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University of Northern Iowa Graduate Council Minutes, February 9, 2012

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UNI Graduate Council Minutes #1011

February 9, 2012

Present: Caswell, Clayton, Coon, Etscheidt, Hays, Husband, Iqbal, Licari, Nelson, Terlip (for Pohl), Waldron

Absent: Bartlett, Bauman, Botzum, Power, Schuchart

Guest: Susie Schwieger, Director of Graduate Student Life

The meeting was called to order by Chair Clayton. Motion by Etscheidt to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2012 meeting; seconded by Husband. Motion approved.

Licari stated that he cannot make allocations for stipends and tuition scholarships until he has clarity about the University budget for next year. He has communicated his displeasure with the pace of the process, as well as the timing. He also communicated that the delay in being able to move forward is going to impact graduate students and he has tried to make it known that the process needs to move along. As soon as he is able to make allocations he will do so as quickly as he can. There was a question as to whether or not these decisions were primarily dependent on the budget or also on the program closures that faculty have been hearing about, but don't know what they are. Licari responded that the decisions would be based on both, so that is part of the reason that the process is taking a bit longer than he would like. As part of that process the contract requires certain steps that need to be taken. He added that the budget is a larger issue and it is harder to know what that situation is at this point. The governor's proposal was very disappointing in that it lacked the extra \$4 million that UNI hoped for and the House budget is even more disappointing and would be disastrous if passed. The senate is proposing a moderate increase in the budget. Licari anticipates slow negotiations toward the governor's proposal, which would be a net cut of \$2 million to the University, plus the lack of funding of salary increases would make it approximately a \$5 million cut. Licari noted that as soon as he has word about allocations for next year that he can pass along, he will do so.

Coon commented that the Union is, appropriately, representing the interests of faculty. However, if the faculty say any delays in the process are hurting graduate recruiting – that is something faculty can tell their Union representatives.

Regarding Graduate College representation in the Northern Iowa Student Government, Licari noted that the *Northern Iowan* reported that graduate students and the Graduate College now have three student senate seats. He added that after the last Graduate Council meeting he contacted the NISG regarding the current wording of the constitution disenfranchising graduate students. After NISG discussions regarding rewording of the constitution, it was determined that the Graduate College would have three senate seats. With those seats now available, Licari said it would be important to have those seats filled and encouraged Council members to encourage students to run for those seats. It was noted that a petition with 25-30 graduate student signatures is required in order to run and since most programs have 20-30 students, students gathering signatures should not have a difficult time getting enough signatures to run. He said it is a great opportunity for graduate students, the Graduate College, and

graduate education because now graduate students will have a greater voice in student government affairs than ever before. Licari also commented to Spencer Walrath and Jill Hohnecker that it is important for graduate students to have their own representation on the NISG, as graduate students have very different concerns than undergraduate students, ranging from extra liability in terms of research ethics to different needs because they are older and possibly have families and various other concerns. Hays noted that the NISG controls a substantial amount of resources that can be applied for and if you don't have the representation it is harder to access those resources. Licari responded that from a resource standpoint this representation allows graduate students a better chance of accessing some of these resources, as they pay student fees just as undergraduate students do and have not accessed their fair share. He added that serving on the senate gives graduate students the opportunity to play a leadership role in the university. Clayton mentioned that Botzum could not be at the meeting, but said she would be happy to mentor or advise any graduate student who would like to run for the senate seats and also said that it is a great opportunity for the right person. After a brief discussion about the petitions needed, it was decided that the petitions could be housed in the Graduate College if the student wants to in order to provide a central location for graduate students to come in and sign the forms. Coon will send an announcement to make everyone aware.

Licari showed the Council a very rough draft of a template that is being developed by Meghan White, a graduate assistant in the Graduate College, to be used as a recruiting piece. He commented on the excellent job Meghan is doing on the template that was originally provided to her in a sketch. Each program would have a sheet with a picture and the program name across the top, an overview of the program, specific outcomes of the program, a "brag box" at the bottom and then how to apply, along with contact information on the right side. Once the template is finalized, the colors and font would be changed a bit. The template should be ready for Graduate Coordinators to fill in, as the coordinators should drive the content. This will allow Schwieger to have a handout ready for prospective students that is consistent in appearance with other information and has program-specific information. It was noted that this handout would not need to be posted on any program's website or would not have to be used by the program at all. Licari clarified that the handout would not be supplanting the program website materials. The Graduate College has a challenge when providing recruiting materials due to the collection of brochures and material from the various programs across campus.

On Schwieger's behalf, Coon reminded everyone of the following events:

February 22 – Deanne Gute will present a hands-on practice on the APA style. Students will bring their examples for input.

February 27 – Schwieger will conduct a resume writing workshop for graduate students

March 8 & April 9 – Coon will conduct student request workshops for graduate students, graduate coordinators, graduate secretaries and anyone else who would like to attend. The dates have been set in order to coincide with the beginning of summer registration and fall registration; times when students are typically thinking about classes and student requests.

March 26-30 - Graduate Student Appreciation Week. The graduate student meeting with President Allen is one event that will take place on March 26. This meeting was previously scheduled for February 20 and is for graduate students only.

May 4 – Graduate Student Commencement at 7:00 p.m. in the McLeod Center. Coon said the hope would be to have good faculty and advisor representation. She noted that a small reception will be taking place after the ceremony.

Nelson reported that the committee working on conducting President Allen’s five-year evaluation by the University Faculty Senate has completed its work on the survey. The survey can be accessed on the main page of my UNiverse and will run until February 21. Clayton noted that there are ways to opt out of a question if it is not applicable to the user. Nelson said Council members may want to mention the survey to their faculty colleagues in order to get a graduate school perspective. She added that if there are issues related to graduate education that faculty would like to call to President Allen’s attention there is room for comments on the survey. Nelson noted that Tim Lindquist’s Brown Bag Lecture is coming up on February 24. A flier will be distributed in the near future.

Vote on proposal from Annette Lynch and Mark Rowe-Barth to implement online sexual violence education program for graduate students

Clayton noted that at the last meeting Annette Lynch and Mark Rowe-Barth demonstrated the online sexual violence education program and had provided a link for the Council to review the program as well as some of the data that has been gathered through the undergraduate version of the program. The proposal is that all graduates students would be required to complete the program with a pass rate on the post-test of 80% in order to be able to register for the Spring semester. They would need to complete the program sometime during the Fall Semester before they could register for Spring. During discussion council members expressed concern about:

- - the requirements for students who start in the spring semester-when do they have to pass the test by?
- - students who already completed the program as an undergraduate,
- - whether there is a certificate of completion and how long does the “certification” last,
- - consistency with the policy for training in ethics research (undergrads),
- - whether there is content that is specific enough to graduate students that we’d want to make sure they experienced it regardless of having completed the undergrad version,
- - whether all graduate students need to take it, or only those in degree programs, or only those who have registered for a certain threshold of credits.
- - Not making it needlessly complicated--we can’t anticipate all the reasons for an exemption in advance, so there needs to be a simple way for a student to test out or request an exemption.

Hays made a motion to adopt the online sexual violence education program for graduate students; seconded by Husband.

Clayton said she had noted the Council's concerns so she could share them with Annette Lynch and Mark Rowe-Barth. Clayton asked if there were any additional concerns. A friendly amendment was made by Waldron that the Council would be kept informed about the program's implementation process.

It was noted that undergraduate students are encouraged to complete the online program before they come to the University and then they have a block on their registration after their first semester of enrollment if they haven't completed and passed with 80% or better. Coon said that graduate students could be encouraged to complete the program before they come and that is something the Graduate College could help with, but the mechanism by which that is done would have to be thought out. Clayton added that faculty could discuss some of the graduate student applicable parts of the scenarios with their students in order to reinforce some of the issues from the program. The possibility of professional development opportunities for graduate students offered through the Graduate College as follow up was mentioned. Clayton added that Lynch had mentioned that viewing the program one time only is not necessarily going to change behaviors permanently, but coupled with something else it might.

Clayton asked if there were any additional questions; there were none. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of common application and response deadlines for graduate programs

Clayton said that the general consensus after the Council previously discussed a common application deadline was that this is probably a good idea, but there were no specifics, so Licari was looking into that. Licari had not gotten as far as he had hoped, but said that in beginning to look into the issue a couple of issues came up. One issue is that he is not able to make timely allocations of resources across graduate education this year, so it is difficult to contemplate setting a common response deadline. The common response time would need to be set so late that it would be moot to do so. He also notes it's difficult for applicants to not hear in a timely way from programs. In the meantime, Licari said the Council could think of ways to facilitate that process to move a little more quickly. The reason for this being brought to Licari's attention was a result of international students having challenges in receiving information quick enough so they could process their paperwork, visas, etc. Licari said he could work with the Office of Admissions to see if there are any internal hang ups. Hays said that there used to be an agreed upon norm for an application deadline. It was noted that that particular deadline was very late. Coon clarified that offers of support that are made must be valid through April 15 and if a student has not accepted by then, the offer can go to someone else. Nelson added that this has nothing to do with the application deadline that programs set; it is only the point by which a student must respond and the student is not to be pressured to give an earlier response. It lets them weigh their options. Coon said she thought it was in response to schools a long time ago that started trying to get students locked in earlier and earlier, so it was a common agreement among graduate schools that April 15 would be the decision date. Hays noted that the University would want to make sure to have offers out to students in order to be competitive. He added that by early March when our offers usually go out, some schools have already made offers

and he thought that is one thing that everyone should be cognizant of. This would be especially important for assistantships. The best applicants have gotten other offers sometime before or right around the time that UNI makes the offer, when we are able to make them on a normal timeline. Licari said he could reach out to institutions that go through CGS to gauge what other schools do. It was suggested that looking at Iowa and Iowa State would be good. Licari will look into this, including other Regent's institutions and report back. Coon confirmed that the only official deadline is that students should apply by February 1 for consideration for an assistantship and added that some programs have earlier deadlines. A question was asked as to whether a program can make an offer before their deadline has passed. Coon said the program can't make an offer for an assistantship, they can say the student has been recommended for an assistantship, but the offer comes from Graduate College. If the program gets the paperwork to the Graduate College fast enough, the offer can go out if it is graduate college funded. Slowdowns at the Graduate College were mentioned as a reason that offers don't get made earlier. We need to be cognizant that the delay is there as well. Coon reminded everyone that the student needs to show up as admitted in order to be offered support. The admissions paper work makes its way through Admissions, then to the Graduate College and then back to Admissions. The offer paper work will not go through until the student is admitted. It was noted that having the admission form on paper slows the process down. Licari said he could work with Admissions to see if the process could be made to move a bit faster. Licari will do some digging and see what he can come up with.

Revision of the nomination procedures for the Distinguished Scholar Award

Coon distributed the current Distinguished Scholar Award guidelines that are currently on the Graduate College website. She noted that there have been no nominees in the last three years and she has gotten feedback that the application process is too odious. The proposal is to have three letters of support; one from the outside of the University. It was also agreed that instead of submitting paper copies of the materials, electronic submissions would be accepted. Coon explained that the deadline was previously early in the Fall semester so the deadline was moved to Spring in order to allow more time to collect materials and hopefully have more nominees. It was noted that this is a Graduate College award that carries an award of a \$1,000 account for the recipient. Nelson wondered if one reason it was difficult to get nominations was that people are less likely to write letters of support these days, being afraid of liability issues. The suggestion was made that only two letters of support would be needed, because the nomination itself is also a letter of support. It was also suggested that the letters did not have to come from outside UNI. Since there was not a quorum at this point of the meeting, it was noted that revised guidelines would be brought to the next meeting and the vote would take place at that time. Clayton said that any additional comments could be sent to Coon or her.

The meeting ended at 4:47 p.m.

The next meeting will take place on Thursday, February 23, 2012 at 3:30 p.m. in Lang 115.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Nedrow
Secretary