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University of Northern Iowa Graduate Council Minutes, October 11, 2012

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UNI Graduate Council Minutes #1017

UNI Graduate Council Minutes No. 1017

October 11, 2012

Present: Bartlett, Christ, Caswell, Clayton, Coon, Hays, Iqbal, Licari, Pohl, Power, Rajendran (for Power later in the meeting), Schmitz, Terlip, Waldron, Witt, Zhbanova

Absent: Milambiling

Guests: President Ben Allen, Michelle Czarnecki, Provost Gloria Gibson, Pam MacKay, James Maxwell, Meghan O'Neal, Vicki Oleson, Susie Schwieger, Joy Thorson

The meeting was called to order by Chair Clayton, who thanked everyone for attending; introductions followed.

New Business

Meeting with Provost Gibson and President Allen – Clayton thanked President Allen and Provost Gibson for coming and asked if they had opening comments or if they would like to open with questions and answers. Allen thanked the Council for the invitation and began by commenting on budget issues. He said that UNI is asking for the second part of a three-part funding increase of \$4 million to the base budget; \$4 million was received last year and he is hopeful we will receive it this year as well. He added that the uncertainties are not on the revenue side, as the tax revenues are pretty good. The uncertainty will be the upcoming elections and what that might mean for the effort. There was quite a bit of bi-partisan support for the \$4 million last year, so we hope that will also come through. In addition, we are asking for a 2.6% increase in our operating budget, which would be common across all three universities. The outcome won't be known until March or April of next year.

Provost Gibson said she would repeat something that the Council may have previously heard, but that she thought could not be said too much; her number one priority for this year is to improve communication and to work on a better working relationship with faculty. Coming to today's meeting was very important in helping Gibson meet that goal. Moving forward she thought it might be helpful for her to meet with the Council more than once a year to hear concerns and for her to report out any information that she might have. She said she would appreciate an invitation to come back in the future. She added that clearly, her goal is to do what she can to make sure that everyone is on the same page as far as information goes. If she has correct information she will give it and will do her best to get it to the Council in a timely fashion.

Chair Clayton opened the floor to take questions, first from Council members and then from guests.

Hays had two questions for Gibson and Allen; he asked for comments on the tuition set-aside issue related to graduate tuition scholarships. With graduate education in the Strategic Plan as a very important part of our mission at UNI, and with some of the

graduate programs being eliminated, Hays asked what they saw as the key elements of strengthening and maintaining graduate education as an important part of UNI.

Related to the tuition set-aside, Allen said that for at least the last 30 years there has been a Board of Regents policy in place that a certain amount of tuition dollars should be set aside to generate money for financial aid. He added that it has been part of the policy for at least 20 years and in fact, part of a five-year goal is to have a certain percentage. The policy was that we have to have at least 15% of our tuition dollars set aside for financial aid. So the issue is that last year, much to everyone's surprise, it became an issue when some members of the legislature received complaints that people are paying more for tuition and building up a big debt and that money is going to support someone else. It was an issue that was very much a political issue, an economic issue, and is one that was not going to go away, so it has to be faced.

Since last spring there have been a series of discussions with the Board of Regents leadership and others that basically said, how can we change the state policy with respect to financial aid for students like most other states do. We are one of two states that do not have money set aside to pay financial aid for students going to public institutions. The bottom line is that both Republicans and Democrats have joined forces on the issue and said we had to quit doing this, and all of a sudden we realize we had \$14 million total that we could not generate anymore through that set aside policy. \$1.2 million of that would go toward graduate scholarships. Allen suggested that if you look at the unpublished draft language, it talks about using private and other funds to make up the difference. Raising private money for graduate students is difficult. It takes a sophisticated donor to say they want to help; you can find them, but it is a lot easier to find donors for undergraduate scholarships. Allen's argument, although he thinks it is an argument that apparently does not carry much weight outside of the higher education circles, is that the better the students you have, the better the educational experience would be for all, because you're not only learning from faculty, but you also learn from each other. Under the Board of Regents plan, we are going to ask the state for \$39.7 million for need-based aid and then we would reduce tuition a commensurate amount. The question is, if the state doesn't do that, can we go at least a couple more years using the tuition set-aside to give us more time to think through solving this problem not only for graduate education, but for everyone else? Allen thinks part of it will be, can some private fund raising be developed; difficult, but he said the Foundation might be able to do it. He added that there are now some projects that are being worked on that they can't share, but maybe some of that money could be used for graduate stipends. He thought it would be more from the Foundation than through private donors for the most part.

Gibson added that she thinks it is a very serious issue and she hopes that the Board of Regents will allow us to phase this in, rather than just say this is the end of set-aside as we know it, as it is supposed to be five years.

Clayton asked if we have to rely more on outside funding, does that mean that there will be a Foundation staff member designated for raising money for graduate college and graduate students, as that doesn't exist today. Allen responded that he didn't think the issue was staffing, rather the key is the process of identifying needs when the next

campaign is being developed and to have Graduate College people at the table saying what needs they have. Having said that, he said it is tough raising money for graduate students and really difficult despite the fact that we need the students here. He thought a good question would be how do we get the Foundation to be more involved. Another issue is partnerships; support for graduate students could be from corporations that could use this in a way that would help them and help us at the same time. One question would be how to get those corporations to understand how we can work for them. That won't help for every discipline around the table though; it will help certain disciplines. Licari added that there are opportunities that would naturally lend themselves, particularly in professional programs.

Allen said that in looking around the table for science-based areas, he noted that every time you put in a grant proposal, you should build graduate students into the proposal. Some feel that it makes your competitiveness go down a little bit and he asked how Council members in the sciences felt about that. Iqbal commented that a big concern he has is that if you reduce a graduate program too much then that has a huge negative impact in terms of getting external grants to build labs and all that involves. He pointed out that this issue is not isolated from the undergraduate research experience which is one of our priorities and pride is taken in that. He added that a lot of undergraduates are actually working in the labs and those labs are built by faculty and graduate students through their research program and those programs are supported by external grants. Iqbal added that he has been involved quite a bit in graduate research and is quite worried about that aspect; what will he say to the granting agencies.

Pohl mentioned that if the Foundation is not receptive in helping with fund raising, the Council had discussed the possibility of having a gateway to go out and make its own contacts on behalf of programs and try to talk to organizations and ask for help and get these organizations to come on board.

Allen responded that there are a couple of pieces to Pohl's comments. One is that he used to do that all the time when he was trying to leverage money in the College of Business at another institution. The only thing you have to be worried about is companies who are very sensitive about having so many people coming at them, so you have to have some type of gatekeeper. You can get into problems with foundations and corporations if you have a lot of people involved. In certain areas if you're working with someone, you can seek your own money from logical sources that way.

Gibson added that Council members may have contacts in industry or corporations that the Foundation does not have and perhaps the Foundation could work with the Council to approach that particular corporation or company. She suspected that each Council member would have some names of people who could possibly help. Allen said that what he was hearing from a couple of Council members is the need to have someone in the Foundation that would be allocated to that effort.

Power said that he saw some potential in terms of graduate distance learning and that if we had more distance students, we could use some of that tuition to have research assistants and graduate teaching assistants to help with graduate courses; maybe general fund money to support graduate teaching assistants. Allen said that is why we

used to do the executive MBA programs, because you would make excess money and then you would buy other things. Power said that it would have to be targeted and we would have to be more agile competitors than we have been, but there are at least some opportunities there at the graduate level. We would be able to use some of that money from distance students to support some on-campus students. Gibson added that she thought the other issue is that not all departments are supportive of distance education, so it falls to the faculty. She said that there are some graduate programs that if we could get them up and going, she thought they would be very, very successful online programs or distance education programs. Power said there is a lot of competition out there and we have to find a niche.

Related to the question regarding how to strengthen graduate education, Gibson responded that as everyone knows, in the University Strategic Plan, graduate education is goal number two. The Strategic Planning Committee had quite a discussion/debate, back and forth, as to where to place graduate education. At one point in time, graduate education was a part of goal number one, under graduate and undergraduate education. That was debated and debated and it was decided that it needed to be its own goal. The role of graduate education was a topic that everyone on the Strategic Planning Committee, which involved 35+ people, took very seriously.

Gibson asked now, how do we strengthen graduate education? And she said the exciting thing for her about graduate education is that in each college there are programs, where if we had more faculty we could have more students. There are programs in every college where we are turning away students. A few of these programs are unique to UNI, so she then asked how graduate education could be strengthened. She said one way is to make sure that we have faculty in these key areas. She added that we need faculty, and it's not faculty just for the sake of upping the numbers, it's faculty because they are key to the development of a program, strengthening the program and what those faculty are going to bring. Those faculty are going to bring the potential to go out and get grants, to get external funding, to work with the graduate and undergraduate students and there is great potential there. She thought that number one, to strengthen the programs, additional faculty needs to be hired and the resources for those faculty are needed. She continued that UNI is a part of the EPSCoR grant and one of the requirements is that we hire a faculty member and the grant will provide the start-up package for that particular faculty member. It really is important that we continue to reach out and partner, because EPSCoR is a state-wide grant partnership with Iowa and Iowa State and is a very prestigious award. So it is having the infrastructure, but it's also still working to get students into the programs, so recruitment is also very, very important. But again, there are programs where we don't have to advertise, because the students are already there; we need faculty.

Clayton mentioned that there are only a handful of searches underway. She asked if there was a timeframe in which the University might actually be hiring. Gibson responded that we are doing some hiring now. Clayton commented that we are basically replacing right now, not adding additional faculty in key positions. Gibson said we are adding a few, certainly not what we need and added that she does have dollars for new lines and that there needs to be a determination as to the criteria for allocating those dollars. It was discussed at AAC and a retreat took place over the summer where

the criteria was decided. Gibson again mentioned that they are trying to work more closely with the faculty, so she has had a discussion with Faculty Senate about their ideas related to those dollars might be allocated. She said she would certainly want the Council's ideas of what criteria it feels would be important as well. She has money that she's holding onto this year or it's being used as one-time money and new faculty line searches have not started this year. So she said the first issue is that criteria as to how the new dollars will be allocated is needed; secondly, Gibson does not want to give lines to departments and then next year have to say she needs the money back. There are a lot of variables right now; one of them is set-aside and how all of that is going to shake out and there are others. Gibson said she also needs to see how the dust is going to settle this year and with the program cuts and the closure of Price Lab School there were some savings there; not as much as she had hoped, because we made sure that Price Lab faculty were hired back into the new clinical experience and that is a good thing. She said she had between \$600,000 and \$700,000, a little of which has already been used, but that is a ballpark figure. She has some money for new lines, but she has to be cautious.

Going back to the tuition set-aside issue, Zhbanova asked if the Board of Regents had any suggestions as to how the gap would be filled. In Curriculum and Instruction, she could not think of any corporations that would want to support education, because it is not something that they can personally use for their corporation. Allen responded that as he understood it, the question is if the Board of Regents has any suggestions as to how to solve the problem and the answer was no. The issue was that everybody was surprised by this and the Board office is behind us. He added that Pat Geadelmann, who is the Special Assistant for Board and Governmental Relations went to Washington, D.C. last spring and talked to the head of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU); they talked to the president, the vice president of government relations and the vice president for policy and they were stumped by how to solve this, because this has been affecting us here in Iowa, it has come up in Virginia, and it has come up in Texas. So we are the leading edge of this challenge. Allen thought that our solution has to be not with the corporations, although he thought we should keep working hard, but we have to be viewed as different from the other two universities and be the public university where somehow we get more state money and some of that state money can be used to make up some of the difference. Allen didn't see any other way to solve the problem.

Regarding the reorganization of designated graduate programs, Waldron mentioned that there were programs in particular that were asked to reorganize and she asked about the process for reorganization and if there have been clear guidelines and timeframe given to these graduate programs. Gibson responded that there have not been guidelines other than departments should follow the curriculum process. Gibson has not said, nor did she think it is her role to say that a program should do "X." She provided a small stipend this summer and into the fall for faculty to get together to talk about curricular issues, how to reshape the curriculum. She knows that in some programs there was a concern about length and faculty were asked to take a look at the number of hours required. For some undergraduate programs there was an issue of matching endorsements with minors; they weren't quite the same and there was a lot of

overlap. She said that it is the role of the faculty to look at the curriculum and to start planning, and she would hope that the process has already started, so that the reorganization plans and curriculum changes can move forward. Waldron responded that it would make sense that it comes from the faculty, but on the same hand, then it would seem that there would need to be some direction and guidelines for that process to be successful. Gibson responded that she certainly would not expect that immediately after the reorganization process, numbers would somehow go up miraculously. Waldron asked if the key indicator of the reorganization would be that in a certain amount of time after the reorganization the numbers would be up. Gibson said they haven't gotten to that point yet. She said she did not want faculty solely focusing on the numbers, because she thinks that if you have a dynamic, exciting curriculum and program, the students will be there; and of course recruitment would be worked on. She did not want the Council to focus on the numbers and she wasn't even sure what the numbers would be since it hasn't been discussed. Gibson asked "Should you be concerned about enrollment? Yes, I'm not going to sit here and say no. Yes you should, but what I want and what I hope that you want is a program that is going to be a program that will launch our students into their careers or into post-graduate or doctoral programs. So it has to be both, but I don't want you to solely focus on the numbers."

Waldron said that essentially the reorganization process is solely going through the curricular process, so they are not furnishing a report. Gibson responded that the only reports that are given are the reports where she has provided money for faculty to get together to talk about the curriculum, because she wants to know what the outcome was. She said if a report is being offered as a suggestion, she would certainly consider that and maybe that is something there can be a conversation about if the Council feels that it would be helpful.

Licari added that in talking to some programs directors who are reorganizing their programs, some of them have been concerned about having their program basically shut down for two years while we go through the curriculum process. Licari talked to Scott Peters, the Faculty Senate chair about this at length. Both agreed that if there is a program that is reorganizing and they've finished the curriculum modifications to everyone's satisfaction through the curriculum process that there is no reason not to expedite that and have those reviews done this year, rather than have them wait essentially almost three admission cycles; two academic years but really three admission cycles. As quickly as these programs do this reorganizing work, he would be happy to facilitate their review through the curriculum process as soon as possible.

Clayton said there is a general concern that it needs to be made clear to programs being restructured or reorganized what the issues are. They know that they don't have the numbers or else they wouldn't fall into that category, so they need to know if it is only that they need more students or if there are some other issues that programs need to be aware of moving forward. She added that if Gibson knew of any the issues, they need to be made very clear.

Gibson responded that she would hope that programs are having those discussions themselves. She said if she could point to Technology's doctoral program, although she didn't know if it had been completely overhauled, but the both the Masters and the

Doctorate programs were restructured very quickly. It can happen, but faculty and the department head did a lot of intense work to get that done. They had to look at their curriculum and make some difficult decisions, so it can happen. Gibson and Allen had a discussion with Licari and felt that they had made significant progress, so let's not close it down for two years. They made some difficult decisions, so let's go with it. Waldron said that she thinks those types of communications are going to be important and added that she was sure that is being done, but just to maintain that and to continue to have this for all the programs would be essential.

Zhbanova said that from a student's point of view as it relates to attracting students to a program, of course you would want to go to a university that has your program, but before you start it, you don't really know what you're signing up for, so a lot of times students, especially graduate students, who already have loans from their undergraduate program choose a university based on the scholarships that the university can provide. She said that she was just afraid that students, especially out of state students, would stay home rather than come to UNI. Allen responded that he did not disagree; he made his own selection of a PhD program on both quality and the availability of money. He added that we have to assume that we have to solve the financial aid issue. Related to going to the private sector, he said that it is almost easier getting big money for a program as opposed to little money for scholarships. The big money would be used not only for scholarships, but for getting additional stipends to attract the best faculty.

Gibson said that they understand the importance of assistantships and scholarships for graduate students and this is not forgotten. It's just a dilemma that we're going to have to work on. Allen added that from an institutional point of view, we have to have high quality graduate programs. If you require stipends and scholarships, which I think we do have to have, you probably have to decide how many graduate programs we can have so we can focus those resources on those programs.

Related to the amount of money saved from the program closures, and Price Lab School closure not being as much as expected, Waldron asked if we know exactly how much money has been saved and if the money saved would continue to increase over time. Gibson said it would increase a little, because of the phased retirements. She said she gave a ballpark figure and can try to get a more precise number, but that is about where we are with the savings. Waldron asked if that was money that has been allocated for faculty lines. Gibson responded that she hoped those funds will go to faculty lines. Gibson said she is "gun shy" because of past budget cuts and reversions. This puts her in a very difficult situation, because the Board of Regents does not like to see money left in the budget. Gibson had announced that we were going to have fellowships and asked faculty for ideas as to what they need in order to continue their research agenda and she hoped Council members had sent in ideas. That money that is not being spent to hire faculty is being used as one-time money to give back out to the faculty for those ideas about generating research. Gibson is hoping that if we get our \$4 million and our percentage increase, that we will have these dollars that we can do searches for new lines in the fall. Gibson said she had not looked at all the ideas that were sent in, but she had looked at some

and some of what the faculty has sent has included funding for graduates and undergraduates.

Related to the economics of graduate programs, Rajendran asked Allen to expand on his comments. Allen responded that graduate programs are inherently expensive and to say otherwise is foolish and misleading. The issue is how to generate the basic revenue streams that you have to have to support graduate education. He said to keep in mind that he is not saying that graduate education is associated with research, but there is an overlap. The question he always asks is why we have graduate education and why do faculty members want graduate education. His personal story ties to the economics; one is that you like to teach graduates more than you like to teach undergraduates, as they are more inquisitive, they are more focused, they are simply not distracted by so many other things. But, and this is a key issue, at a personal level, he always wanted graduate students and graduate education because it leveraged his research. He added that the economics here is related to how we partner with institutions. In Education for example; from an institutional point of view our masters programs have been very helpful to us. He thinks it is going to be a case where you have to be out there in Des Moines and be partners in these different communities. Based on what he sees going on in Education about how they want professional development to be, Allen thinks that the economics would be how do we partner with other institutions, particularly at the master's level. And at the doctoral level we would simply say if we want a doctoral program, we support it. There is no way to get around the fact that it is high cost.

Hays commented that a strong argument could be made that people with graduate degrees are vital in more and more areas, whether it's government, non-profit, business, etc. So by training people for master's degrees in particular, we are adding value and trying to think of it that way is not so much that we're training people to do more research. We're not a PhD-granting institution and we're not training people for PhD's; we're training master's students that are going to go out into the community and really add value to whatever institution they participate in. Hays said that may be the key to really justifying and defending our graduate programs. Allen said this is a valid point; how do we market that and it has to get us money. Allen commented that as Gibson said, we need to identify those programs where there is demand for students.

Related to the comments about the high expense of graduate programs, Bartlett asked Allen if he was referring to graduate assistantships or other expenses. Allen responded that it was a general statement because of class size, stipends and in certain areas because of the equipment and because just simply the cost of placement and more mentoring; there are exceptions, and some programs are close to breaking even.

Terlip said that both Allen and Gibson had indicated that communication is important and they would be willing to attend Council meetings more often. She said that she knew that leadership from the Senate and the chair of the faculty meet with Allen and Gibson either monthly or bi-monthly. Terlip asked about the possibility of getting a representative from the Council to attend those meetings as well. Gibson responded that having a separate meeting including the Dean would be a possibility. Licari mentioned that on the Thursdays when there is no Graduate Council meeting, a

leadership meeting that covers any issues that might arise in Graduate Council takes place. The Leadership Team meeting is an informal meeting where Clayton also drafts the agenda for the Graduate Council meetings. Gibson said she thought that was a great idea and would be make a commitment to attend a Leadership Team meeting once a month. The Graduate Council secretary will arrange the meeting. Clayton mentioned that many of the issues that were discussed at today's meeting in terms of the value of graduate education at UNI, ways to move forward with funding, etc., would be discussed at the next Graduate Council meeting.

Gibson added that Cliff Chancey is the representative on the Presidential Search Committee for Academic Affairs. He does not solely represent the department heads and she encouraged Council members to talk with him to let their ideas and feelings about graduate education be known to him. Pohl asked about the possibility of having a representative, ad-hoc or otherwise as a member of the Presidential Search Committee. Allen and Gibson said they did not have any input, but Allen was pretty sure it was too late, but an e-mail a request to Bob Donley, with the Board of Regents. Allen said students tried to add someone and they couldn't. Allen thought the issue would be to influence those on the committee and there are opportunities through Cliff and others. Allen added that when the candidates come on campus, the key is to interact with them. Clayton mentioned that Power is on the Search Committee in another capacity and Gibson responded that the Council should have some interaction with Chancey.

Coon mentioned that a former president espoused the belief that we should be increasing graduate education because we have the community colleges basically nibbling at our front end and fairly soon we will have so much competition for the bachelor's level that we need to expand in the upward direction. Coon asked if Allen and Gibson could comment on how they view that philosophy. Allen responded that he thought if you define graduate education to include certificate programs and non-degree programs, he thought it is not a bad strategy. If you rely on traditional programs he doesn't think that's going to work, but that is his view. Gibson added that the focus ought to be on the programs that we have, to strengthen those programs. She said related to starting new programs, it would be very, very expensive. She reiterated that we have programs where we are turning away students, so a first strategy would be to get more faculty so we can increase the numbers in those programs.

Rajendran asked what Allen thought are the qualities of a good president *at this time*. Allen responded that his bias is that first of all the president should be an academic in order to understand the nuances and challenges. Another quality would be someone involved in graduate program both as a researcher and as a faculty member, as well as someone who can see into the future; they have to "shoot beyond the duck". He added that another quality is someone who has an ease at making partnerships with private sector providers, because he thinks there will need to be partnerships with those that have more resources than we do. He said that is a comfort level that some academics don't have.

Clayton asked if there is anything Council members can do to help Allen and Gibson related to graduate education. Gibson responded that the first thing would be to recruit

students and that is already being done. She continued that we have some very strong graduate programs and for some of them we do not need to recruit students, because students are already there. A question is why aren't more students applying for more of our programs; whether it is that we are not doing enough marketing, we're not reaching out to the right constituents. She mentioned that if we have the only program in the state, then a question would be why aren't we turning away students. She concluded that we should think about our programs and what it is that we need to do better, which could be a wide spectrum of things. She said she feels that strengths, weaknesses and threats are known, but what are the opportunities?

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

The next meeting will take place on Thursday, October 25, 2012 at 3:30 p.m. in Lang 115.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Nedrow
Secretary