Northern Illinois University

UNDERGRADUATE COORDINATING COUNCIL
184th Meeting
Thursday, November 3, 2011
Altgeld Hall 203

MINUTES
Approved


Absent: A. Birberick/Vice Provost, V. Demir/EET, S. Lee/HHS, M. Lilly/LAS, N. Lindvall (Student/Honors), G. Schlabach/EDU, C. Vander Schee/EDU,

Guest: Jerry Blakemore, Vice President and General Counsel
Greg Brady, Deputy Counsel for Administration
Alan Rosenbaum, Executive Secretary, University Council, and President, Faculty Senate
D. Smith, Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator

I. Adoption of Agenda

Snow suggested revising the order of the agenda to allow guests in attendance to address the committee prior to the regular business meeting.

A motion was made by Stoddard, seconded by Wiemer, to approve the revised agenda. The motion carried.

II. Announcements

A. Electronic Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the October 6, 2011, meeting of the Undergraduate Coordinating Council were electronically approved.

B. Introduction of Guests

Snow introduced guests, Jerry Blakemore, Greg Brady, and Alan Rosenbaum, who were present to answer questions and provide clarification on the status of the academic integrity/misconduct policy catalog language issue.

III. Reports/Minutes from Standing Committees
A. Admissions Policies and Academic Standards Committee

Stoddard provided an overview of the September 14, 2011, meeting of the Admissions Policies and Academic Standards Committee.
Stoddard made a motion, seconded by Baker, to receive the September 14, 2011, minutes of the Admissions Policies and Academic Standards Committee meeting. **The motion carried.**

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

Gasser reported on the September 12, 2011, meeting of the Committee on the Improvement of Undergraduate Education. He pointed out that the committee reviewed the nomination forms for the Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and Instruction awards and discussed possible changes to the framework of the CIUE grants and the requirements of the follow up reports.

**Gasser made a motion, seconded by Nicolosi, to receive the September 12, 2011, minutes of the Committee on the Improvement of Undergraduate Education meeting. **The motion carried.**

**C. Committee on the Undergraduate Academic Environment**

Committee members independently reviewed the minutes of the September 13, 2011, meeting of the Committee on the Undergraduate Academic Environment Committee.

**Snow made a motion, seconded by Gasser, to receive the September 13, 2011, minutes of the Committee on the Undergraduate Academic Environment meeting. **The motion carried.**

**D. Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum**

Najjar reported on the October 13, 2011, meeting of the Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum noting that the committee discussed a new library course and an online approval process currently being developed for the purpose of streamlining the curricular process. She pointed out that the College of Engineering Degree with Honors has been revised to now include more research to encourage students to pursue further research activities and increase contact with faculty.

**Najjar made a motion, seconded by Nicolosi, to receive the October 13, 2011, minutes of the Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum meeting. **The motion carried.**

**E. General Education Committee**
Wiemer reported on the September 22, 2011, meeting of the General Education Committee. The committee was informed that a search will begin soon for a replacement for Greg Long as General Education Coordinator. In addition, the committee received an overview of the 2011 University Writing Project report and approved forming an ad hoc committee with representatives of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to explore the process of collecting general education assessment data.

Wiemer made a motion, seconded by Keddie, to receive the September 22, 2011, minutes of the General Education Committee meeting. The motion carried.

F. University Honors Committee

Goldenberg reported on the September 2, 2011, University Honors Committee meeting. The committee heard a report from the new Associate Vice Provost for University Honors, Chris Jones, which included an overview of Jones’ vision and goals for the program. An office-wide assessment has been completed by Jones, and the division of labor and staff responsibilities have been re-organized. The committee also previewed a recruiting video that will be featured on the Honors website.

Goldenberg made a motion, seconded by Conklin, to receive the September 2, 2011, minutes of the University Honors Committee meeting. The motion carried.

IV. Other Reports

A. University Assessment Panel

Notes of the October 7, 2011, meeting of the University Assessment Panel were independently reviewed. There was no discussion.

V. Old Business

A. Selection of UCC Faculty Representative to the University Assessment Panel for 2011-2012

Anyone interested in serving on the University Assessment Panel for the remainder of the current fall semester was asked to contact Mollie Montgomery. Jeanne Isabel has agreed to serve in this capacity for the spring 2012 semester.

B. Academic Integrity Language Discussion/Response
Rosenbaum opened discussion by providing an overview of the academic integrity/misconduct policy language issue and the current status of the situation. He explained that the initial problem was that there was no academic misconduct policy that was consistent across the different bodies within the university, and the undergraduate catalog was different from the student code of conduct. He said that the original intent was for the Faculty Senate to develop language that would be acceptable to both the UCC and to the Student Conduct Board. Language was developed and then revised first by APASC and then UCC. As a result of these changes, the situation, as it stands now, is that there are actually three versions of language: the online catalog, the printed catalog, and the student code of conduct.

The language that was changed referred to the appeals process and whether the appeals process (which does not currently exist) ought to run through the College Council or run through the grade appeal process. He went on to say that the wording revision approved by the UCC had the appeal running through the grade appeal process. Unfortunately, however, the grade appeal process, as written, does not accommodate the appeal of a penalty that is assigned as a result of a misconduct finding. Thus, what was being sent forward to University Council by UCC was not only the catalog language but also a rewrite of the grade appeal process.

University Council felt that, based on numerous conversations involving both the University Council and General Counsel, the UCC has the right to control catalog language but does not have the authority to rewrite the grade appeal policy. Since the catalog language that UCC submitted is dependent upon that grade appeal policy rewrite, University Council chose not to accept the rewrite for a several reasons. Thus, given that University Council felt that they were not going to accept the rewrite of the grade appeal policy, the catalog language no longer made sense. It was decided that the entire grade appeal process, if that is the process to be used for a penalty appeal, needs to be reconsidered as there are issues with the policy itself outside of the language rewritten by UCC.

Rosenbaum said that University Council has delegated the issue to a committee with the instructions to do one of the following two options:

1) Rewrite the grade appeal process, not only to include the academic misconduct language, but also to correct the necessary statements already included in it. If the committee chooses to do this, then the catalog language would make sense, and the entire language could be approved. Rosenbaum said, under this scenario, UCC is being asked to hold off taking any action on the issue until the grade appeal portion comes back to University Council.
2) Leave the grade appeal process alone and consider formulating a separate policy that would accommodate academic misconduct penalties. If the committee decides to do this, UCC could then review and approve that new policy and then reframe the catalog language accordingly.

Rosenbaum went to say that, in either case, University Council is asking that UCC hold this issue rather than send it back to University Council. He emphasized that an attempt will be made to move this through the committee at a reasonable pace as it is important to have the appropriate language for the catalog approved by UCC so that the University will have a consistent academic appeal policy in all of its documents.

Stoddard agreed that it is important to have a uniform code; however, he said that he isn’t clear on why the grade appeal policy is not an appropriate avenue for the appeal of an academic misconduct penalty. Rosenbaum responded that it was his understanding that UCC rewrote the grade appeal policy because the committee did not feel that the policy accommodated misconduct penalties that might come up. He said there are situations where a student might want to appeal something that is not covered under a due process, and, initially, that is what Faculty Senate was attempting to do. The issue has become, however, where that appeal should take place. The Faculty Senate felt an appeal should take place at the college level, and UCC felt that it should take place at the department level through the grade appeal process. Conklin pointed out that the original language was for the appeal to be made through the College Council; however, College Council deals with personnel issues. She said that body is not the appropriate avenue for such appeals, and that is what UCC was responding to. Rosenbaum clarified that Faculty Senate’s discussion did indicate that the College Council might not be the best vehicle, but rather the college level might be the appropriate level. He said, if the language had been rewritten to have the appeal at the college level in some way that would have been more acceptable, however, it still would not be within the jurisdiction of UCC to make that change.

Rosenbaum summarized the status of the situation now. He stated that University Council felt that they could not accept the language as written because it refers to the rewrite of the grade appeal process, and it is not within the authority of the UCC to make or change the grade appeal policy as that falls under the right of the University Council. He reiterated that University Council is asking UCC to hold on to the issue for the time being and wait for the recommendation from the Academic Policy Committee in order to sort out this situation in a way that does not disadvantage students and is acceptable to the faculty. He added that UCC members are welcome to provide input into the discussion through either their University Council representatives or through the UCC as a committee recommendation to the Academic Policy Committee.

Nicolosi asked for clarification on the discrepancies in language as it is currently stated in the online and printed versions of the undergraduate catalogs. Rosenbaum replied that the
online catalog states that a student may appeal an excessive penalty through the grade appeal process, and the printed catalog does not contain that language. The online catalog supersedes the printed catalog. The grade appeal process remains as it is and is contained in the Academic Policies and Procedures Manual (APPM). The APPM committee has been instructed to make no changes to the grade appeal process until instructed by the University Council. Nicolosi asked if the online catalog could legally be changed to reflect the printed catalog in order to keep uniform language until this issue is resolved.

Snow clarified that when UCC changed the language one year ago and the language was added to the online catalog, it was not done following the proper procedures. As such, the online catalog now contains a statement that has not been approved through the university governance system. He went on to say that he and Vice Provost Birberick have met with NIU General Counsel Jerry Blakemore, and General Counsel Blakemore recommends that UCC revert back to the previous language in order to obtain continuity across all catalogs.

The question was raised as to whether UCC had the authority to make a change in the online catalog during the academic year or if changes could only be made at the beginning of the year. Blakemore responded that changes can be made at any time to make it right. However, the more significant issue is that what is online is not sensible because there is the acknowledgement that the process by which the statement got there was not consistent with the policy established. Although the statement is there, it has very little meaning, and the lack of clarity associated with all of this is problematic. Blakemore went on to say that the general rule that the online catalog supersedes the printed copy does not apply when the online language has been established inconsistent with the university policies and procedures.

**Gasser made a motion, seconded by Nicolosi, effective immediately, to revert to the previous academic integrity catalog language by removing the statement in the online version of the 2011-2012 Undergraduate Catalog which reads “In cases where the student feels the penalty of less than or equal to an F in the course is excessive and/or inappropriate, an appeal of the penalty only may be made through the grade appeal process” due to irregularity in the procedures followed to initially approve this statement, in light of advice received from NIU General Counsel and University Legal Services, in order to make both versions of the catalog consistent. The motion carried.**

Aase commented that the Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum (CUC) has held a discussion related to a timeline for when changes could be made in the online catalog. The committee, at the time of the discussion, concurred that changes could not be made to the online catalog midway through the academic year. He said that when there was only a printed catalog with certain procedures, there were significant consequences on how
policies would be implemented and which catalog a student would actually adhere to. He suggested that this issue be a topic for discussion at a later date so as to determine what the policies are for updating the online catalog. Gasser added that he was viewing this as a “mistake” in the online catalog which justifies the change. Blakemore clarified that UCC, because it has authority over the catalog, can make those changes. He said that often times that are non-substantive changes that are needed for clarity, spelling corrections, etc. Substantive changes need to have a process and procedures in place to make the changes.

Snow facilitated a brief discussion as to what UCC’s options are with regard to the academic integrity language returned to them from University Council. It was the consensus of the committee to postpone any further discussion on the issue.

VI. **New Business**

There was no new business.

VII. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m. The next UCC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 8, 2011, beginning at 1:00 p.m. in Altgeld Hall 203.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Mollie Montgomery*