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University of Northern Iowa Graduate Council Minutes, January 23, 1997

University of Northern Iowa

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UNI Graduate Council Minutes #860

January 23, 1997

Present: Bankston, Crew, Decker, East, Finder, Kashef (for Kirmani), Krapfl, Rogers (for Dedrick), Safford, Somervill, Stefanich, Walker

Absent: Chao, Hageman, Jackson, Osman, Raiklin

Guests: Mohammed Fahmy (Industrial Technology)

East moved that Minutes #859 be approved as published. Motion was seconded by Decker and passed.

Somervill discussed with the Council that Mary Ann Hesse will no longer be taking minutes, instead a student secretary, Nicky Meints, will be taking the minutes with the assistance of a Council secretary. Council By-Laws will need amending if the position becomes permanent. Somervill asked for a nominee from the Council. Rogers nominated Dedrick for the position. No formal motion was decided upon, but the Council agreed to have Walker assist Nicky for Minutes No. 860.

Somervill distributed comparative information to the Council about incentive funds from grants and contracts. He said that 65% of overhead funds go to the University General Fund, the remaining 35% is allocated as follows: 40% to the Graduate College, 30% to the principle investigator, 15% to the academic dean, and 15% to the department head. Somervill indicated that this distribution system was implemented on a two-year experimental basis. If a decision is made to eliminate or readjust the distribution, now that the two year cycle is nearly complete, he wants to be prepared with an alternative proposal. The current grants office consists of the Grants & Contracts Administrator, an accountant, and a student worker. The office is understaffed and incapable of providing necessary support services for grant activity under the current budget. One major goal is to allow the G&C administrator to spend more time working with faculty on their grant application budgets and to administer successful grants. The grants accountant and the operating budget of the Grants & Contracts Office are currently paid out of soft money incentive funds. In addition, incentive funds also support a thesis/dissertation reviewer. The G&C Office badly needs a professional grant writer who would not only assist faculty with grant applications, but also take a pro-active stance in encouraging additional grant activity.

Last summer Associate Dean David Walker and Ruth Ratliff, UNI Foundation, visited nine university campuses of comparable size and reasonable travel distance. They interviewed grants officers and foundation administrators, especially looking at the size of their respective office staff and services they provided to the faculty. Walker distributed a list of the universities visited as well as a summary of the final report. Clearly, UNI is understaffed and too dependent on soft money in its grants and

contracts operation.

With this as background, Somervill asked the council to consider endorsing a plan to request that the 35% of the incentive funds which are currently distributed to deans, heads, and PI's be assigned to the Graduate College. This would allow an expansion of pre-award and post-award services and provide consistent financial support to principle investigators. Crew offered his endorsement for increasing assistance in writing and developing proposals, but noted that additional staff was needed. Federal grant opportunities are decreasing, thus more needs to be done to encourage UNI faculty to pursue available grants. Additional services, available through the Graduate College, will assist that effort.

East brought up the question of hard vs' soft money; staff on hard money is important in comparisons with peer universities. He stated that it is the departments that buy paper, computers, and etc, so why does 65% go to the University General Fund. Let's subdivide 100%, not 35%. Crew called a halt to this discussion on account of time constraints at 4:50, but suggested that the Council e-mail or snail mail him with additional comments before the next meeting.

Stefanich discussed plans for the annual Graduate Faculty meeting. He suggested that the Council invite Glenn Hansen, Dean of Continuing Education, to speak. It is to be scheduled for the end of March or April--Monday, March 31, April 14, or April 28. We need to contact Public Relations and look at the University schedule for finalization of a date. This year the meeting is going to be combined with the thesis and dissertation awards presentation to increase involvement and attendance. Refreshments will be served.

Motion to adjourn was seconded and passed at 4:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicky Meints
Secretary

Next meeting will be February 13, 1997 at 3:30 pm in Seerley 3