

Welcome Back! As we begin the 2024-2025 school year, I wanted to give you a brief update on Academic Positioning initiatives.

Department of Nursing and Public Health

On September 5th, **Dean Brenda Bass** and **Chief Academic Nursing Administrator Nancy Kertz** were joined by faculty, staff, students, and members of the extended UNI community, including Iowa BOR members, **David Barker** and **Nancy Dunkel**, to celebrate the official Nursing Ribbon Cutting and Open House. As part of the celebration, **President Nook** thanked alumni and friends of UNI who have contributed more than \$1.25 million to the program. As a result, all BSN students entering the program this year will receive a renewable \$1,000 scholarship. The first cohort of BSN students will be recognized and welcomed into their professional community during UNI's first Nursing White-Coat Ceremony. A special thank you to **UNI Facilities** for creating such a magnificent space for the Department of Nursing and Public Health.

Academic Advising

In Spring 2024, the Excellence in Academic Advising (EAA) Implementation Plan Task Force was charged to develop the next steps for creating leadership and advisor training opportunities that reflect best practices and enhance the consistency of the advising experience across campus. As a result, the task force developed an advisor training program that focuses on "just-in-time" topics that will be offered at three key points in the academic year: 1) Early Fall Semester, 2) Pre-Spring Semester Registration, and 3) Early Spring Semester.

To pilot this program during the 2024-25 academic year, select academic departments within the College of Humanities, Arts & Sciences and the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences will participate in the new training as a unit. Additionally, a limited number of group sessions will be available to any academic advisor. After the pilot year, a timeline will be established so that all faculty and staff advisors may complete this program.

Supporting this effort is the newly established **Undergraduate Advising Council (UAC) to the Provost** that serves as a platform for the assessment and advancement of ideas and issues related to academic advising. Members of the UAC include:

- **Jenny Connolly** | Director, College of Education Academic Advising & Teacher Education Success
- **Karen Cunningham** | Assoc Dean & Director, Online Education & Individual Studies
- **Samantha Goss** | Asst Professor, Art, College of Humanities, Arts & Sciences
- **Kyle Haiman** | Academic Advisors, Biology, College of Humanities, Arts & Sciences
- **Melinda Heinz** | Asst Professor, Family, Aging & Counseling, College of Social & Behavioral Sciences
- **Deirdre Heistad** | Associate Provost for Academic Affairs (ex-officio)
- **Emily Machen** | Associate Dean, College of Social & Behavioral Sciences

- **David Marchesani** | Director, Office of Academic Advising, Chair
- **Elisabeth Soliz** | Director, Wilson College of Business Professional Distinction Operations

Thank you to all who have agreed to serve on the UAC

Alternative Credentialing

As a result of the work completed last year by the Alternative Credentialing task force, the 2024-2025 Academic Catalog now includes definitions for Certificates alongside those of Majors and Minors. This framework positions UNI to support faculty in designing and implementing a meaningful and innovative specialized combination of courses tightly focused on a specific set of skills or knowledge. The Graduate, Research, and Online Education (GROE) College will continue to provide leadership in supporting this work. To support these efforts, **Dr. Kyle Rudick** was selected to serve as the inaugural Administrative Fellow for Micro-Credentialing and Environmental Analysis. Thank you, Kyle, for continuing this important work.

Applied Engineering

In May 2024 President Nook and Provost Herrera began meeting with campus and industry stakeholders to discuss a significant enrollment decrease in Applied Engineering and Technical Management. After preliminary discussions in Spring 2024 with AETM leadership, industry partners, and AETM faculty and staff regarding the challenges, President Nook and Provost Herrera decided that UNI would decouple Applied Engineering and Construction Management to promote and nurture each program's distinctiveness, provide a more focused student experience, and strengthen the marketing and recruitment opportunities for both programs.

To support these goals, in May 2024 an Executive Advisory Committee (EAC) was created and met regularly over the summer to assist President Nook and Provost Herrera in identifying the parameters of the initiative that would be turned over to Academic Positioning in Fall 2024. Members of the EAC include: **Nick Bruns**, John Deere; **Drew Conrad**, UNI; **Jennifer Cooley**, UNI; **Ben Hammes**, MBI; and **Deirdre Heistad**, UNI.

To achieve the goal of standing up two distinct departments by Fall 2025, two focused working groups have been established. Thank you to the following members of the FWGs.

Construction Management Focused Working Group

- **Andy Anderson** | Associate Professor, Management
- **Lisa Riedle** | Department Head and Professor, AETM
- **Randy Sharp** | Assistant Professor of Practice, AETM
- **Joseph Ugrin** | Department Head and Professor, Accounting

Applied Engineering Focused Working Group

- **Lee Geisinger** | Assistant Professor, AETM
- **Scott Giese** | Professor, AETM
- **Rukmini Srikant Revuru** | Associate Professor, AETM
- **Julie Zhe Zhang** | Professor, AETM
- **Jin Zhu** | Professor, AETM

Please continue to watch for updates on [Academic Positioning](#) initiatives. If you have any questions, please reach out.

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