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University of Northern Iowa Graduate Council Minutes, October 25, 2012

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UNI Graduate Council Minutes #1018

UNI Graduate Council Minutes No. 1018

October 25, 2012

Present: Bartlett, Caswell, Christ, Clayton, Coon, Hays, Iqbal, Milambiling, Pohl, Schmitz, Witt, Zhbanova

Absent: Licari, Power, Terlip, Waldron

Guests: Pam MacKay, Susie Schwieger, Lisa Steimel, Joy Thorson

The meeting was called to order by Chair Clayton. Motion by Pohl to approve the minutes of the September 27, 2012 and October 11, 2012 meetings; seconded by Bartlett. Motion approved.

Graduate College Reports – Coon informed the Council that students had been notified of graduation application deadlines. Students have until December 14 to apply, but after November 10 there will be a late application fee.

Coon will be sending a reminder to departments regarding the current TOEFL policy and the process for requesting a waiver for submitting the TOEFL score.

She also noted that Graduate Coordinator/Department Head meetings would be held on October 29 and 30. One of the issues covered at the meetings is related to new graduate assistantship policies that will be implemented for 2013-2014 assistantships. Parts of the Graduate Assistant Handbook presented at today's Graduate Council meeting will be presented at the Coordinator/Department Head meetings as well.

Another item to be covered at those meetings will be the prospect of having all application materials submitted directly to the Office of Admissions instead of submitting partial materials to both Admissions and the various departments. Coon added that she and Schwieger met with Christie Kangas and Amy Schipper of Admissions regarding improvement of communications to prospective graduate students, such as students Schwieger has talked to at graduate recruiting fairs. Coon said she has received a good response to her request for programs to send her a template letter that would be automatically sent out from Admissions. A timeline of the various communications to prospective students is being developed in order to turn the prospective students into applicants.

Schwieger reported that over 160 undergraduate students attended the Thinking About Graduate School (TAGS) event on October 9, which was the largest number to date. She thought the marketing of the event was very well done and the faculty support was good. Schwieger sent all the attendees a follow up e-mail thanking them. Students who did not end up attending were sent information on how to access the TAGS presentation and handouts, as well as a list of graduate programs.

Schwieger announced that on November 14 there would be a graduate student open forum with Dean Licari. Graduate secretaries have been sent a flyer related to the event and Council members were given a flyer to post. Her last recruiting event of the season will be the Quad College Career Fair in Dubuque on Monday, October 29. The next issue of the Graffito will be available in late November. She informed the Council that due to the upcoming graduation of a graduate assistant in the Graduate College, there is currently a GA opening. The Graduate Student Symposium is set for April 4, 2013; active marketing will take place this semester and Schwieger encouraged Council members to promote the event as an opportunity for students to present their research and enhance their resume and CV.

Pohl reported that she had the opportunity to go to the University Council meeting and provided Council members with a summary of that meeting. Related to the first Brown Bag lecture, Pohl reported that there was a good turnout. The topic was very well-received and a lively discussion about bullying in the workplace took place. The PowerPoint presentation from this meeting will be posted on the Graduate College website. November 7 from 12:00 to 12:50 p.m. in the Presidential Room, Maucker Union, Cynthia Goatley (Theatre) and Rebecca Burkhardt (Music) will present, "Writing *Just Ann*, A Musical about the Life and Times of Former Governor of Texas, Ann Richards."

Pohl informed Council members that on Friday, October 19, she and Clayton sent a letter to Bob Donley, Executive Director of the Board of Regents regarding the University Strategic Plan's acknowledgment of graduate studies as being very important. They also emphasized the need for Council representation on the Presidential Search and Screen Committee or the need for the Council to have a voice in the interview process. They will inform the Council of Donley's response.

Approval of the Graduate Assistant Handbook

Coon noted that the Graduate Assistant Handbook which is designed for both students and faculty, would replace at least three previous documents; the graduate assistantship system document, the instructions for offers and the instructions for submitting paperwork. Coon noted that Human Resource Services was also provided with the handbook for review and suggestions.

Coon went through the handbook to highlight changes, additions, and areas in which explanation was expanded. Policies that were added or changed include: Graduate Assistant Job Descriptions to be in place and posted on departmental websites for 2013-2014 assistantships; Performance Appraisals conducted at least twice per semester that work in conjunction with the job description; some Continuing Education hours can be used for assistantship eligibility (not for tuition scholarship); GA maintaining at least regular weekly contact with supervisor and performance appraisal training for GA supervisors.

A question was asked about whether or not military leave would be covered in the handbook. Coon agreed that it should be included and will check into the current policy. Related to the retention of performance appraisals, Coon indicated that this issue is being looked into. Coon clarified that assistantship stipends are based on 16

work weeks for the semester. (Excluding Thanksgiving week during the fall semester and spring break week during the spring semester; students can work during finals week).

It was stressed that a job description needs to be in place prior to students applying for a position and before the graduate assistantship is offered, so students know what they are applying for and what they are expected to do. It was also noted that part of the reason for a job description is so graduate assistants are being asked to and are doing work that is appropriate for that position. Extended conversation took place regarding what to include in the job description and when the description should be presented.

It was also noted in the conversation that the assistantship application will be online on the Graduate College website for 2013-2014 assistantships and that students will e-mail the application to the department as an attachment. The Council agreed this was a good idea to eliminate paper forms.

At the conclusion of the conversation Coon stated that the graduate assistants are employees and job descriptions need to be in place and performance appraisals need to be conducted for the benefit of the student as well as the supervisor.

After some consideration, it was decided that the Council would continue to review the document for a possible vote at the next meeting. In the meantime, Clayton encouraged Council members to talk with colleagues as well and send her any comments. Coon noted that it would be helpful to check with the key people who are involved with graduate admissions and admission decisions.

Approval of the Benefits of Graduate Education at UNI

Clayton began the discussion by stating that having a clear and consistent message related to the benefits of graduate education is important and particularly important as the University is in the midst of a presidential search. She and Pohl brainstormed to find what they thought was a clear and consistent message that could accommodate a variety of graduate programs on campus. They decided on three themes: enhanced scholarship, professional development, and workforce development. It was clarified that the message would be used to inform people both on and off campus of the benefits of graduate education. Clayton noted that this relates to the part of the Graduate Education Strategic Plan that deals with being clear and consistent in communications about the importance of graduate education to both on and off campus constituencies. It was mentioned that graduate education is a benefit for undergraduates as well as graduate students and not just for those seeking a degree, but also for non-degree students taking a few classes. Clayton said that wordsmithing of these benefits would be worked on, however, Clayton and Pohl wanted to know if the ideas presented resonated with the views of the Council. She also noted that in developing these benefits, she and Pohl were considering the constituencies that would benefit from graduate education; the campus, the students who come to campus, and the surrounding communities/region. Pohl again emphasized that they were not at the point of wordsmithing, but rather identifying themes; wording will be crafted to suit each targeted audience. Clayton said the wording might vary depending on the audience, but the themes will be consistent.

Motion by Bartlett to approve the three major themes developed by Clayton and Pohl to be further developed; seconded by Hays. Motion approved.

The meeting adjourned at 4:44 p.m.

The next meeting will take place on Thursday, November 8, 2012 at 3:30 p.m. in Lang 115.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Nedrow
Secretary