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University of Northern Iowa Graduate Council Minutes, September 26, 2002

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UNI Graduate Council Minutes #917

September 26, 2002

Present: Coulter, Fogarty, Granberg-Rademacker, MacLin, Rajendran, Saiia, Smaldino, Somervill, Utz, Walker
Absent: Bozlinsky, Dolgener, Hanson, Schafer
Visitors: Al Hays (public policy), Pam Mackay (Registrar)

A correction was reported to minutes #915. Line 2, paragraph 4 should read: "Bodensteiner stated that he felt that certificate programs are market driven and that these programs might actually increase student enrollment in graduate programs." Minutes were approved as corrected.

A correction was reported to minutes #916. Line 2, paragraph 2 should read: "Despite all of the aforementioned cuts, Somervill emphasized that graduate student assistantships remained intact." Minutes were approved as corrected.

Somervill explained that the estimated decrease in the number of graduate students he gave at the last meeting was incorrect. After third week enrollment, the number of graduate students increased slightly, leading to the highest number of UNI graduate students ever. He will make specific data available at the next Graduate Council meeting. The number of graduate students of color also increased (110 students; 7 percent of all UNI graduate students). Information about the number of international graduate students will be available shortly.

Walker thanked Graduate Council members who attended the reception for new tenure-track faculty on September 19.

Somervill discussed that the reception for graduate assistants had moderate attendance. Additional publicity targeting both graduate assistants and graduate coordinators may further increase this. There will be two graduate student receptions in November – one for international graduate students and one for graduate students of color. Graduate coordinators will be invited to both receptions.

Saiia asked why Somervill originally thought the number of graduate students would decrease. Somervill noted that the daily reports from the Registrar's Office were consistently showing a decline. He attributed the increase to last minute registrations by some graduate students.

Al Hays spoke to the Graduate Council about his proposal for an accelerated program for the master's in Public Policy. He noted that the current program is longer than a typical masters program at UNI, largely because it is interdisciplinary. The overarching objective for the accelerated program is not to replace the current MPP but rather to recruit highly motivated undergraduate students. These students would take some of the MPP 100-g courses as undergraduates, receive undergraduate credit for these, but would contract to do the additional coursework that a graduate student would be required to do. Additionally, these students could be enrolled in the maximum 8 hours of graduate credit during the final semesters of their senior years. Hays explained that the accelerated route would allow the public policy program to provide incentives for motivated UNI undergraduates to pursue the MPP. He came to the Graduate Council for feedback, and to answer any questions before a formal curriculum proposal was drafted.

Somervill noted the possible challenge created by the need for departmental approval of 8 graduate credits during students' senior years. Since public policy is not its own undergraduate department, where would students go for this approval? Hays explained that political science and economics would probably grant this approval. Further discussion revolved around the possibility of transfer coursework and the availability of the accelerated program beyond UNI. Hays indicated that this was a possibility though more cumbersome because of the advance planning that would require. He drew a parallel to the accelerated MPP program and the MSW or MBA. Rajendran explained that the MBA has an accelerated program but not a program that begins a pipeline of undergraduate students. Rather, the MBA program prefers that students have had work experience. He asked Hays if the MPP would likewise benefit from work experience. Hays indicated that the current program has many returning students with work experience, and that the internship component of the MPP program would help meet this requirement.

Somervill asked how the program would shorten students' time to degree if MPP students were required to take the same number of credit hours. Hays indicated that accelerated MPP students would take some course work as undergraduates, thereby eliminating the number of hours they would need as graduate students. The proposal would not shorten the program beyond the 30 hours required of any masters program at UNI. Utz asked what would keep students from other departments from wanting to pursue similarly accelerated graduate programs. Somervill said that this could be done if formal proposals were made. Fogarty noted that similar accelerated programs emerged decades ago, and that these posed additional pressure to some students on an accelerated track, particularly due to their inexperience. Hays explained that the program would reach students when they were ready to declare a major, particularly those interested in public administration or economics. Further discussion ensued regarding students from other institutions, and other undergraduate majors. Hays indicated that the contractual agreement to do the graduate work required in 100-g

courses would help retain quality control for the accelerated program. Smaldino indicated that the Curriculum & Instruction department does not change the requirements for master's degrees in Curriculum & Instruction for students who achieved a minor in the area. Further discussion revolved around the type of student who would be recruited into the accelerated MPP program. Namely, students who have proven themselves (i.e., minimum GPA requirement discussed was 3.4) would be given the option to participate, and the requirements would be listed in the next catalog. Fogarty noted that provisions exist to enact an approved program before the next catalog cycle.

Fogarty discussed possible agenda items for the remainder of the fall Graduate Council meetings. He suggested that the Registrar's suggestion of a new calendar be one item. Discussion ensued about how the proposed calendars would affect graduate students/graduate assistants, and how this would affect sessions offered and salary decisions. Fogarty noted that the proposed 15-week calendar included a week off for Thanksgiving break, and a week for Spring Break. Somervill asked Pam Mackay if Phil Patton would be willing to respond to questions at the next Graduate Council meeting. Further discussion revolved around the timeframe when Faculty Senate would be discussing this issue, and what role the Graduate Council could play in their decision-making processes. Walker suggested that the Graduate Council consider this issue at the next meeting, when Phil Patton would be present.

Fogarty noted that the minimum-GPA requirement for non-degree students also should be on the Graduate Council's fall agenda. Barb Hetrick (biology) should be invited to a future Graduate Council meeting to discuss her concerns.

Fogarty suggested that different curricular items should be included during future Graduate Council meetings, particularly the development of new programs.

Coulter mentioned that the constitutional issues should be added as an agenda item for the fall semester. Somervill suggested a possible change to the current Faculty Senate constitution that would delegate authority to Graduate Council to make graduate-curricular decisions. He added that most universities give their graduate councils this responsibility. Coulter mentioned that the Faculty Senate constitution is currently under discussion, and will be put to a faculty-vote in November. She was unsure if there was enough time to pose an amendment before that vote, but agreed to ask a Senate representative about this.

Fogarty suggested that the Graduate Council consider implementing a quorum rule that would provide for a minimum meeting attendance based on actual elected membership. CHFA's Graduate Council membership was discussed, and Somervill suggested that

Dean Lubker be contacted so that elected faculty members and alternates can be determined.

Fogarty suggested alternatives to the current means of distributing minutes, so that they could be received in a more timely fashion. Somervill explained that the Graduate College currently has an email distribution list but that a large group of graduate faculty prefers to receive paper copies. Walker noted the availability of the minutes via UNI-online. Rajendran asked about email/attachment size limitations. Fogarty discussed experimenting with several systems, either separating attachments or mailings so that size did not become an obstacle.

Fogarty shared a question that he had heard from many faculty members – why doesn't UNI require students who have finished their programs but not graduated to enroll in one-credit hour per semester until they graduate? Mackay explained that the Board of Regents made this decision, and decided instead to create the Graduate Continuing Scholar program to allow graduate students some basic resources (i.e., access to the library, UNI-email, etc.) for a fee. It was suggested that the Graduate Council not pursue this idea with Regents due to current budgetary issues.

Somervill suggested that another item deserving attention was the current Program of Study system, and making online access to this system a possibility for graduate students. Mackay explained that the difference between the undergrad and graduate My UNI-verse system is that undergrads were given a prescribed set of curriculum, based on their majors. Individualized programs, as many graduate programs are, are much more cumbersome. Somervill expressed concerns about the length of time it took to process programs of study. Mackay reinforced that this slow response was mainly due to the extra time it takes to check every students' program for errors.

Rajendran suggested that another item deserving the Graduate Council's attention was the definition of graduate faculty. Somervill explained that he has worked with the Graduate Faculty on several occasions to change this, and proposals were defeated each time. Rajendran suggested that it would be helpful if graduate faculty status were limited to those who are actually interested in graduate education.

Walker thanked those who agreed to serve on award committees or who recommended others who could serve. He indicated that he still needs two council members on the Distinguished Scholars Committee, in addition to Fogarty who serves as Graduate Council Leadership on that committee. Representatives to evaluate the Outstanding Dissertation, Outstanding Master's Thesis, and Outstanding Master's Paper committee are still needed.

Walker reminded the Council that the UNI Distinguished Scholar nomination process is currently underway. Nomination must begin with the regular Graduate Faculty in a department; deadline for submission of a nomination is Monday, October 14, 2002. There are two important changes this year, necessitated by severe budget restrictions: (1) the recipient will receive a \$500 cash prize; (2) the previous requirement "describe the research/creative activity project to be undertaken during the leave period" has been eliminated since the semester leave has been eliminated. Nomination materials are available online at www.grad.uni/awards/scholar/asp.

The meeting adjourned at 5:05PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Granberg-Rademacker
Program Assistant