The Graduate Council (GC) reviewed the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) Program Review documents in advance and then met with the CTL Interim Director, Kandice Pryor, on September 26, 2011. The Center was well prepared for that meeting and addressed questions raised by the GC.

CTL is an academic service unit housed in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Its primary objective is to provide instructional services outside of the classroom which are important to increase retention and graduation of all UIS students. The core mission of the CTL is to provide students with academic support.

The GC found that the program review self-study presents a well-written summary of CTL’s mission, vision and activities primarily at the undergraduate level. GC recognizes that, given the change in the UIS student body due to increasing freshmen enrollments requiring developmental assistance, the shift in CTL emphasis to serve first and second year students was warranted. It is commendable that CTL has managed to support this new constituency of entry-level students while still serving the broader population of undergraduate and graduate students.

GC discussions focused primarily on CTL’s service to online and on-campus graduate students. GC notes that graduate students encompass nearly 40% of total students, graduate enrollments continued to increase this academic year and there are advancing populations of online and international graduate students. Meeting with the Interim CTL Director helped to clarify several of the issues associated with CTL service to graduate students. This discussion can be summarized as follows:

- CTL currently provides services to graduate students including orientation, instructional support and test proctoring. CTL typically serves as test proctors for an average of 100 graduate students and assists 150 graduate students in writing assignments per academic year.

- For international graduate students, CTL provides various outreach activities including support for the ESL program for students who enter graduate programs. CTL recognizes that
international graduate student service will continue to be an emphasis area. GC supports the new Intensive English Program (IEP) to continue to recruit international students to UIS and into campus graduate programs.

- For online graduate students, CTL provides online supplemental instruction and online workshops which have been used by students in multiple programs. CTL employs a variety of methods to meet with online students which include Elluminate v-Room, email appointments, and Camtasia appointments.

After careful consideration of both the review documents and the information shared during our meeting with the CTL Interim Director, GC wishes to emphasize the following points

- CTL has expressed the desire to work more closely with graduate program faculty and online coordinators to identify needs. Last spring, CTL’s writing staff began a liaison project to build better relationships with each department. GC suggests that a survey of graduate departments may be a useful method to further coordinate outreach efforts and to identify primary graduate student needs.

- Consideration should be given to providing separate online tutors who are specialized in online learning assistance.

- GC noted that CTL’s Recommendation 11 in their program review self-study indicates that UIS should create a testing center. GC supports efforts to find a long term solution that will allow continued proctoring for tests for online and on ground students.

- Based on the number of master’s project and thesis appointments, consideration should be given to hiring another writing specialist in CTL to serve these students.