduate students in terms of thinking about economic security. Can UNI have a niche in offering applied/practitioner programs? More funding from community agencies might be needed.

While we may want to expand on the types of graduate programs, a very close eye needs to be kept on the number of students in our graduate programs so that they continue to have adequate resources and some hard choices may have to be taken.

Question was raised if we effectively use our graduate students to teach undergraduate classes like they do at other universities? Discussion will continue at future meetings.

**Meeting adjourned. The next meeting will be on February 11 at 3:30 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Rubina Chowdhury**

**Secretary**