Northern Illinois University

UNDERGRADUATE COORDINATING COUNCIL
188th Meeting
Thursday, April 5, 2012
Altgeld Hall 203

MINUTES

Approved


Absent:  S. Conklin/HHS B. Hart/VPA, M. Lilly/LAS, O. Najjar/LAS

Guest:  D. Smith, Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator

I. Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made by Snow, seconded by Ballantine, to approve the agenda. The motion carried.

II. Announcements

A. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Schlabach, seconded by Lindvall, to approve the minutes of the March 1, 2012 Undergraduate Coordinating Council meeting. The motion carried.

III. Reports/Minutes from Standing Committees

A. Admissions Policies and Academic Standards Committee

Birberick reported on the February 8th meeting of APASC. One of the issues discussed was the 200 day limit for students’ grade changes from incomplete. Part of the issue stems from the change in systems. In the old Legacy system a number of weeks was the determining factor for the grade change however MyNIU has to have a specific date therefore 200 days was selected. This spans semesters. The advising deans brought the issue to APASC to change the number of days to 120.

Plus/minus grading came up again. Birberick pushed for the ad hoc subcommittee to come back together. There was discussion about that. John Wolfskill is no longer able to serve on the ad hoc committee so Shevawn Eaton replaced him.
Discussion on the middle school literacy certificate also took place. Specifically regarding the 2.5 GPA and there was some confusion about that so it was returned for clarification.

Schlabach made a motion to accept the minutes of the APASC committee held February 8, 2012, seconded by Snow. **Motion carried.**

Ballantine spoke briefly about the March meeting, saying the 200 day subject was again discussed as well as the plus/minus grading issue. He stated there is a lot of debate about the plus/minus grading issue. Some Senate representatives feel very strongly about the issue and they will be attending a meeting later in the month to continue the discussion. Lastly he made mention of the College of Business’ departments limited admission/retention renewal requests which he indicated the committee felt did not adequately address the issue of the impact on underrepresented groups and groups from various socioeconomic backgrounds.

**B. Committee on the Improvement of Undergraduate Education**

Stafstrom reported on distribution of funding for the summer grants. There were six applications from throughout the university. Each were assessed by the committee’s members individually based on the selected rubric. Rankings were arrived at based on the rubric. The committee voted to fund five of the six applications. He mentioned all six proposals had merit. Dr. Birberick wrote letters to the individuals indicating what was expected from the committee and included comments from the committee.

The payment will be $2000 up front and $1500 upon the submission of the final report. Still an issue is that the final report is due prior to when the project can be completed, however assessment of the progress of the project can be done.

In addition to the improvement awards, there were also two applications, one by a faculty member and one by a student to support materials and items needed for particular courses or activities on campus and both of those were approved as well.

One important policy question arose – that being there was enough funding to fund all the applications however the committee decided not to expend all available funds if a proposal was deemed not to be adequate.

March meeting had to do the with undergraduate teaching awards, that have been determined and will be announced shortly. The awards ceremony will be the afternoon of April 19th in the Altgeld auditorium.

Keddie made a motion to accept the minutes of the February 20, 2012 CIUE meeting, seconded by Braun. **Motion passed.**
C. Committee on the Undergraduate Academic Environment

Schlabach reported the committee discussed the issues of spirituality and accountability. The committee came to understand their role was not to require or suggest a specific religious course be taken but felt they should approach the subject through non-academic means.

On the issue of accountability - regarding the classroom environment – there is some concern that faculty and staff are not respectful of students, not displaying appropriate professional behavior so the question became should we encourage the University Council to add a question “Is your professor respectful?” on the annual faculty evaluation.

Denise Rode, Director, First Year Experience, made a presentation to the committee. Schlabach said she provided a lot of data. An interesting point made, Schlabach said, was that the information Rode presented showed there is no difference in the GPA of those students who attend UNIV 101 and those that don’t. Rode also talked about the new initiative for Sophomores. Another initiative, a pilot program for orientation was also discussed.

Stafstrom asked if the university mandates the content on the faculty evaluations. Birberick indicated there are a few things that must be included in the evaluations and thought that information was contained in the APPM. Aase questioned whether students would be able to distinguish between what is appropriate behavior and what isn’t and how well they liked the course. He also asked why we would collect such information if there is no proof there actually is a problem. Ballantine commented that he believed that students are already intimidated by faculty. He said that there are faculty that bend over backwards to help students but there are also faculty that make students feel stupid if they ask a question. Ballantine said that is the issue that needs to be addressed. Price commented that as a student he and other students talk about these matters and they distinguish between the challenge of the course and the behavior of the faculty. Aase stated that was the purpose of the comments section. Ballantine said some students share comments and some don’t. He also pointed out that the only person to see the comments is the faculty member for the course and this would provide documentation of what may be a pattern of disrespectful behavior.

Baker made a motion, seconded by Snow to accept the February 14, 2012 minutes of the CUAE. Motion carried.

D. Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum

No minutes, March 8, 2012 meeting cancelled.
E. General Education Committee

Keddie reported that the majority of the meeting dealt with the social sciences courses as part of the General Education program that were up for resubmission. She said they split into committees and then were assigned courses and had to review and report on whether they should be approved or explain why they shouldn’t be considered. She reported a broad problem with many of them was lack of assessment data or if assessment data was provided it wasn’t analyzed or have a plan to use it to improve the courses. Anthropology, Economics, Sociology, History and Political Science were all asked to resubmit assessment data between fall 2012 and spring 2013 staggered by department. Sociology didn’t give much data but they had a really good plan for correcting it in the future and members were impressed by that. Geography did give basic data so they fulfilled their requirements and a few Psychology courses did as well. There was an FCNS course that was also acceptable.

She reiterated the ongoing assessment issue. On resubmission departments must fulfill certain General Education goals. They must collect data that shows they are fulfilling those goals.

She reported that two candidates had been selected to interview for the General Education Coordinator position and the interviews would be next week. Birberick urged committee members to attend the interview sessions.

Birberick reiterated the importance of assessment data. The Higher Learning Commission will be performing a site visit in 2014. A self-study is being worked on now. One of the big issues will be the Gen Ed program. Birberick added that the Higher Learning Commission is changing the way the reaccreditation process will be handled. It will no longer consist of one visit every 10 years. There will be a series of steps and information that will need to be provided to them throughout the process.

Keddie made a motion to accept the minutes of the General Education committee from February 16, 2012, seconded by K. Wiemer. Motion passed.

F. University Honors Committee

No minutes were submitted.
IV. Other Reports

A. University Assessment Panel

Birberick pointed out that the university does have a new mission statement. This is a requirement of the Higher Learning Commission and the statement needs to be reviewed from time to time.

Birberick pointed out from the March notes that the information pertained to the Higher Learning Commission and Doris MacDonald was taking point. The report and review for accreditation has several aspects. Subcommittees have been formed and chairs of the subcommittees have been designated and they are working on collecting the data according to the requirements of the Higher Learning Commission. A self-study is being worked on which the site team can review before coming on campus.

V. Old Business

None

VI. New Business

None

VII. Adjournment

On a motion by Ballantine, seconded by Baker, the meeting was adjourned @ 1:50 p.m. The next UCC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 3, 2012, beginning at 1:00 p.m. in Altgeld Hall 203.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne E. Ratfield