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University of Northern Iowa Graduate Council Minutes, December 12, 1996

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UNI Graduate Council Minutes #859

December 12, 1996

Present: Bankston, Bleile (for Hageman), Chao, Crew, Dedrick, East, Gilpin (for Osman), Heller (for Stefanich), V. Jackson, Kirmani, Safford, Walker; guests: Debra Jordan (HPELS), and Linda Quinn (Teaching).

Absent: Decker, Finder, Krapfl, Raiklin, Somervill

Walker announced that seven dissertations were nominated for the Outstanding Dissertation Award. First Place will be awarded to Yuko Hashimoto, Curriculum & Instruction (Rheta DeVries, advisor). Walker thanked the committee for their effort on behalf of graduate student scholarship: Keith Crew, Philip East, Mark Grey, Greg Stefanich.

Debra Jordan (HPELS) addressed the Council with a request to waive the TOEFL exam for students in a new leisure services MA program in Hong Kong. The graduate program will be offered in conjunction with Hong Kong Baptist University, taught by regular UNI faculty in English on the HKBU campus. Students enrolled in the program, primarily parks and recreation professionals, will be required to meet all UNI Graduate College and HPELS requirements for admission. The University of Victoria, Australia, has a competitive program in Hong Kong where the TOEFL exam is not required. Jordan indicated that the issue of the TOEFL score is the final negotiating point as preparations are made to begin program offerings in July 1997.

Council discussion raised a number of issues: Will students have adequate English language ability to perform at the graduate level? How will that level of language competency be assessed without the TOEFL exam? Could potential students be required to submit a written essay as an alternative to the TOEFL exam? Could students be required to use the intensive English test administered by the UNI International Programs office? Could final admission be withheld until students successfully completed one or two graduate courses? What changes will occur when Hong Kong reverts to China in July 1997? What sort of precedent is set when the TOEFL exam is waived for an entire graduate program?

Council members decided not to bring the issue to a vote at this meeting. Instead they asked Professor Jordan to investigate the use of the intensive English test as an alternative to the TOEFL exam. She will pursue that course of action.

East moved, Kirmani seconded a motion to change the UNI Catalog to indicate that freshmen and sophomores may not enroll in 100g courses and that departments be notified that "Junior Standing" may be omitted from 100g prerequisites since the general policy related to freshmen and sophomores will be enforced by the Registrar.

East provided background that included an earlier concern from Earth Science about inconsistency related to "junior standing", "consent of instructor", "consent of department and/or instructor." East also read a 1985 Graduate Council policy that indicated the "g" should be dropped from all 100 level courses unless "junior standing" be included as a prerequisite.

Council discussion raised several points: Should "junior standing" be listed in the UNI Catalog for each 100g course rather than having a single statement elsewhere in the Catalog? All policies and procedures can be overridden by individual student petition; Should each department decide what background students need for a 100g course rather than a uniform policy?

Bankston, Bleile, and Walker each read statements from the Department of Modern Languages indicating that preventing freshmen and sophomores from 100g courses would negatively impact many of their programs, especially in the Russian language program. Freshmen with substantial high school language training currently enroll in advanced language courses. If a ban on their enrollment in 100g courses was implemented, these talented students might not enroll at UNI. Council members pointed out that other departments shared the concerns expressed on behalf of Modern Languages. East said that individual student petition would still be available if the motion passed.

East and Kirmani withdrew their motion which was substituted by a Council recommendation that Dean Somervill send a letter to all Deans, Heads, and Graduate Coordinators asking them what problems might arise if each 100g course had a consistently stated prerequisite of "junior standing." He would remind departments of the 1985 Council policy. This is an attempt to bring the UNI Catalog in line with the stated policy. East will work with the Dean to draft such a letter. Motion to approve the recommendation passed.

Jackson pointed out that two 100-level Russian language course did not have a "g" attached. That was an inadvertent mistake and should be corrected. Chao, as Chair of the Graduate College Curriculum Committee, agreed to look into implementing the necessary change.

Meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David A. Walker
Acting Secretary

Next meeting will be January 23, 1997 at 3:30 p.m. in Seerley 3.