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University of Northern Iowa Graduate Council Minutes, March 24, 2016

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UNI Graduate Council Minutes #1054

Notes from “Who are we? Graduate Education at UNI”

Graduate Faculty meeting – March 24, 2016

Melissa:

Update of last year's meeting with some answers in bold

Increased awareness of what happens in the Graduate College

- What are responsibilities of Graduate Dean, Associate Dean
- Continuing Ed role
- What happens in Grad Council
- Dedicated Graduate Dean – Provost came to Grad Council and wanted additional information about role of Graduate education at UNI. We can provide this information to him with coming up with answers for him; can discuss at the Annual Meeting
- How can we offer new graduate programs?
- How can we publicize graduate programs more?
- Graduate College can do some, but need to have departmental support as well

Gayle:

- Handed out the updates for some ideas for vision and mission
- Discuss ideas for where the Graduate College should go forward

Who do we want to be?

- Provost seems ambivalent about GC – what does he want?
- We **need to determine what we want** – For example, we seem to think that engaged learning at the undergraduate level is important and there is a conversation about it, but what are the things that make graduate education at UNI different and compelling – what do we want to promote? If we do put resources in, what/where do we want to cut funds – what is it we want to prioritize since we won't have huge amounts of funds in the near future.
- We need to **better communicate** what we have been doing because we have been doing engaged learning at the graduate level very well but this is not out there.
- We **need to know why the students are doing the program here** – if it is for getting a promotion, they should do online. We aren't really providing a good experience on campus; we need students to have a better experience on campus for those students doing on campus programs; need to track students better as far

as progress and where they end up, so we should understand where we need to put our resources.

- There are a variety of reasons for students to do online programs not just for getting promoted; the confusion that exists is due to the fact that the mission/vision of the programs differ and we don't know what the mission is for all programs; **don't have a common vision**
- Both the on-campus and online programs **can be complementary**
- For certain programs, we **need to do online to provide access**; couldn't do an on-campus program for certain students because they are from all over
- **A student perspective:** have to have both online and on-campus programs need to be promoted equally since both have their advantages

Discussion of education-specific programs

- How can we promote the idea that getting an advanced degree is good for all teachers just for teaching's sake and not necessarily just for going on or creating good administrators? But we know we also have to have administrators that are good teachers.
- In recent years, the best teachers have been taken out of classroom – not a great thing but it seems that teacher leaders are the pools are now in the Leadership programs.

What is graduate education at UNI?

- UNI graduate education is a lot of different things; has to **come from the department level**; need to have ideas where the faculty have a voice; we need to serve the state, community – so we need to be broad in what we can offer
- We need to **have more conversations** about how graduate education can enhance undergraduate education; grad education doesn't take away from the "pie" rather talk about **how it can enhance the education of undergraduates**
- We need to ask each department what the highlights of each of the graduate programs; themes can help us to answer "who are we"
- We need to ask why students are coming here; how can we obtain this information?
- Programs need to be collecting this data; but many faculty don't have the time to maintain the information
- SOA can be a means to collect this information since we have an annual report that will need to be submitted.

Are we being "fair" to all our graduate students?

- When students come forward and join the graduate programs, we are making a commitment to the students as well as them making one to us; we need to be supportive. Many times we can't even offer the courses that students need.

- What is the history of the rule that students can only get support for 4 or 6 semesters?
 - It was decided to do this and viewed as an equity issue.
 - Concern was expressed about the quality of graduate programs: if classes were not available and if there weren't choices, students resort to independent study, not what we want to offer as substitutes at the graduate level. How can we have a rule so that we **restrict or close some of the graduate programs due to lack of resources**. It seems most of our graduate programs are geared toward research, trying to produce "Mini-Mes". In these programs, do all students fully engage in the community, either internal or external?

What "makes" a graduate program?

- We need to take a strong look at curriculum and look at what we are offering to the students. Is one-on-one teaching for example at the doc-level, the best way to do it in terms of faculty load and time? Is it equitable?
- What criteria are used in making decisions about graduate programs – their existence or closure?
- It shouldn't just be about enrollments, for example, if they are to bring in external funds from grants – this should be one factor to exist.
- Their impact in the state – if it is the only program in Iowa. For example, School Psychology, needed but due to accreditation issues, there is a cap on enrollment.
- A suggestion was made that we **need to know what the programs actually do, who they serve and their goals** and that information should be gathered as to what types of students are coming and what the programs are doing with respect to contribution to the state.
- It would be important to have data up to date so that we know what the larger picture is?
- Additionally, questions need to be asked as to why students are coming to specific programs – subject area, place-bound, new career-direction.
- We need to ask each department what are the **highlights of each of the graduate programs**; themes **can help us to answer "who are we"**
- Need to **understand what is the question we are asking?** Since we can't have additional faculty and more assistantships to grow, what can we do NOW? That is the question we need to be talking about. We need to change the question.

Discussion about adding/growing programs

- Online education should be expanded but not at the expense of face to face.
- There is external pressure for increasing online programs
- We should also think about expanding 4+1 – BA/MA type programs that can help students complete advanced degrees.
- We can also think about promoting second BA that can be combined with Master's program; it would targeted to specific types of students, not all.

- Before we begin to add programs we have to ask several important questions.
- What are the objectives for graduate programs?
- We have to take a deep look at what are really the requirements needed for programs.
- We need to be willing close some existing programs if the resources aren't there.
- There has to be a point where we can't add more programs.