

9-12-2013

University of Northern Iowa Graduate Council Minutes, September 12, 2013

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Recommended Citation

University of Northern Iowa. Graduate Council, "University of Northern Iowa Graduate Council Minutes, September 12, 2013" (2013). *Graduate Council Documents*. 48.

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UNI Graduate Council Minutes #1026

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

Absent: Calderon, Stokes

Guests: Rob Boody, Susan Etscheidt, Linda Fitzgerald, Mary Herring, Julie Klein, Sam Lankford, Charles McNulty, Vickie Robinson, Susie Schwieger, Joy Thorson

The meeting was called to order by Clayton who thanked everyone for coming to the first meeting of Fall 2013. Introductions of Council members and guests followed. Clayton said that since there were guests present the meeting would go out of agenda order.

New Business - Discussion of the proposal for changes to the Ed.D. presented by the College of Education ISA Graduate Studies Committee

Herring stated that a number of years ago, as part of a reevaluation process, the Ed.D. Program was asked to reassess its intensive study areas and look at curriculum. As the end of the four-year process approaches, they are soliciting input by way of retreats with all the graduate faculty and have totally changed the graduate curriculum, creating a much more interdisciplinary program as opposed to separate entities and changed the core from 15 to 27 hours. These changes are currently going through the curriculum process. As a part of the conversations there were several other pieces that came up; two of which are brought before the Council.

Related to the recency shift, Herring said this has been on the docket since she started with the COE ISA Graduate Studies Committee because it is an issue that advisors mention, who have shared their personal stories of situations their students have dealt with. The committee's summary:

1. Masters degree students are given 7 years to finish 30+ hours of coursework, doctoral students have a 60 hour requirement with, at present, the same requirement for recency.
2. The majority of Ed.D. students are part time students and their shifting schedules cause delay in completion.
3. Since they are practitioners, these students stay current through their daily work so extending recency does not mean that their knowledge has stagnated over time.
4. This brings us more in line with our competition who offer from 8-10 years recency.

Herring said that since many of the students are practitioners in the field, oftentimes life gets in the way of being a student. However, they are still practitioners, so they are still staying current at many levels since they are in the field. She added that when looking at competitors, there was no institution with 7-year recency; recency went from 8 to 10 years.

The second issue the ISA Committee brought before the Council was related to the definition of departments and divisions within the School of HPELS. The ISA Committee's proposal reads:

Students are required to have someone on their dissertation committee from outside their department. In the School of HPELS, divisions are similar to departments in their functioning. The Physical Education Division is not a part of the HPELS ISA. The ISA would like Physical Education faculty to be considered as "outside" faculty, much as someone from Educational Leadership would be considered as "outside" on the C&I ISA.

Lankford stated that HPELS has divisions and chairs for those divisions which operate just like departments. Lankford is requesting that a faculty member in another division or department can have the ability to serve on a committee if they are the appropriate person. He said that Physical Education has chosen not to participate in the doctorate. Fitzgerald clarified that it is not that Physical Education is not involved in the doctorate, it is part of the completely separate Curriculum and Instruction intensive study area and if you take the divisions as departments, they are really separate.

Fontana noted that this topic was discussed in a Physical Education faculty meeting and there was a consensus that PE faculty could not be considered as external. They would be willing to participate, but they thought the areas were similar enough that they should not be considered external readers.

Clayton said that since there were two issues, they would be discussed separately.

Related to the recency issue, Clayton clarified that the recency policy change was made in 2009 which shifted the recency from ten to seven years. Coon added that prior to the Fall 2010 admission courses seven years prior to admission and seven years after admission were within recency, so it was a total time period of 14 years that was available, but not all students had courses up to seven years prior to admission. It was seven years after admissions and in 2009 a committee of the Graduate Council made a recommendation for a consistent recency policy for all degrees of seven years and also developed the policy as far as what is needed for a waiver of recency, depending on how far past the deadline a student is.

Clayton stated that the proposal being presented is to change the policy and allow students in the Ed.D. program up to 10 years from the time of the first course that counts toward their degree in order to finish. Christ asked how often students go beyond seven years. Fitzgerald responded that people are forced into finishing in seven years in really uncomfortable ways. She added that these are mature practitioners and sometimes their practice is that they are a superintendent, director of a program or other leadership roles. She went on to describe some Ed.D. students as sandwich generation students who have young children to care for, as well as possibly caring for an ailing parent or have health issues themselves. She added that these students see that the recency deadline is coming and make huge sacrifices in their lives to avoid it. She said there are exceptions, but they are punishing too.

Coon clarified that in instances of illness of a child or self, an exception has and always will be made and a student should not be told that they have to finish in seven years

when they've spent two years recovering from an illness. These students should be requesting an extension and it will be granted. As mentioned in 2009, if Coon sees that a student has been part-time and working steadily, she has no problem with an extension; the problem is multiple extensions and no progress. Fitzgerald commented on having a policy of extensions rather than just taking into account that you give seven years for often full-time students to complete 30 credits and seven years for part-time students to complete 60 credits.

In response to Christ's questions, Clayton said that in her opinion whether something is a policy or an exception has something to do with the frequency of the issue. Theoretically, exceptions are relatively rare. She asked if there was a ballpark estimate as to the number of students who fall into the category of needing more than seven years. Etscheidt responded that there was a lot of discussion before the COE ISA faculty brought the proposal to the Council. She added that they appreciate the reason for the recency since on the completion of the degree and awarding of the degree that you have current information in your field. She said the decision points the committee had were very similar to the criteria Coon reviews when granting an exception, is the student an active professional engaged in work related to the degree, as opposed to a person who has been inactive and has no professional or non-professional obligations. Etscheidt added that they are trying to develop a reasonableness not only to recruit students, but to see them through to the end. The opportunity instead of going after exceptions and waivers is to set a recency period that is reasonable for a 60-hour degree program for someone who cannot go as a full-time graduate student. She concluded by noting that the committee wants to insure that there are not only 60 hours, but there is a very rigorous doctoral program.

It was mentioned that the University of Iowa's recency is 10 years and Iowa State is 7 and Drake's is 10. Coon asked when students are encouraged to start work on the dissertation itself. Boody responded that in the new curriculum proposal, the first year students think about the topic and possibly do a pilot study. There will be a seminar that starts students visualizing what the dissertation looks like, comps will be able to be taken earlier, there will be a greater emphasis for comps. Coon responded that she applauds and encourages that because she thinks the culture has been to finish all the classes and then think about the dissertation. Herring added that there is a full research project that is carried out in the first two classes so students get going in the dissertation process immediately.

In additional conversation, there was a question as to where the seven-year recency time frame originated and after a comment from Noh, it was clarified that if the recency shift goes into effect, the ten-year recency policy would be for Ed.D. students, as the Doctor of Technology is not requesting a ten-year recency policy.

Licari asked how the recent discussion in the ISA Committee went. He said he would expect that if a ten-year recency is put into place that they will take ten years. He wondered how comfortable everyone would be knowing that some of the coursework will have been a decade old. Fitzgerald commented that a doctoral student would demonstrate recency as part of the literature review in their dissertation. Licari responded that he completely understands that as the purpose of the dissertation is to

blaze a new trail, but the totality of the graduate degree is more than just a chapter or the research portion of a dissertation. So he was trying to gauge how those discussions went within the ISA Committee. Herring responded that this was not an issue that came up; not in the retreats with all faculty and not within the ISA Committee. She thought that one of the pieces that the committee mentioned is that the 27-hour core is meant to build a foundation. If you look at a course that was taken a number of years back, you're still using that information in another course, so it's not like they're separate entities. The intention is clearly to build on what we've been doing.

Coon pointed out that at the time there was a seven-year prior to admission recency, students also had a limit of 15 hours prior to filing the GF-1 and 12 hours in Non-Degree status, so there were limits. They couldn't have taken half their degree prior to admission. She also emphasized that she never tells a student or a department which courses need to be re-taken in order to be current; she leaves that to the experts. She tells them how many credits are needed and it is then up to the department to determine what a student takes. The decision about what Boody's student had to retake was made by the C&I doctoral coordinator at the time.

There was a question as to whether or not adding an extra year to the recency policy would be beneficial. Herring responded that she suspected anything would be helpful. She said that there was a lot of discussion and based on issues advisors had been dealing with, it was determined that 10 was the logical number. Lankford added that the ISA Committee did look at other universities. Those institutions generally have more than seven years to complete a dissertation. Brief discussion followed.

Christ stated that on the surface she did not like the idea of ten years, but in recognizing that every discipline is unique and considering the arguments presented, made a motion to increase the number of hours of recency in the Ed.D. Program from seven years to ten change years; seconded by Milambiling. Six votes in favor; zero votes against, three abstentions. Motion passed.

Herring thanked the Council for its decision. In regards to when the change would take effect, Licari responded that the change would take effect in Fall of 2014.

Definition of Departments and Divisions

Herring said that in light of Fontana's previous comments about the consensus that PE faculty did not consider themselves as external, there was no need for a discussion related to the definition of departments and divisions.

Graduate College Reports - Licari reported that overall enrollment at the University is well above budgeted expectations by about 350 students. Although enrollment is very, very slightly down from last year, it is significantly up from projections. He said he hopes the \$10 million in one-time funds over this year and next helps settle everything down. He noted that graduate enrollment is at or exceeding our record number of

students set in 2011 and should be close to 1,800 graduate students. Licari said that everyone should be very proud and all the hard work that is being done across campus is paying off.

The Graduate Student Opportunity Fund is available this year on a first come, first served basis to help fund graduate student travel to conferences or for research activities. If students know they are going to be traveling this Fall, the Graduate College may be able to provide some help. It was clarified that any currently enrolled graduate student is eligible to apply for funding.

Graduate Coordinator meetings will take place again this year. Some of the topics discussed at last year's meetings are now coming to fruition and Licari received good feedback last year. The first meeting is on September 24, from Noon to 1:00 and another on October 2, from 3:30 to 4:30; both will cover the same topics.

On behalf of Coon, Licari talked about the change in the eligibility for graduate assistantships and scholarships moving away from requiring nine program hours to simply nine hours. The number of student requests has gone down and the need to follow up with students to make sure their enrollments are set up properly should also go down. The number of semesters a student is eligible for support has not changed.

One process change that came about as a result of suggestions from year's graduate coordinator meetings is changes in application and admissions processing. The process will move to an electronic process so that everything will be imaged and all application materials will go through Admissions. International students already go through Admissions, but domestic applications have been handled in a decentralized fashion. This will allow prospective student applicants to log in to see the status of their application, see what has taken place and if any action is needed. It will also allow easy communication with the applicant.

Schwieger reported that the Graduate Student Information Meeting took place on August 28; 173 graduate students attended. From the evaluations that were received, the event was a big success with 40 local employers donating door prizes, compared to 20 last year. Thinking About Graduate School (TAGS) is coming up on September 25 at 3:15; 154 undergraduate students attended last year's event. Coon will be giving a presentation and a four-person faculty panel will talk about the application process and what they have looked for in their experience being on graduate admissions committees. The event will conclude with a UNI programs fair. Schwieger will be at the UNI Career Fair on Monday; she will e-mail the Council her complete recruiting schedule for the fall. She added that the Graffito is being reformatted to have a new look. Schwieger noted that the Graduate College display case has been redesigned with alumni photos and bios. The information provided by graduate coordinators related to the alumni was overwhelming. The Graduate Student Symposium will take place on April 1, 2014 and marketing will begin in October. Schweiger also mentioned the "Thinking About Doctoral Studies" meeting that will take place on September 24, from 3:30 to 4:30 in the CME. Helen Harton will be the presenter.

Chair of Graduate Faculty Report – Pohl reported that Melissa Beall will be presenting the first brown bag lecture of the year in either in September or the beginning of

October. Pohl asked that Council members let her know if they are interested or if they know someone who may be interested in presenting.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair of the Graduate Council

Pohl nominated Clayton to serve Chair of the Graduate Council. Clayton accepted the nomination; seconded by Schmitz. Motion passed unanimously. Pohl nominated Milambiling to serve as Vice Chair of the Graduate Council. Milambiling accepted the nomination. Motion passed unanimously.

Clayton asked that anyone who has not designated an alternate to please to so in writing (e-mail is fine) to Cheryl Nedrow.

The meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday, September 26, 2013 at 3:30 p.m. in Lang 115.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Nedrow
Secretary