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University of Northern Iowa Graduate Council Minutes, October 26, 2017

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UNI Graduate Council Minutes #1071

Graduate Council Meeting
October 26, 2017

Present: Al-Mabuk, Berendzen, Bullard, Curran, Cyphert, Edmister, Igou, Olivares, O'Loughlin, Pease, Pohl, Schupanitz, Schwieger, Weeg.

Chair Pohl called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Chair Pohl asked that members introduce themselves to President Nook.
President Nook thanked everyone for the invitation.

The meeting started with initial remarks from the President. He mentioned in clear terms that he considers graduate education an important part of the UNI's curricular mission. He supports graduate education because it directly helps undergraduate programs. It makes undergraduate students more interested in pursuing further studies after graduation. Because graduate education requires a lot of extra money, resources and faculty lines, he is looking for values and students' interests in each program. Once student interests are well defined, it makes sense to build upon the undergraduate programs into graduate curriculum. In areas where there is not a lot of student interest or market demands, it is hard to justify graduate programs. In order to explore the actual potential for growth, President Nook said he is always interested to visit academic departments and get to know what's going on there. He wants to know about success stories, what students are doing, major departmental activities and how money is being spent. He is particularly interested in finding out about the accomplishments of existing graduate programs at UNI.

Discussion continued over a series of questions asked by different Council members. When asked what he saw as the future for graduate education at UNI, President Nook responded that the future is pretty bright. One plus point was that many graduate courses and programs at UNI and elsewhere were online. In fact, online programs made sense since many students who take these classes live far away from campus. It is an effective means of communication with program faculty and students. In many cases there are practitioner students who can only attend online classes. However, President Nook reiterated that the university must make sure programs have markets. If there is need, only then UNI should pursue. The institution must make sure it has the proper strength of faculty and resources to be able to offer graduate programs. There has to be a balance and he asks faculty to think about those things.

President Nook was asked how he distinguished between fund raising for undergraduate and graduate education and programs and what information could the Graduate College provide him in that regard. He responded that he did not make a distinction. The most important thing was the budget. "We need to run a good campaign, find what size campaign we need and what our means are. What are the needs of the departments and programs to enrich their curriculum? Meet those needs and then go for expanding their programs" he stated. In order to make fundraising a comprehensive move, President Nook wants to make sure there is visible student scholarships, faculty support, strategic plans, and meaningful community engagement.

When asked if the Provost would consult about needs, President Nook reaffirmed that both him and the Provost would be directly involved in defining the needs of UNI's programs. The President expressed with high confidence that there are donors out there to support UNI. But, in order to convince them to support UNI needs, the university must showcase its accomplishments. It would always be a good idea to use money toward scholarships. UNI doesn't have many alums with graduate degrees from UNI so it may not be always easy to find adequate resources for these programs. One thing different this year is that UNI is aggressively pursuing extra 2 million dollars from the legislature. In pursuit of that money, the legislature was told that graduate enrollment was up by 101 students. (It is a good indication because it helps to maintain the total enrollment given that our undergraduate enrollment has gone down by about the same

margin). This would be a good way to make the balance. Graduate Council members reminded President Nook that the Graduate College did a great recruitment last year, probably seeing the result here. A Council member asked what President Nook would suggest as effective methods of recruitment. The President said that recruitment ideas include keeping in touch with the alumni, constantly updating them about our programs, telling them that they can be in touch with us, and emailing alumni as well as prospective applicants about UNI's programs. Finally, President Nook made it clear to the members of the Graduate Council that he did not have problem with graduate programs significantly growing as long as the university ensured resources.

President Nook was asked what he saw was the role of the Graduate College in this comprehensive university. He responded that the College could actively find strength in existing graduate programs and help add more strength and growth.

When asked what questions he had for the Graduate Council, the president wanted to know what the Council members thought was missing in our graduate programs. If we have to add something tomorrow, what are the things you need? Council members responded that faculty members were missing in a number of programs. At present, there are many program areas with clear student interest, but no faculty. Other areas of need are technology and health care.

At the end of the discussion, President Nook reminded everyone that UNI must meet the needs of the state. UNI must focus on a clear branding in order to be more visible statewide. Then UNI must try to increase online offerings to go out of state and internationally. It is time consuming but it is needed. Another part of branding is the quality of our programs. Potential students must find our degrees valuable. The university really needs to expand offerings in specialized education in technical areas where the state will benefit. Other areas possible include health care, administration and technology. Council members added that additional areas to grow would be interdisciplinary and certificate programs where employers would see a value. Many times people have the degrees but not enough specialization or leadership skills in a field and this is where graduate programs can help.

The chair called a motion to approve the minutes of the October 12 meeting. Motion was carried and passed.

Meeting adjourned. The next meeting will be on November 9, at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rubina Chowdhury

Secretary