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University of Northern Iowa Graduate Council Minutes, February 24, 2000

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UNI Graduate Council Minutes #893

February 24, 2000

Present: Durham, Hanson, Jackson, Neuhaus (for Coulter), Reineke, Smaldino, Somervill, Spencer, Walker, Wallingford, Vajpeyi

Absent: Bankston, Bozylinsky, Dolgener, Utz, Wartick,

Visitors: Suzanne McDevitt- Social Work, Philip Mauceri- Political Science, Marius Boboc- Education, Aaron Podolefsky- VP and Provost

Minutes #892 were approved as published..

Somervill announced that the draft of the UNI strategic plan had been presented to the Academic Affairs Council. He also stated that he was pleased with the way that the objectives were presented in the proposed draft. Somervill pointed out several different items in the draft that he felt were good points and objectives that would help the University's Graduate Programs. It was also stated that the proposed draft was now on the web.

Suzanne McDevitt chair of the Faculty Senate informed the council that the Faculty Senate was now constructing a proposal for the decentralization of curriculum. McDevitt received a proposal from the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences to decentralize the curriculum. The proposal called for disbanding the University Curriculum Committee. McDevitt stated that the Senate had decided to engage in consultation to determine all of the different effects that this might have on the colleges at all levels. The consultations would include public forums with different departments, including the Graduate Council. This proposal is on the Faculty Senate web page and is still in the process of being put into its final form. The Faculty Senate has a firm commitment to working on this. Somervill stated that the Graduate College staff including himself would be available to help and answer any questions that the Senate may have. Somervill said that the matter of decentralizing the curriculum would be put on the Council agenda to be discussed in length at a different time.

McDevitt mentioned that during a meeting of Senate committee chairs there was discussion and agreement that there was a need to change the curriculum process. McDevitt also informed the Council that the College of Natural Sciences has a draft proposal on the web. Jackson questioned whether or not the Graduate curriculum process had been discussed and/or was in the proposal. McDevitt stated that as of right now there was nothing in the proposal to deal with graduate curriculum issues, but there was a need to do this and she would like to put this into the proposal. McDevitt stated that the only problem is what exactly to change is not known. Somervill stated that this was a very important topic and needed further discussion with the Council.

Somervill stated that he felt the Outstanding Graduate Teaching Award application process was in need of change. Student involvement in the nomination process has been over looked. The current process makes it almost impossible for a student to nominate a teacher for the award. Somervill said he and Dr. Walker would draft a streamlined application process and present it for council review later this semester. Somervill suggested, for example, that the teacher should not have to be a tenured person with at least five years at UNI. Teaching should not be judged on length of time served, but on quality. Some suggested that a nominee should at least be in their third year at UNI. Somervill ended by saying he would like some flexibility in the rules of the process. Hanson moved to accept the offer of Somervill and Walker to streamline the process. The motion was seconded by Durham, passed.

Reineke expressed concern with the way that fellowships such as the Fulbright are handled. Many fellowship organizations expect the University to contribute funds to permit a leave of absence. Without the matching money the applicant finds it very hard to accept these awards. Reineke asked Walker to check on the policies of the ten benchmark Universities. Somervill asked if there were any way that faculty would be able to find support, so that they would not have to turn down awards because of inadequate funding. Podolofesky stated that he wanted to encourage faculty to pursue and accept those awards. He said that there are current mechanisms to support those who receive these awards; that we need to be happy and supportive when faculty receive significant awards. The Council thanked Dr. Aaron Podolofesky for contributing to the discussion.

No new items were identified to publicize

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebel Saffold III
Secretary