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University of Northern Iowa Graduate Council Minutes, September 26, 2013

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UNI Graduate Council Minutes #1027

The Graduate Council

UNI Graduate Council Minutes No. 1027

September 26, 2013

Present: Calderon, Caswell, Clayton, Coon, Czarnecki, Fontana, Licari, Milambiling, Nesbit, Noh, Pohl, Schmitz

Absent: Christ, Ogbondah, Stokes

Guest: Joy Thorson

The meeting was called to order by Chair Clayton. Motion by Pohl to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2013 meeting; seconded by Czarnecki. Motion approved.

Graduate College Reports - Licari reported that the first meeting of the first round of graduate coordinator meetings took place on Tuesday. He said the meeting was very productive with most of the time spent talking about the new process for admissions for graduate students. Currently, international graduate student application information is collected through Admissions. As a result of discussions from last year's graduate coordinator meetings, the same system will be used for domestic applicants. This will allow easier communication with prospective students and a more efficient and effective application system since everything will be housed in one location. Students will also have a checklist that tells them exactly what they need to submit for whichever program they are applying to. He added that since the paperwork will be housed electronically, there should be less work for program faculty and program secretaries, and the system should be easier for students to use. Licari is encouraged by the conversations that have taken place at the graduate coordinator meetings. The meetings have been well attended and productive. Additional meetings will take place throughout the year.

Regarding the communication system for the comprehensive exams, Licari reported that there has been some confusion and a communication breakdown on a student's status regarding taking and passing or not passing their comprehensive exams. Recently there had been a situation where a series of communication breakdowns led to the improper awarding of a graduate degree. He emphasized that this is a situation that absolutely cannot happen; every organization has a set of impermissible outcomes and for any university, this is one of them. As a result, a new system for tracking and recording students' comprehensive exams results is being developed. Licari will send out communication on this process in the near future. The standard form currently in use is a source of confusion in itself and will be broken into two forms; one for comprehensive exams and one for research papers. He pointed out that theses and dissertations are still handled through Janet Witt in the Graduate College. The new comprehensive exam reporting process will essentially parallel the

thesis and dissertation reporting process in terms of alerts that students will be taking comprehensive exams, the communication to students and to the Graduate College office about the status of students once they've taken the exams, and whether they have passed or not. One of the key changes is that the Graduate College will be responsible for some of the reporting. This should clean up the process, since the program, department, Graduate College, Registrar's Office and any other office that needs to know will be informed as to students' status. This will give the student the reassurance that all of the offices around campus know what their status is.

Coon reported that the Graduate Council Curriculum Committee (GCCC) will be complete once Graduate Council representation is determined. Meetings take place on Fridays at 3:30, with the next meeting being Friday, October 4.

On behalf of Schwieger who was out recruiting, Licari reported that the "Thinking About Doctoral Studies" facilitated by Helen Harton from the Department of Psychology was successful, with approximately 35 students in attendance. The "Thinking About Graduate School" (TAGS) event was held yesterday for the seventh year; approximately 140 students were in attendance. Licari thanked everyone who had representatives who participated in the graduate program fair following TAGS. Most of the students who attended the information session stayed to talk with representatives at the various tables. Pohl commented that she heard some positive feedback after the event.

Chair of Graduate Faculty Report – Pohl reminded Council members that the first Brown Bag lecture of the year would take place on Wednesday, October 2. Melissa Beall from CHAS will be presenting "Why Your Students Don't Listen." In November, Raj Rajendan from the College of Business will be presenting as well as Kevin Finn from the College of Education. In December, Chris Larimer from the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences will be presenting.

New Business

Appointment of 2 representatives to the Graduate College Curriculum Committee (GCCC) - Licari noted that the work on the GCCC is hard work, but very important work. Serving on the GCCC is an opportunity to serve the university and really get involved in curriculum development on campus. It is a time commitment and it is important to have good people on these committees. Clayton said there is clearly an interest from faculty across campus in having more say and being more involved in the curriculum and GCCC is a place to do that. Coon added that the function of the Graduate Council representatives is to serve as the liaison to ask questions of the departments bringing the curriculum forward and to help in the reporting back to Graduate Council. Caswell and Fontana were chosen to serve as the Graduate Council representatives on the GCCC.

Volunteers Needed for Student Awards Committees - Coon noted that she has a policy of not having reviewers from the same department as the nominated students, which makes some Council members ineligible to serve. After some discussion about the review and paper selection process, Milambiling agreed to serve as a reader for the

dissertation submissions; Schmitz for the Master's Thesis; Noh and Nesbit for Research Paper submissions. Clayton and Pohl said they would be willing to be reviewers if needed. Coon thanked everyone who volunteered to serve.

Approval of modifications to the Graduate Assistantship Handbook – Clayton noted that the main change to the Graduate Assistantship Handbook would be to make the handbook match the change in policy of nine graduate credit hours, as opposed to having nine program hours, to be eligible for an assistantship. Clayton asked if there were any questions regarding the change. In response to a question about program hours versus graduate credit hours, Clayton said that the basic difference varies from department to department as to how elective hours are treated. Many times students have to file student requests in order to allow a particular course to count on their Plan of Study. The new policy means that they would not have to do this prior to being eligible for an assistantship. They would still eventually have to fill out a student request in order to graduate, but in terms of registration, they simply have to be registered for nine graduate credit hours (coursework at the 5000-level or above) to be eligible for an assistantship. Licari clarified that the policy has already been changed and the proposal is to change the language in the handbook to match the current policy.

Motion by Pohl to approve modification of the Graduate Assistantship Handbook to reflect the change in policy from nine program hours to nine graduate credit hours; seconded by Noh. Motion approved.

Coon asked if the same plan should be in place for summer. At this point, the wording still reads that the two credit hours needed per four weeks have to apply to the degree. There are two places in the Graduate Assistantship Handbook where this wording appears. Clayton clarified that the proposal would be to change the policy for summer to match the policy for the fall and spring.

Following brief discussion, motion by Pohl to approve changing the policy for summer to match the policy for the fall and spring; seconded by Pohl. Motion approved.

To give some history related to the Graduate Assistantship Handbook, Coon stated that the handbook is based in large part on a document called The Graduate Assistantship System, which was developed in consultation with the Graduate Council and Graduate College a number of years ago. The language that has been in place is that a student must be enrolled full time and carry a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 12 on-campus graduate-level credit hours for each semester during the award. The maximum of 12 hours causes problems and has not been enforced. There are at least three pretty large programs on campus that always have credit hour loads of more than 12 and always have graduate assistants; usually 10-hour graduate assistants. Coon asked the Council if it would like to change the maximum, remove the language about the maximum or what it would like to do. She added that she does not like to have something written down that is not enforced. Licari said the Graduate College is not enforcing the rule due to the large graduate programs that exist; the rule needs to either be abandoned, modified, or the 12-hour rule needs to be enforced. Clayton asked if there were a higher maximum number that would be appropriate. It was noted that some programs go up to 17 hours per semester with others going up to 13. There was a comment that some of the hours would be practicum hours. It was pointed out that

there is already a safeguard in place in that a student has to submit a student request to take an overload if they want to register for more than 15 hours. At that time Coon evaluates the student's situation as it relates to the number of credit hours and whether or not the student has an assistantship. Coon pointed out that a department may choose to have a more strict policy in place related to the maximum number of hours if it chooses.

Motion made by Czarnecki to remove the 12-hour graduate-level credit maximum for each semester during a graduate assistantship; seconded by Pohl. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 4:22 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday, October 10, 2013 at 3:30 p.m. in Lang 115.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Nedrow
Secretary