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University of Northern Iowa Graduate Council Minutes, October 9, 2014

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UNI Graduate Council Minutes #1038

October 9, 2014

Present: Beall, Calderon, Caswell, Chatham-Carpenter, Clayton, Coon, Deemer, Gacke, Fontana, Noh, Pohl, Power

Guest: Schwieger, Thorson

Absent: Stokes

The meeting was called to order by Chair Clayton. Motion by Deemer to approve the minutes of the September 25, 2014 meeting; seconded by Pohl. Motion approved.

Graduate College Reports

Chatham-Carpenter reported that the Graduate College Graduate Faculty showcase that took place on October 6 went very well with approximately 50-60 people in attendance; there were six oral presentations and twelve poster presentations in the showcase. She thanked the Council for their support of the event.

Chair of Graduate Faculty Report

Coon reported that the imaging of the Graduate Admission Recommendation Form and various other admission documents is moving along. She has gotten feedback from a few areas that there has been some problems getting access to the imaging system. Coon is trying to follow up and suggested that faculty in those areas follow up as well.

Schwieger reported that as a follow up to September's TAGS event, the Personal Statement Workshop was held yesterday. Deanne Gute facilitated the session, with approximately 60 people in attendance. Another follow up event is set for October 29 from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m., in the Oak Room, entitled "Demystifying the GRE." Presenters at the October 29 event will be Deanne Gute, Latricia Hylton and Emily Borcharding. A graduate student social mixer is planned for Monday, November 7 from 4:30 to 6:00 in the Maucker Union Ballroom. Planning for the 8th Annual Graduate Student Symposium is also underway. Related to recruiting efforts, Schwieger said that she had participated in events at UNI, Wartburg, Luther and Grinnell colleges. Starting October 20, several visits are scheduled including events at Augustana, Monmouth, Knox, Bradley, Milikin and Dubuque.

Chatham-Carpenter added that the Graduate College and UNI's Continuing Education and Special Programs are collaborating on an event entitled "Beyond Your Bachelor's," set for November 5 from

5:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the UNI Commons Lounge/Ballroom. All of the graduate coordinators and programs will be asked to have a representative from their program at the event. E-mails have gone out to graduate coordinators, deans and department heads; several people have already signed up to have a table at the open

house. Continuing Education will be conducting mass marketing for the event. In response to a suggestion related to a targeted e-mail to undergraduate alumni, Schwieger responded that she would follow up with Continuing Education.

Beall reported that the first Brown Bag with Tammy Gregersen took place on Tuesday, October 7 with 22 people in attendance. Sergey Golitsynskiy with the Department of Communication Studies will present on October 29, the presentation title is "A Big Data Approach to Measuring News Media Reliance on the Press Release." Joyce Chen, communication studies, will present "African American Voices of the Cedar Valley" on November 5, Audrey Rule, curriculum and instruction, will present on November 12 and Belle Cowden will present in December. Cowden's presentation will be co-sponsored by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

Old Business

Continued discussion of and vote on TOEFL/IELTS minimum score requirement for provisional/conditional admission of graduate students (discussion tabled on 9/25/14)

Clayton gave a brief recap of the September 25 council meeting in which a discussion regarding provisional admission was tabled. For the day's meeting, Clayton said one question would be whether or not there should be university-wide condition in place. If the answer is that there is not, the default would be that every department would have its own conditions. If the answer is yes, there would need to be a decision as to what that condition is, how long students would have to meet the condition, and what would happen if the conditions aren't met within the required time frame. There was a question about recruiting students from universities where the first language of instruction is English. Clayton responded that in those cases a waiver for the TOEFL requirement could be requested.

There was a comment that there are some students who are coming to UNI intend to take CIEP (Culture and Intensive English Program) and then go into a graduate program when they finish CIEP. There was an additional comment that one challenge is that there is no guarantee what will happen when a student starts the CIEP. The student incurs cost for CIEP not knowing how long it will take and whether or not their English skills will improve enough to be unconditionally admitted to graduate study. In additional discussion it was mentioned that CIEP administers its own diagnostic test when a student enters the CIEP for placement at the appropriate level of CIEP courses. They also administer an "institutional TOEFL" test (an actual paper TOEFL test) with a much lower fee than the official TOEFL test. The score from that test is only used internally and is not reportable by ETS.

Motion by Fontana that there be a University-wide condition that conditionally admitted students would have to attain the minimum TOEFL/IELTS score of 550/79/6.5 for unconditional admission in order to be removed from provisional admission; seconded by Noh. Motion approved.

Discussion took place on a reasonable time frame in which a student would be able to reach the minimum TOEFL/IELTS score. Thorson said there could be some concern about international students' visas and having those visas extended if needed. Coon said she would follow up with Linda Jernigan in International Graduate Admissions.

Based on previous discussion, there was also a suggestion that there should be a policy regarding whether or not a student can take graduate courses while they are completing CIEP or studying individually to improve their English.

Motion by Fontana that students who are accepted conditionally may not take any graduate courses until they obtain a sufficient TOEFL score for unconditional admission; seconded by Beall. Motion approved.

Discussion took place related to what would happen if a student did not pass the TOEFL in the two semester time frame.

Motion by Pohl to discontinue a student from graduate study if they do not attain the minimum TOEFL score for unconditional admission within a two semester time frame from first enrollment; seconded by Fontana. Motion approved.

It was noted during the meeting that it is still the case that the department may request a waiver from the Graduate College of the requirement to submit a TOEFL or IELTS score on behalf of an applicant. This is appropriate for the case in which the department has reason to know that the student is proficient in English without benefit of a TOEFL or IELTS score, such as if the applicant's previous education was conducted in English, or if the applicant has been in the U.S. for some years, or if they have spoken personally with the applicant.

Clayton noted that Coon would be providing these policies to graduate coordinators and Linda Jernigan for their feedback.

Following is a summary of the motions passed at the day's meeting, as well as the motion passed at the September 25, 2014 meeting related to the TOEFL/IELTS:

The decision whether or not to employ conditional admission is up to the individual graduate programs. Some programs will not admit students conditionally. A minimum score of 453/46 TOEFL or 5.5 IELTS is required for conditional/provisional admission, whether as a degree or non-degree graduate student. Students who are conditionally admitted with a score in the range 453-547, 46-78, 5.5-6.0 must meet the minimum TOEFL/IELTS score for unconditional admission within 2 semesters. Conditionally admitted students may not take graduate courses until this condition is met. Students are encouraged to take CIEP courses to improve their English, but the requirement for the removal of the condition and for full admission to graduate study is to achieve the minimum 550/79/6.5 score. Completion of CIEP alone will not satisfy the condition, nor is completion of any CIEP necessary if the applicant can improve his/her English sufficiently without it. Students may take the institutional TOEFL to demonstrate that they have achieved the necessary score. If the condition is not met in 2 semesters, the admission to the graduate program is nullified and the student's graduate career will be discontinued. An international student will have to return home or be admitted as an undergraduate.

The meeting adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting is Thursday, October 23, 2014 at 3:30 p.m. in Lang 115.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Nedrow
Secretary