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REQUEST TO MERGE COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND FINE ARTS AND COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA AND TO NAME THE NEW COLLEGE AS THE COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SCIENCES

Action Requested: Consider approval of the request by the University of Northern Iowa to merge the College of Humanities and Fine Arts and the College of Natural Sciences and to name the new college as the College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences.

Executive Summary: The merged college will absorb the existing departments and programs of the two colleges. The proposed name provides an appropriate description of the programs and departments located in the merged college. This request has been reviewed by the Board Office and the Council of Provosts and is recommended for approval. This request addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priority of “educational excellence and impact” and the goal to be “increasingly efficient and productive.”

Background:

- ◇ **Need for the proposed change.** The purpose of combining the two colleges is to create important strategic advantages for students and faculty and to generate administrative savings. The proposed merger will facilitate the achievement of the goals in the university’s strategic plan, which include improving efficiency and promoting interdisciplinary work. The proposed merger will result in cost savings with the need for only one academic dean. Other efficiencies will also occur because some of the functions that are currently occurring in both colleges, such as fundraising, strategic planning, and paperwork distribution, will be consolidated.

The proposed merger will also promote interdisciplinary work and collaboration on university initiatives. Issues related to interdisciplinary work, including merit pay and evaluations for promotion and tenure, will be easier to address under the proposed change. The departments in the proposed college will find it more conducive to collaborate. For example, the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders will work more easily with the Departments of Biology, Chemistry and Biochemistry, and Physics on issues ranging from genetics to hearing aids.

- ◇ **Functional organization of the proposed merged college.** The proposed college will be administered by one dean and two associate deans. The dean of the College of Natural Sciences will become the dean of the proposed new college; the dean of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts returned to his faculty position last year. Two associate deans will be necessary to accommodate the large size of the new college; the associate deans’ responsibilities will include curriculum, technology, and recruitment. These are existing positions in the two colleges.

The two colleges have undergone a year-long transition period and have successfully combined a variety of committees, such as the Student Outcomes Assessment Committee, and have proposed a new model for representation on various university-level elected bodies, such as the faculty senate and graduate council. The graduate faculty members have approved the new representation system for the graduate council.

All other educational responsibilities dealing with the operation of academic programs will remain intact. Students will not have any disruption to their programs of study. Faculty governance structures, such as the college senate, will remain the same.

- ◇ Effect on existing programs. The proposed merger will not affect existing programs. No programs or courses will be eliminated, changed, or proposed as the result of the merger of the two colleges.
- ◇ Effect on students and faculty. The proposed merger is not expected to affect students. Students will not see a change to their programs of study and their progress toward degree completion will not be affected. Faculty members' teaching and research duties will not be affected; they are likely to enjoy new possibilities resulting from easier collaboration with other units.
- ◇ Proposed new name. The proposed name describes the collection of programs and departments that will be part of the proposed college. Colleges of arts and sciences are found in many of UNI's peer institutions, such as Illinois State University, Indiana State University, Ohio University, and the University of North Texas. While some colleges also include the social sciences, that will not be the case at UNI because one of the existing colleges at UNI is the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.
- ◇ New resources required. The proposed merger will not result in the need for additional resources other than the cost for new letterhead, signage, public relations materials, and website alterations. These are expected to be one-time implementation costs.
- ◇ Date of implementation. The proposed merger and name change will become effective upon approval by the Board of Regents and will be implemented on July 1, 2011.