To: UNI Faculty Senate

From: Educational Policy Commission

Re: Recommendation regarding NISG “Dead Day” Proposal

Date: November 12, 2012

The EPC has discussed NISG’s proposal to have the last Thursday and Friday of each semester designated as a “Dead Day,” whereby “…faculty at UNI allow students the last class day of each semester, excluding night classes and lab classes, to prepare for their finals without the added stress of papers, tests, or new material to study” (NISG Senate Petition).

The EPC believes that UNI’s current policy is sufficient. Currently, UNI policy states: “A comprehensive final examination, if required, must be administered at the time indicated on the final schedule. No final comprehensive examination shall be administered to a class within the last two weeks prior to the officially scheduled final examination period (excluding summer sessions or half-semester courses). In the week prior to the beginning of the final examination period, unit tests, papers, projects, and other assignments are permissible if announced in the course outline/assignment sheet/syllabus or prior to midterm” (Schedule of Classes).

The EPC believes that the issue is more a matter of lack of knowledge about the specific nature of this policy. Students have the right not to have unexpected tests, papers, assignments during the last week of classes, while faculty have the right and responsibility to organize their courses in ways that are most educationally appropriate for their students. Therefore, the EPC suggests that the University announce via UNI Online and/or MyUNIverse the above passage each semester, at least one week before classes begin and again at the Monday following Thanksgiving break. Further, the EPC suggests that a link to the Grievance Policy be included in the paragraph above that is published in the Schedule of Courses, as well as in the announcements previously suggested.

Based on the petition submitted by NISG, the EPC does not believe that a Dead Day policy will work in a practical way to benefit students. The work load itself does not change, it simply moves a day or two earlier in the week, or potentially means that students would have both a major term paper and a final exam or project due on the same day during finals week. The current policy clearly states that all exams (excluding cumulative finals), papers, assignments, and projects due the last week of class must be announced prior to mid-term. Therefore, students should have enough advanced warning to complete the work assigned for their courses.