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University of Northern Iowa Graduate Council Minutes, October 9, 2003

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UNI Graduate College Minutes #928

October 9, 2003

Present: Frank Thompson, Kristen Mack, Sue Pettit, Ben Schafer, K.N. Rajendran, Cynthia Coulter, Dixon Stuelke, Sue Joslyn.

Visitors: none

Ex-Officio: David Walker, Jackie McGlade.

1. Minutes #927 of the Graduate Council meeting September 25, 2003

The following changes were noted:

- Sue Petit is the alternate doctoral representative; her name should be moved to the "Present" category of attendees rather than "Visitors."
- In the second paragraph under #4 Announcements, Rajendran motioned to accept Stuelke as the masters' representative.
- In the first paragraph under #5 Computer Science Proposal, change the first sentence to read "The Computer Science Department proposed two related changes to the **General Catalog Policy.**"
- In the second paragraph under #5 Computer Science Proposal, include the statement "It was decided that the consultation form need not include any clause outlining how the Council would interpret non-response from a department."

Schafer motioned to accept the amended minutes, Mack seconded. Motion passed with one abstention.

2. Graduate Deans' Report:

Associate Dean Walker:

- Dean Walker asked that the minutes reflect his gratitude for faculty who volunteered to serve on the Outstanding Dissertation/Thesis/Research committees. He is greatly appreciative of everyone's willingness to serve.

Associate Dean McGlade:

- Dean McGlade noted that the Dean's Graduate College Advisory Board (comprised of graduate students) does not have minority representation, and she has asked the Minority Graduate Student group to nominate someone for the board. Thompson suggested including representatives from outside the University on the board to positively impact fundraising, and to make connections for graduate students to form partnerships with graduates (internships, theses, job shadowing, etc). McGlade will talk with Somervill about including outside representation on the advisory board. She indicated this would be a good strategic plan issue. Thompson suggested surveying peer institutions to see what is already being done. Rajendran suggested including academics on the advisory board, and agreed that it would be very important to get their input.

- When Stuelke's website is complete, McGlade suggests a demonstration to the council. Two departments (Continuing Studies, Psychology) will also include graduate paperwork available online, which will also be demonstrated. The Minority Graduate Alumni association website will include virtual reunions and other interesting technology.

3. Announcements:

Council members should provide Joslyn with alternate council representation, if they have not already done so. She will provide the list to Dorothy Dillon as soon as possible.

4. Update on survey of departments with comprehensive exams

McGlade has responses from 31 departments, with several different approaches noted. Each department that requires a comprehensive exam has some kind of written evaluation tool, although the department may not share the evaluation tool with students, or may share orally only. No departments include written policies on disclosure/what part of the completed exam is the student able to see, which was the basis of the problem that precipitated the survey. McGlade reported she has not yet heard from the Registrar on specific legalities involved with this disclosure issue. McGlade indicated she would like to ask departments for their written policies, to keep on record in the Graduate College. Mack asked about the response from the Department of Geography, which has a thesis defense in place of a comprehensive exam. Mack asked if this issue under discussion included thesis defenses. McGlade indicated that defenses could be included in this issue. Thompson stated that the Graduate College should not intrude on department policies. Coulter responded that was not the intent of this survey, it was merely a request for determining the status quo. McGlade gave a brief overview of the problem – the survey was to find out if departments who required comprehensive exams had clear written guidelines for students. McGlade reiterated that the intent of the survey was not to dictate policies. She recommends departments put as much as possible in writing, and file the policy with the Graduate College. She would also encourage that written policies exist, and that the departments share policies with students.

5. Action on methods for developing guidelines for comprehensive exams

Coulter recommended creating a subcommittee to identify core components to include in the policy, pass the recommendations through Tim McKenna and Phil Patton, and then share recommendations with departments. McGlade indicated many departments are thinking of getting rid of comprehensive exams in favor of portfolios, technique/performance, etc. Thompson stated that students wishing to go on for doctoral studies who had never taken comprehensive exams would be at a definite disadvantage. McGlade will investigate best practices in peer institutions regarding comprehensive exams, policies, and legal counsel. Coulter stated that after receiving input from McGlade, the Graduate Council will discuss forming a subcommittee to propose guidelines for comprehensive exam procedures.

6. Update on Computer Science proposal.

McGlade has received some consultation forms to date. She is concerned that many departments say they do not object because the proposal doesn't impact them; however it will impact all departments, and that needs to be clarified. Coulter asked what do departments need to hear. McGlade stated that departments would have no limit on xxx:299 credits, and would have to include an exception in the catalog to limit research credit hours to 6. McGlade suggested that if the proposed change is approved, the Computer Science department should include a catalog statement to the effect that students seeking more than 6 credit hours of xxx:299, the student needs departmental approval, rather than including a blanket xxx:299 change. Schafer agreed that was a reasonable alternative. He added that if clarifications are sent to departments before consultations are due, the perception may exist that the Graduate College is "fishing" for a specific response, and that the Graduate Council should wait until after the due date for consultation forms to be returned, then the Graduate Council should vote on the Computer Science proposal. He thought it was somewhat backward to actively discuss changes to the proposal at this time. He indicated the intention of the proposed change was for departments not to have to include exceptions in the catalog. Coulter suggested the Council wait until after consultation forms are due (October 27, with reminder sent one week before), and at that time propose alternate language for the proposal, to include: "Students seeking more than 6 hours of 299 credit must have departmental approval." McGlade will request MacLin send out a request asking for consultation responses one week early (October 22) and will copy departmental responses for the October 23 Graduate Council meeting. Schafer moved, Rajendran seconded to have the consultation response date moved to October 22, motion passed unanimously.

Discussion followed on dates of approving graduate curriculum, and it was noted that departmental curricular proposals are not presented until after the November 13 Graduate Council meeting. Thompson moved, Rajendran seconded to have the November 13 Graduate Council meeting changed to November 20, to accommodate all curricular packages. Motion passed unanimously.

7. Items for Publication:

- Coulter asked Council Members to tell their new faculty colleagues of the Ingenta document delivery services available through the Rod Library, a great asset to researchers on campus.
- McGlade announced that Stuelke was reelected as masters' student representative to the Graduate Council.

8. Other Business: none

Thompson moved, Schafer seconded meeting adjournment. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting of the UNI Graduate Council was adjourned by Coulter at 4:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue A. Joslyn, Ph.D.