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University of Northern Iowa Graduate Council Minutes, March 22, 2012

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UNI Graduate Council Minutes #1012

March 22, 2012

Present: Bartlett, Botzum, Clayton, Coon, Etscheidt, Hays, Husband, Iqbal, Licari, Nelson, Pohl, Power, Schuchart, Waldron

Absent: Bauman, Caswell

Guest: Susie Schwieger, Director of Graduate Student Life

The meeting was called to order by Chair Clayton. Motion by Pohl to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2012 meeting; seconded by Bartlett. Motion approved.

Licari reported that allocations of stipends and scholarships had gone out. He understood that timing was not the best, however he could not move any faster on those. The total number of tuition scholarships available for the coming year decreased because the amount allotted for tuition scholarships did not keep pace with the tuition increase. If the projected tuition increase goes forward, there will be about 15 less tuition scholarships, which is a pretty significant reduction. The House Education Committee passed out of committee the bill that would prevent the Regents' institutions from increasing tuition, so that would add to the current challenges. He added that it is a bill that has only come out of committee so a lot could change. A question was asked about a whether or not there was a place to access what the total allocation looked like and where those went. Licari responded that he could put that information together.

Licari announced that Mary Ann Hesse would be retiring, effective April 3 and an open house would take place on Thursday, March 29 that everyone is invited to attend. Lisa Steimel from the Office of Business Operations will be taking Mary Ann's place.

Coon reported that she was prioritizing student requests for summer tuition scholarship applicants and has a list from Pam MacKay of the students who have applied for Spring graduation. She also noted that she had met with some students who are in closed programs to answer questions about their options for finishing.

Schwieger noted that next week is Graduate Student Appreciation Week. The lead off speaker on Monday, 3/26 will be President Allen. He will be talking only to graduate students from 3:00 to 4:00 in McCollum Science Hall, Room 001. She asked everyone to encourage their students to attend. The topic of President Allen's remarks will be his vision of graduate education moving forward. He will also talk about the role of graduate education relative to his goals of being a leading undergraduate institution and a leader in pre-K through 12 teacher preparation. An e-mail will be sent today regarding the activities for the week.

The Fifth Annual Graduate Student Research Symposium is set for Tuesday, March 27. Schwieger said that although there could be more participation, she is pleased with participation overall. The focus of marketing efforts will be changed and expanded.

Schwieger added that there is a myth that a project has to be finished in order to participate in the symposium. At the beginning of the Fall semester one of the

marketing efforts would be to dispel those types of myths early on. Symposium sessions are as follows:

Poster Presentations: 12:00 - 2:00 p.m., Maucker Union, Ballroom

Oral Presentations: 12:00 to 3:00 p.m., Maucker Union, Lower Level

Creative Performances: 6:30 to 9:00 p.m., Davis Hall, GBPAC

Related to those students who have not finished their project, Clayton wondered if it would be useful to restructure the awards to possibly have one award for posters/presentations in their first year and other awards for those in their second year, so students who had not completed their project would not be in competition with those students who had finished. Schwieger thought that would be a great idea.

Nelson reported that the third brown bag lecture took place yesterday; there was a nice turn out and the presentation was interesting. Chris Buckholz will hold the next brown bag that will take place in April.

Related to President Allen's five-year evaluation, Nelson noted that she and Clayton are working on the data from faculty and interviews are underway.

Nelson also informed the Council that the Annual Graduate Faculty Meeting will take place on Friday, April 20 at 3:15 p.m. in Sabin Hall, Room 002; a reception will follow. A panel format is being considered for the presentation portion of the meeting. Licari said he thought a panel and Q&A session would be fine. Other topics that could be included by the panel were briefly discussed.

As Chair of the Committee on Committees, Power mentioned that Pohl has been nominated for Chair of the Graduate Faculty. He said that the biggest problem has been lack of participation with electronic balloting. He noted that only graduate faculty can vote for Chair of the Graduate Faculty, while all faculty may vote for Chair of the Faculty. He encouraged everyone to take an interest in voting. Power informed Council members that United Faculty is trying to work with faculty members in programs that are being closed; Betty DeBerg would be the contact person.

Volunteers to Serve on Graduate Student Awards Committees

Etscheidt and Waldron will review the nomination materials for the Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award.

Clayton, Husband and Nelson will review nomination materials for the Outstanding Master's Research Paper Award.

Clayton and Coon thanked them for their willingness to serve. Access of materials and timeline for review were discussed.

Revision of the Nomination Procedures for the Distinguished Scholar Award

Coon distributed the revised procedures for Distinguished Scholar Award. She said the main modifications from the original version from the last meeting were related to letters of support and electronic submission other than the single hard copies of books that

would be difficult to provide electronically. Discussion topics, suggestions, concerns and outcomes are as follows:

Topics of Discussion

- Should there be a limit on the number of samples of scholarly work/creative activity? (Nelson)
- Suggestions: 3-5 works, 50 pages, no limit.
- Concerns:
- What about short, but significant creative works (e.g. poems)? (Husband)
- Committee does not have time to look through entire body of someone's work. (Nelson)
- Will the nomination letter be written in such a way to emphasize the importance of certain works that might be overlooked by someone outside the field? (Coon)
- Should the limit be number of works or number of pages? (Husband)
- Outcome:
- The wording of the guidelines was changed to "single hardcopy samples of selected scholarly work..." so that the nominee can select his/her most significant works.
- Personal statement by nominee to provide the context for those from other disciplines.
- How to stimulate nominations for this award? (Power)
- Suggestions:
- Graduate Dean could suggest to dept. head of Regents' Award Winners that those individuals be nominated. (Power)
- Graduate Dean could suggest that winners of College faculty research awards be nominated. (Licari)
- Promote through the graduate coordinators. (Etscheidt? Pohl?)
- Concerns:
- Awards can be political-don't want to link this to another award in any way.
- Reflects poorly on graduate faculty when we have no nominations. (Power)
- Process has been onerous – similar to Promotion and Tenure (Nelson)
- Outcomes:
- We have already made the process less onerous by not requiring external letters.
- Grad dean can feel free to make informal contacts to stimulate nominations.
- Promote the award as prestigious, stand-alone award.
- Promote through grad coordinators.

Etscheidt made a motion to approve the nomination guidelines for the Distinguished Scholar Award as revised; seconded by Husband. Motion passed unanimously.

Regarding the deadline for nominations, it was noted that this year nominations were due January 17 and materials were due February 13. It was also noted that the January 17 deadline is not ideal, since it is so close after people come back from break and that February 1 or some date early in February would be preferable. Coon responded that the deadlines are not part of the original guidelines and can be adjusted. She added that she didn't want to make it too late since the award is given at the Annual Graduate Faculty meeting.

Implementation of the Graduate Education Strategic Plan

Clayton started the discussion by asking Council members to think about any initiatives that are taking place in their programs to meet the goals and objectives of the Graduate Education Strategic Plan.

Nelson mentioned that Objective 1, under Goal 2, could be part of a panel discussion at the Annual Graduate Faculty Meeting. Regarding Goal 2, Objective 2, Clayton noted that there are students with very different needs who are seeking graduate education; there are students who need a degree in order to get credentials in a field and there are students who are just genuinely inquisitive and want to obtain knowledge in a particular field, but have no desire to even work in that particular area. There is an untapped pool of students who want to take some graduate course work here and there, not really interested in seeking a degree, but maybe for their own professional development. Clayton and Nelson had been talking about including these different aspects of graduate education in a panel discussion.

Pohl talked about her department's initiatives related to Goal 1, Objective 2. She said they are reorienting and readjusting comprehensive exams in order to accomplish better student outcomes assessment for exams. They are standardizing some of the questions and getting reading lists to their students and giving them different types of scenarios that they might be encountering in an exam; for example, for theory questions and for research questions. They are fine tuning and tailoring their exams with the hope that the outcome will be a more learned graduate student and one with a firmer grasp on those two areas. Clayton responded that in addition to improving outcomes assessment, this could result in a better sense of areas in which students are lacking. A measurement of the quality of the teaching in those two areas and where improvement is needed could also be a result.

Power commented that the MBA graduate program will have external reviewers coming on campus and he suspects there are some other programs that are going under review this year. He added that he feels program reviews are clearly a cornerstone to achieving Goal 1. Nelson asked if there is documentation regarding how many programs are regularly reviewed. Licari said there is a chart of the rotation of program reviews and added that the challenge is that, generally speaking, program reviews are understood to be confidential, so it limits the ability for findings of those reviews to be brought back to the Graduate Council for discussion. He added that he was not saying that program reviews are not cornerstone of maintaining quality education, however to have a wider discussion in an open meeting is a challenge. He said a department could be asked to provide an executive summary of the findings from the external reviewers.

After some additional discussion including various benchmarks and measurements, Clayton said it might be good to start out by identifying attributes that programs might share in common, for example, all programs that have an accreditation body, as they are probably all going to have some common issues that might not be shared with other programs. She added that just have those programs know who each other are and have a place where they could meet or have an opportunity to discuss some of these issues might be the facilitation; various accreditation standards might be a little bit

different, but the process and how to satisfy those standards might be similar. Bartlett commented that she thought that would be a great idea. She added that she had tried to reach out to other programs, because they are shifting from not just having standards and syllabus, but have to have outcomes for all 300+ standards in the accrediting process. So programs have to have demonstrated student outcomes, that the students know all this information, and that is a real big shift. They are trying to work with Donna Vinton in terms of how to tie this to SOA, so if there is a way for faculty in programs to talk to each other and share information would be a good idea. Power added that if there was a way to piggyback with program reviews it would not require a lot of extra work and yet we could gather and share information, so a two-page summary would be something reasonable. Nelson said that with the unique needs of the various programs, reviewing of documents might identify some of those needs. Licari said that review of program plans that are a result of the program review process would identify some needs. Etscheidt commented that Mary Herring could provide information on curriculum mapping as it relates to outcomes assessment.

Nelson said that a first step to Goal 1 may be to look at input standards and generating a chart so some of the information is known and then be able to monitor that so it does not erode over time. There is a fear of full time faculty eroding and being replaced by part time faculty. A baseline would be needed to know what's happening. Clayton added that there were some steps taken in that direction when the Graduate Faculty Constitution was revised in terms of what it means to be regular graduate faculty.

Related to Goal 3, Nelson suggested that at a future Annual Graduate Faculty Meeting, a good speaker who could address the topic well could be brought in if funding permits. This person could be invited to provide a bit of inspiration and ideas next year.

There was a question as to how the Graduate College works with Continuing Education in terms of the online graduate program offerings. Licari responded that a lot of universities are expanding graduate education and there are opportunities there and recent new graduate programs have been through that arrangement. He added that he sees opportunities in terms of the market; there are certain kinds of programs that delivered through that delivery mechanism can reach a greater market of students; place bound students, those who are already work or don't want to come to campus. He said the concerns are that converting courses for an entire program is costly; faculty development money needs to be provided to retool courses and instruction methods and time needs to be allowed for that to happen. He added that there would need to be a careful transition plan if a program were going to be converted. If a new program were to be started, there would need to be some careful market analysis. He said that Kent Johnson is good at that and could help with that, but this takes a fair amount of planning. The quality of delivery would not be a concern because our faculty are good and they are supported in developing online teaching. The concern would be the assurance they would adhere to Graduate Council expectations. A concern about managing programs when distance and online courses are being housed in another area was also shared. There were comments that the programs should be managed by the graduate faculty of the specific program and department. After additional discussion, Licari said inviting Kent Johnson to a meeting for a discussion would be a key initiative and a good way to kick off the academic

year. Nelson noted that these discussions would feed into Goal 1, Objective 1 of the Strategic Plan.

Botzum informed Council members that next Thursday is Regents day; student representatives take a charter bus to Des Moines to meet and discuss various issues with lawmakers. She added that student representatives are needed and from what she has heard, the Graduate College has been fully represented in the past. Botzum is attending, but was not aware of anyone else and offered to send an e-mail regarding the event. Botzum noted that this is definitely a good way to promote graduate education at the student level.

Botzum also mentioned the Universities for a Better Iowa student advocacy initiative, which involves the three Regents Institutions. The kickoff is on April 2 at 2:00 p.m., when students will go to the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines. Governor Branstad and others from around the state will attend. Rhonda Greenway, the NISG Director of Governmental Relations is spearheading UNI's effort in this initiative. Greenway informed Botzum that she has not received any responses from graduate students that she had e-mailed information to. Botzum said that if Council members could encourage their graduate students to attend it would be appreciated. She added that there will be a briefing session in order to brief students on how to address issues of concern.

The meeting ended at 4:49 p.m.

The next meeting will take place on Thursday, April 12, 2012 at 3:30 p.m. in Lang 115.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Nedrow
Secretary