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University of Northern Iowa Graduate Council Minutes, March 13, 2003

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UNI Graduate Council Minutes #924

March 13, 2003

Present: Bozylinsky, Coulter, Fogarty, Granberg-Rademacker, MacLin, Meier, Pettit (for Villavicencio), Pohl, Safford (for Smaldino), Schafer, Stuelke, Somervill, Utz, Walker
Absent: Hanson
Regrets: Gallagher, Rajendran, Saiia
Visitors: Pam MacKay (Registrar), Phil Patton (Registrar)

Utz moved, and Meier seconded, to accept minutes #923. The minutes were approved.

Somervill reminded Council members that the graduate student travel funds were no longer available. The funds (\$30,000) were eliminated in last year's budget cuts.

Granberg-Rademacker discussed plans to move forward on automating the program of study process. The current process, she noted, is often considered cumbersome and leads to many complaints surfacing to the Graduate College and Registrar's Office. The Registrar's Office will consider means of giving access to current programs of study to students and faculty advisors. A committee will review the current procedures for doing programs of study, and will work to define the project, to make program of study procedures easier.

Bozylinsky reminded the Council that there had previously been discussion about possibly moving the current student request procedures to an email format. He explained that this was a low-cost, efficient solution to students' questions about the status of their student requests. Somervill suggested that Bozylinsky be added to the committee reviewing these issues. Further discussion ensued about possibilities for developing online forms to serve these functions, and the benefits (i.e., expedited process) and the costs (i.e., inability to see the historical development). Patton explained the documentation that current programs of study provided, and the potential benefits of an electronic version of this form, including the ease of updating individuals' records. Bozylinsky explained President Koob's current initiative to develop an undergraduate "program of study" which could be used as an advisement tool, allowing undergraduates to see what courses they needed to complete. MacKay detailed some issues with the current student request process, and the proposed email student request process. Somervill reminded the Council that the committee dealing with these issues would regularly report to the Council.

MacKay began the continued discussion about transfer work, and potential policies, by explaining to the Council that they were the body to make decisions about the criteria that should be used to evaluate transfer work. Fogarty suggested that the Council return to the bulleted minutes to discuss the criteria detailed there. The first criterion examined was: “The coursework must be a regular course offering (i.e., taught by regular faculty, and not college credit offered for Area Education or conference offerings).” Utz suggested that faculty be distinguished as “regular **graduate** faculty” in this statement. Council members indicated agreement with the first statement. Council members generally agreed with the second statement, “They [graduate students] must have been a graduate student at the time they took the course.”

The third statement was read: “The course must have been eligible for use on a graduate program at that institution.” Discussion ensued about institutions that offer graduate credit, that do not offer graduate programs in that particular discipline. Patton suggested that the Council consider whether institutions were accredited to offer graduate-level credit as a guide for transfer work practices. Further discussion occurred about temporary versus regular graduate faculty status at institutions accredited to offer graduate credit. Somervill indicated that, at UNI, temporary graduate faculty status would allow the course to carry graduate credit. The University of Iowa has a similar system. Further, he suggested that the Council’s role was to provide transfer-work guidelines because some departments were approving transfer work that did not meet standards set by the Registrar’s Office and/or Graduate College. In the past, however, these courses were typically screened and omitted for further consideration by academic departments. Patton explained that criteria established by the Graduate Council would allow the Registrar’s Office to better determine whether a course should be considered for transfer, while maintaining UNI’s standards. Somervill reiterated that transfer-work decisions largely occur at the departmental level, as a departmental responsibility. However, language passed by the Council could aid in situations where the quality of transferred work is questionable, thereby providing guidelines for the Registrar’s Office and Graduate College to use in evaluating these.

Fogarty proposed that the first guideline could read: “Transferable credit must reflect work in regular graduate courses at residential institutions accredited to offer graduate courses.” Discussion ensued about the use of the word residential, and the difference between this and residence requirements.

Fogarty proposed that the second guideline could read: “Students requesting transfer credits must have had graduate status at an accredited institution at the time the course was taken and at the institution where the credit was earned.” MacKay suggested that an alternative, with less room for interpretation, may state: “Students requesting transfer credits must have been in graduate status at the institution where the credit was earned.”

Fogarty proposed that the third and fourth guidelines could respectively read:
“Transferable

credit must have been eligible for use in a graduate program at the institution where it was taken” and “Transferable credit must be no more than 7 years old at the time of graduation from UNI.” MacKay explained that recency at UNI meant that a course taken in spring 2000 was eligible until the end of spring 2007.

Utz moved, seconded by Pohl, that the Council accept the discussed transfer work criteria. Pettit called the question. The motion passed.

Somervill began the discussion of the theatre department’s decision to suspend admissions into its graduate program. He explained that the program had once been housed with Communication Studies, but divided several years ago, and now only served a few graduate students each year. Somervill suggested that, particularly in times of budget cuts, it is important for departments to consider the viability of their graduate programs. The theatre graduate faculty had taken the first step in the direction of program termination, by voting to suspend admissions, and they did not necessarily need the permission of the Graduate Council. However, the department needed to inform the Council of this decision. Fogarty detailed the information he had received from the department, stating that faculty had decided to suspend admissions and, after visiting with Associate Provost Koch, they were taking steps to ultimately terminate the theatre graduate program. Further discussion occurred about the rationale that the theatre department may have used to make this decision, and the steps that the department needed to accomplish from this point forward. Utz suggested that the Council consider accepting the department’s report of this decision, and that representatives from the department be invited to a future Council meeting to discuss their rationale for making this decision. Discussion ensued about theatre graduate students’ perceptions of this decision.

Utz moved, and Meier seconded, to accept the theatre department’s decision. The motion passed with one objection.

Utz reminded Council members that the annual graduate faculty meeting would occur on Thursday, April 10, at 3:30PM in Sabin 102. He explained that the program would include faculty who have had experience teaching at an undergraduate institution, and the differences they have encountered since working at an institution with graduate programs/students. Somervill encouraged Council members to attend this meeting, to show support for the event.

Stuelke requested that a five-minute section be added to every regular meeting's agenda, to discuss "new business."

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Granberg-Rademacker

Program Assistant