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University of Northern Iowa Graduate Council Minutes, September 25, 2014

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UNI Graduate Council Minutes #1037

September 25, 2014

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

Guests: Carolina Coronado, Lauren Rein

Absent: Stokes

The meeting was called to order by Chair Clayton. Motion by Pohl to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2014 meeting; seconded by Beall. Motion approved.

Graduate College Reports

Chatham-Carpenter mentioned that the Graduate College Faculty Showcase will take place on Monday, October 6, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. in Seerley 115 and Great Reading Room. Additional information, including the program will go out next week. There will be six oral presentations and twelve poster presentations during this event.

Coon reported that she and Gacke participated in the UNI Career Fair earlier in the day. There was a good turnout at the fair, with approximately 20 students stopping by the Graduate College table. She added that Schwieger was out at the Luther College Graduate and Professional School Fair.

Coon also reported that a revision of the electronic Graduate Admission Recommendation Form went into production yesterday. Users are now able to access additional information and a new level of security was added so that only designed individuals can initiate the form.

On behalf of Schwieger, Chatham-Carpenter mentioned that on November 5, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. the Graduate College and Continuing Education will be hosting a recruiting fair for working professionals. An invitation to participate will be sent to graduate programs soon. It was also mentioned that 178 students attended the TAGS event aimed at undergraduate students within UNI.

Chair of Graduate Faculty Report

Beall noted that she is the Graduate College representative on the provost search committee, as well as the subcommittee to refine the job description, which should be out next week.

Related to brown bag lectures, Tammy Gregersen will be presenting "Dynamic Classroom Motivation: Helping Learners Visualize Their Possible Selves" on Tuesday, October 7 in LIB 378. This brown bag will be co-sponsored with the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. On Wednesday, November 5, Joyce Chen, communication studies, will present on the extensive research she has been doing in

the African-American community. Belle Cowden with Continuing Education & Special Programs will present in December. The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning will also co-sponsor this lecture.

New Business

Discussion of and vote on TOEFL/IELTS minimum score requirement for provisional/conditional admission of graduate students (discussion tabled on 9/11/14)

Clayton noted that at the end of the September 11 meeting, the agenda item related to the TOEFL/IELTS minimum score requirement for provisional/conditional admission was tabled until further information could be gathered. Carolina Coronado and Lauren Rein with the UNI Culture and Intensive English Program (CIEP) were in attendance in order to provide any information that might guide the Council's decision making process. Coronado introduced herself and noted that she had been contacted via e-mail earlier in the afternoon and that Clayton and Coon should feel free to share the answers that she provided in her e-mail. Lauren Rein introduced herself and added that she is a part of the CIEP teaching staff and works with the day-to-day operations. Clayton summarized that at the last meeting there was discussion which included the fact that there are currently no standards set by the Graduate College or Graduate Council across graduate programs in terms of setting up conditions for admission for students whose first language is not English. Departments are now free to set those conditions. She said that at the last meeting there were two topics that came up frequently, one of which was providing accessibility to those students; we didn't necessarily want to turn away students that have the English capability to be successful in graduate school, but maybe didn't have the English language ability at the point in which they applied to the program. She said there was also a discussion about whether or not it is in a student's and program's best interest to bring in students who might not be able to improve their English sufficiently to be successful with class instruction and with research or creative activities. Are we bringing in people and not providing them with the tools that they might need to be successful? Clayton added that many programs will not conditionally admit students for whatever reason and those programs can continue to do that.

She added that there could be a scenario where students might not have taken the TOEFL/IELTS, so there could be students who have no scores. For those students may or may not be proficient in English. There are also some students who may have taken the exam, submitted their scores and their scores are lower than the score required for unconditional admission. The students who don't have scores but may actually, in fact, be proficient in English for reasons such as having the majority of their past courses taught in English, the program may ask for a waiver to the TOEFL requirement. There are other students whose English proficiency is not at a standard for unconditional admission; their TOEFL may be too low or there is some other indication that their English isn't up to standard. The Council had also talked about possible routes these students could take. In one scenario there is a subset of students for whom it is clear that their English has some deficiencies and there is a subset where

they are close to the required TOEFL score. For those students there might possibly be a lower TOEFL score that would be acceptable for provisional admission. This would not be appropriate for students who have never taken the TOEFL. For those students their route might be to intend to come to UNI, take CIEP to improve their English while being provisionally admitted to a graduate program. The question would be how to know that they have in fact improved their English sufficiently to be prepared for graduate study.

Coronado and Rein provided information related to the CIEP curriculum and the number of hours classes are taken per week. In response to questions about how long it might take a student to reach a certain TOEFL score, Coronado responded said that would vary depending on the situation. Rein explained that the TOEFL is actually more of a skills test than a language test. It was noted that the TOEFL/IELTS is an internationally recognized test.

Following extended discussion, Motion by Beall to untable the motion related to the TOEFL/IELTS discussion from the September 11 Graduate Council Meeting; seconded by Noh. Motion approved.

Motion by Beall to vote on the TOEFL/ILETS agenda item by hand ballot as opposed to a paper ballot; seconded by Pohl. Motion approved.

Motion by Fontana to maintain the current policy of requiring the TOEFL/ILETS score for admission to graduate study, except in cases where a waiver is requested by the department; seconded by Calderon and Noh. Seven votes in favor; one vote against. Motion passed.

Considerable discussion took place related to a possible minimum TOEFL/IELTS score for conditional/provisional graduate admission. Motion by Noh for a minimum TOEFL/IELTS score of 46/5.5; seconded by Beall. Motion approved.

Regarding ways to be removed from provisional admission, it was suggested that there could be two possibilities; program-specific requirements or a policy that is university wide. Coon said that there needs to be one set of provisions if the TOEFL score is less than the minimum for all programs or it would be at the program's discretion as to what the provision is. The issue of how long the student would have to have the provision removed was also mentioned. There was a suggestion that a student would be removed from provisional admission to non-degree status if they did not meet the minimum TOEFL requirement after one year in provisional status, and a suggestion that they not be allowed to continue in graduate study.

Motion by Beall to table the discussion of provisional admission until the next meeting; seconded by Deemer. Motion approved.

The meeting adjourned at 4:51 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting is Thursday, October 9, 2014 at 3:30 p.m. in Lang 115.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Nedrow
Secretary