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University of Northern Iowa Graduate Council Minutes, October 22, 2015

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UNI Graduate Council Minutes #1049

UNI Graduate Council Minutes from October 22, 2015

Present: Amin, Beall, Calderon, Clayton, Cutter, Deemer, Fontana, Hanson, Kucuksari

Absent: Dhanwada, Pohl, Power, Rod-Welch, Schwieger, Teske

Guest: Diane Wallace, Registrar's office (for discussion of curriculum)

Clayton called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. Fontana moved and Amin seconded a motion to approved the minutes from October 8th; motion passed.

Graduate College Reports:

Cutter reported that there will be an informal meeting of graduate coordinators on Friday, November 13th to create community and generate ideas to improve graduate education. She also noted that the GCCC voted to approve a change in policy regarding curriculum review. When the new curriculum cycle was initiated, it was decided that there were two types of curriculum proposals: editorial and substantive changes. Initially, all changes involving graduate curriculum were dealt with as substantive changes. After the first round of the new cycle, the GCCC has decided to deal with editorial changes in an expedited manner (following the procedure developed for undergraduate curriculum). This policy change will now go to Faculty Senate for approval.

On behalf of Schwieger, Cutter invited council members and other faculty to attend the second annual graduate student social mixer on Monday, October 26th from 4:30-6:00 in the Maucker Union ballroom. The Graduate Student Advisory Board will be meeting on November 4th. The deadline for items for the Graduate Student News is November 6th. The symposium is on April 6, 2016. In a change from previous years, symposium registration will begin in January.

Beall reported on the brown bag given by Paul Siddens on October 21st, and invited everyone to the presentation by Disa Cornish on food in rural areas on November 12th from 12:30-1:20. She requested suggestions for speakers for spring.

New Business:

Fontana moved (second by Kucuksari) to approve the curriculum packet from the College of Education, from Interdisciplinary Programs, and the clean-up from previous GCCC meetings. Motion passed.

Old Business:

A brief discussion was held on a recommendation to the provost regarding the future of Graduate College leadership positions. The consensus was that having a separate Graduate Dean (with no additional administrative duties) was desirable. Some discussion ensued about the possibility of the dean (and other academic deans) teaching in addition to their administrative duties. While there are pros and cons to this idea, there was general agreement that this should be considered in the context of the other duties of the dean. Motion by Amin (second by Deemer) to recommend a separate Dean of the Graduate College, with clarification of the duties of the dean and associate dean (possibly including teaching for both). Motion passed. Further discussion revealed no reason to retain the description “interim” for the positions of the current dean and associate dean. Clayton will communicate these recommendations to Provost Wohlpart.

The discussion for the rest of the meeting focused on the roles of the Graduate Council and recommendations for topics/activities for future meetings. Topics mentioned include:

- The challenges associated with teaching 4000/5000 level courses, and whether these are adequately meeting the needs of graduate students. It would be useful to get feedback from the Graduate Student Advisory Board (and other graduate students) on this topic.
- A follow up involved the larger issue of accountability in graduate programs/graduate education. What types of programmatic review mechanisms are in place?
- Concerns about resource limitations (especially faculty loads/overloads and unfilled faculty lines) affecting the quality of graduate education
- Mechanisms to ensure that graduate student research is integrated into the curriculum, and that the process of developing projects and collecting data begins early in a student’s career. Perhaps these discussions are program specific, but the Graduate College/Graduate Council might facilitate discussions among programs with similar interests and help publicize best practices.
- Further discussion about continuing and distance education (funding, quality matters), and the relationship between those programs and other online/hybrid programs at UNI. Kent Johnson and Belle Cowden will be invited to an upcoming meeting on November 12th or December 10th [update: they will attend the meeting on Dec. 10th]
- Are there opportunities for new graduate programs? Ways to add/grow/strengthen graduate programs.
- Mission/vision and strategic plan. As the graduate representative on the Academic Master Plan Steering Committee, Clayton asked the council for advice on draft mission and vision statements that she is writing. Specifically, she asked if it was important to spell out “undergraduate and graduate students”, or if “students” was sufficient. Comments were that it was important to include both student populations to make sure that both were featured in the strategic plan (and thus resource allocation). She also asked about the need to specifically include reference to

research/scholarship/creative activity/generation of new knowledge. General agreement that wording was tricky, and that it may not apply to everyone, but that this component of UNI's role as a university was important.

Meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m. Next meeting will be November 12th at 3:30.