

## UNL GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES

Meeting of April 16, 2009

The UNL Graduate Council convened at 3:32 p.m. in Room 206 of Seaton Hall. Present were: Professors Elizabeth Jones, Guillermo Orti, Guy Reynolds, Mark Walker, Thomas Zorn, student representatives Benjamin Blackford and Leslie Martinez; and Ex-officio: Dean Ellen Weissinger, Asst. Dean Laurie Bellows and Assistant to the Dean Barbara Brennan. Dean of Graduate Studies Ellen Weissinger presided.

### February 12, 2009 Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes as written. Motion passed unanimously.

### Proposal to offer an Earth Systems Literacy graduate certificate by School of Natural Resources

A motion was made to approve the Earth Systems Literacy graduate certificate. Discussion followed with the following points of concern: 1) certificate title would seem to indicate that Geosciences or Geography departments would be involved, yet there is no indication that either is aware of this proposal; 2) certificate is referred to both as Earth Systems and Earth Systems Literacy, clarification is desired; 3) one advisory committee member is from Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education, the market for the certificate points to teachers, but there is no support indicated from the Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education department. The motion was amended to approve the certificate pending clarification of the title and concurrence of the three departments mentioned. Motion passed pending successful resolution of points mentioned.

### Proposal to offer a Survey Research & Methodology graduate certificate by Survey Research & Methodology program

A motion was made to approve the Survey Research and Methodology graduate certificate. The motion passed unanimously.

### Discussion of Parental Leave for graduate assistants continued

Dean Weissinger shared results of her survey of graduate departments for practices currently used and their responses to the draft proposal discussed at the February UNL Graduate Council meeting. After discussion, Dean Weissinger was unanimously directed to publicize the following statement from the Council.

Statement from the UNL Graduate Council - April 16, 2009

The Graduate Council is working with relevant campus, college and departmental administrators to create a formal policy for GA parental leaves. We intend to have such a policy in place by May 2010. We will include all departments and programs and the UNL Graduate Student Association in this discussion.

In the meantime, the UNL Graduate Council endorses efforts to provide parental leaves for graduate assistants. We specifically endorse the creative methods that graduate programs have developed to allow new moms and dads to continue their studies and their assistantship funding. We encourage the campus to be generous in this support. While there are costs associated with these temporary solutions, in the long run our investments will pay significant dividends. Helping graduate assistants who choose to start their family is a reasonable and academically sound practice that is increasingly a necessity for recruiting and retaining our best students.

### Report from the Graduate Student Association

GSA shared a letter they are sending to all graduate students listing accomplishments in 2008-2009. Some highlights are:

- Implemented a graduate student survey to collect data necessary to effectively lobby for grad student concerns.
- Helped to implement a Graduate Student Advisory Board for UNL Libraries.
- Won bid to host the 2009 National Associate of Graduate-Professional Students' national conference at UNL.
- Received national award for outstanding graduate student advocacy in lobbying for improvements to schedule for paying semester fees and parking payments to align better with pay schedules.
- Several UNL GSA members elected to national and regional National Assn. of Graduate-Professional Students executive positions.

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.