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University of Northern Iowa Graduate Council Minutes, September 27, 2012

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UNI Graduate Council Minutes #1016

UNI Graduate Council Minutes No. 1016

September 27, 2012

Present: Bartlett, Christ, Caswell, Clayton, Coon, Iqbal, Juby (for Hays), Pohl, Schmitz, Milambiling, Rajendran (for Power), Terlip, Waldron, Witt, Zhbanova

Guest: Joy Thorson, Graduate Programs Coordinator, Registrar's Office

The meeting was called to order by Chair Clayton. Motion by Pohl to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2012 meeting; seconded by Milambiling. Motion approved.

Graduate College Reports – Licari announced that another set of Graduate Coordinator meetings would be held at the end of October; dates are yet to be determined and there will be two dates and times in order to accommodate teaching schedules. Since the first set of meetings went well and there was positive feedback, he would like to hold at least two of these each semester. Licari will hold an open forum with students during the first week of November in order to sit down with students discuss any comments or concerns.

As a result of the audit that was conducted this past summer at Licari's request, a Graduate Assistant Handbook is being developed. The handbook will be a resource for each graduate program that contains all of the necessary information in one source. The handbook will be done in time for the spring cycle of assistantship awards.

Related to graduate recruiting, Licari mentioned that an encouraging bit of information was that in cooperation with Kent Johnson, Dean of Continuing Education and Special Programs, they will be hiring a firm to map out issues such as communication, workflow, responsibilities, etc. The current process is not in an organized format and this would essentially produce a coordinated, consistent communication system for reaching out to prospective students or a process for students who contact UNI with an interest in graduate programs. He said this is important because one of the items he wanted to address as a result of the strategic planning process is to make sure everyone is able to talk about graduate education at UNI in a consistent way.

In a response to a question regarding what graduate student recruiting incentives UNI has to offer, Licari responded that the financial incentives are the most obvious. An open question Licari has, that has not been answered, is what happens to tuition scholarships if the tuition side-aside ends. There is a proposal to end tuition set-aside and instead have the state fund need-based scholarships and the three University foundations come up with the funding for merit-based awards. Licari continued that the largest threat to graduate education on this campus is the elimination of the tuition set-aside. Clayton added that the public statements that were made at the last Board of Regents meeting about tuition set-aside, even the idea that the foundation would provide this, was for merit-based scholarships for undergraduates from the state of

Iowa. There was no mention of finding funding for graduate students or out-of-state students of any kind, whether they are need-based or merit-based. Licari said that is part of his question; what does that mean for graduate students? He said he thought it would eliminate the set-aside money for scholarships, because the whole set-aside system would end. It was also noted that there would be many competing priorities of which graduate students would be only one; diversity initiatives, the Honors Program, athletic scholarships, theatre, arts, etc., would also be competing. It was noted that this could be a question to ask when the President and Provost visit.

Coon explained that when Schwieger goes to recruiting events she brings back contact cards from students who are interested in graduate programs at UNI. She then enters them into the CRM system as a prospective student. In order to improve communication with prospective students, Admissions can use the information entered by Schwieger to send an automated e-mail from the graduate coordinator of the program they have indicated they are interested in. Coon is hoping that all graduate coordinators will be able to provide her with an e-mail to forward to Admissions. Coon will provide a basic template for graduate coordinators to personalize as they see fit, and then send back to her. She would then provide the templates to Admissions and indicate which major codes get which e-mail template. These e-mails will give more basic and personalized program, application, and contact information in addition to the e-mail Licari sends. She added that a personal follow up from the graduate coordinator would be beneficial.

It was noted that Admissions can have a timed communication plan with automatically generated e-mails at particular times after the student is in the system. Clayton mentioned that for her department, the huge problem was part of the application materials would be submitted, but the application was never completed. As a result, the prospective students were automatically denied. She thought it would be helpful if once a student submits an item they would receive an acknowledgement thanking them and then reminding them what needs to be submitted next. Coon responded that she thought that a checklist that the student would see that indicates what has been and what needs to be submitted is a coming development. Coon thought that Admissions would like to include as much of the supplemental application as possible into the main application so perhaps students don't need to submit a separate program specific application since all the necessary information would be on the main application. Bartlett responded that her program has a very extensive supplemental application and the program secretary communicates with students about what they're missing in order to complete their file. Bartlett commented that a checklist would be much more efficient and asked who she would need to contact about this. Coon responded that Christie Kangas is the director of Admissions and was the person who contacted Coon about how to get the various pieces of application information from the departments. She also said that one possibility could be that a student would select the program and then the application the student gets is tailored for whatever information the program needs. The other possibility would be for the overall application for graduate study to be more extensive and those people who don't need certain information could pass over that. She did not know exactly how that would work, although she thought it may be fairly easy to have the program choice first. Coon said

she would suggest this to Admissions. Coon also mentioned that going to a paperless system will also be a priority for Admission; eventually they would like to have an entirely paperless system, although she did not have a definite time frame. Zhanova commented that she would rather fill out a huge application for any department, because what would usually happen was the offices that you send all the materials to don't communicate with each other, so sometimes it is confusing because you don't know which documents are where. "Sometimes I think that can drive people away."

Clayton asked if the process would hold true for both domestic and international students. Coon responded that if the student was able to see what applications items had been received, everything would go to Admissions and then from Admissions to the department, rather than items being sent directly to the department as it currently is for domestic students. Admissions is willing to be the central clearing house for everything, particularly if the system goes paperless. After additional conversation, which included various aspects of the application process, as well as a paperless system, it was the consensus of the Council that the student would get "Part B" of the application based on what program they apply to.

Chair of Graduate Faculty Report – Pohl reminded the Council that the first Brown Bag Lecture of the semester, "Civility in the Workplace," presented by Melissa Beall and Marilyn Shaw, would take place on October 10. The next lecture dates are November 7 and December 5.

Coon introduced Joy Thorson who is the Graduate Programs Coordinator for the Registrar's Office. Joy will be a resource to those involved with graduate programs including the upcoming curriculum cycle and in other capacities moving forward. Pam MacKay is still in the Registrar's Office and continues to be a contact, although Joy can assist with issues as well. Thorson mentioned that she had been with the Office of Admission for over 30 years and she is now transitioning back into curriculum. She added that she is a resource for all the graduate coordinators across campus.

New Business

Resolution to the Presidential Search Committee – Clayton said that the next two items on the agenda were associated with Licari's comments related to the value of graduate education at UNI. She added that the statement being brought forward from the Graduate Council comes at a very important time in the life of the University. At the open forum with the Board of Regents members of the Presidential Search Committee, one of the statements made in their summary related to the qualities of the next UNI president was that UNI as an institution is very cognizant of the role of the Liberal Arts and that UNI wants to be known as a liberal arts institution and the next president should embrace that. Clayton continued that what was left out at that meeting was any representation of the importance of graduate education and the role that plays in a comprehensive university and the importance of hiring a president who is fully supportive of graduate education. Since the Council's contact with the search committee is somewhat limited, Clayton thought it would be important to communicate to all the members of the search committee that we do value graduate education, as

well as undergraduate education, and that the Council is looking for a leader who embraces the importance of that aspect of our University. The Council reviewed the draft statement provided by Clayton and it was mentioned that the statement would carry more weight coming from the Graduate Council as a whole.

During the discussion regarding the statement there was a question as to whether or not there would be value in having someone in an ex-officio role serve on the search committee. Clayton said she thought this could be asked and noted that comments are being received on the search committee website. In addition to the statement brought forward from the Council, she encouraged Council members and other colleagues to send their comments forward; not everyone has the same concerns, but everyone has the same opportunity to have their concerns heard. Coon added that she would send an e-mail out to all graduate students to let them know about the website. It was suggested that the Council ask if it can have a member of the Graduate Council on the search committee in whatever capacity and ask if the candidates can present to the Graduate Council. It was also mentioned that the Graduate Council should be a part of the whole process and not just a one-time occurrence. It would be important since at an open forum a question can be asked about graduate education, but coming to meet with the Council and having extended time becomes so important in order to tease out some of the differences in the candidates. If the Council is not represented on the search committee it needs to exert its influence in other ways. The composition of the Presidential search committee was also briefly discussed.

Motion by Pohl to approve the statement to the Presidential Search & Screen Committee with the suggested revisions; seconded by Waldron. Motion approved.

Statement is as follows:

The UNI Graduate Council would like to take this opportunity to underscore the important role of graduate education in a comprehensive university. This is clearly stated in Goal 2 of the UNI strategic plan: "Provide rigorous and relevant graduate education that meets the needs of graduate students, the university, and the community." We urge the presidential search committee to make graduate education a priority during the entire search process, and we look forward to on-campus presentations by candidates who share our commitment to excellence in graduate education.

Discussion and Prioritization of Questions for the President and Provost

In light of the President and Provost's visit to the Graduate College Council's next meeting, on October, 11, Clayton wanted to find the major topics that the Council as a whole feels are important so that those questions are addressed. She added that any other questions could also be asked the day of the meeting.

After extended conversation, questions would be asked regarding the following topics:

- Tuition set-aside
 - In-state tuition for out-of-state graduate students
 - Tuition waivers for bordering states

- Funding for graduate education
- Enrollment issues
- Faculty for graduate education
- How much money is being saved by program closures?
- Progress of program restructuring
- What makes a good president at the present time?
- How can the Council work with the Provost to improve graduate education?

Clayton said she would summarize the questions and send them to Council members for review. At the conclusion of the conversation, Clayton noted that immediately after the Annual Graduate Faculty last spring, Provost Gibson had mentioned to Clayton, Licari and Lauren Nelson that she really wanted to work with us and volunteered to come and would invite President Allen.

Clayton encouraged everyone to attend or send their alternate so that they are represented.

Rajendran made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Bartlett. Motion passed; the meeting adjourned at 4:59 p.m.

The next meeting will take place on Thursday, October 11, 2012 at 3:30 p.m. in the Oak Room, Maucker Union.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Nedrow
Secretary