OPENING: The meeting was called to order by D. Wade, Chair.

I. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Approval of the agenda with a minor change was moved by D. Wade; agenda approved.

II. ELECTRONIC APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. The minutes from February 2, 2005 were electronically approved.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. Change in Grading Process - Student Input and Grade Distributions

As agreed upon during the previous APASC meeting, D. Wade distributed a document for the collection of student advising group input regarding any grade system change. He requested input from the committee related to the draft.

The following issues were raised in connection to the draft:

• It was pointed out that the grading system at NIU does not exist in a vacuum. Fifty-five percent of NIU graduates start their college careers at other campuses. One third of NIU new freshmen transfer out at some point in their college career. Mixing grading systems for the purpose of determining entry into limited admissions programs may have unequal impacts on NIU native and transfer students.

• It was suggested that it be reiterated in the draft that it is OK to retain the current system. Respondents should not feel that we are required to select a different system.
• The possibility was discussed to have changes in the grade symbols without those changes being reflected in the GPA calculation. For example, a B+ and a B would both be given a 3.0 grade point.

• During one faculty meeting it was brought up that is it difficult enough to determine what a “B” is without having further differentiation to determine the difference between a “B” and a “B+”.

• It was suggested that a statement be added to the draft about the impact on transfer students.

• It was suggested that we survey faculty, deans, and department chairs in addition to students. D. Wade indicated that the draft could be sent to the college curriculum committees.

D. Wade moved to approve the draft as modified by adding a statement about retaining the current system, the impact on transfer students, and indicated that a final draft would be forwarded to the committee via email for approval. There would be an April 15 response date. D. Wade will redraft the document and companion letter and distribute via email. Seconded by J. Parker, motion passed.

B. Degrees with Distinction

D. Wade reported that the decision made last September regarding Degrees with Distinction was referred back to APASC by the UCC asking whether APASC had adequately considered the effect of this change on the number of students being granted Degrees with Distinction. Specifically, the UCC was concerned that there was a large increase in some colleges and less of an increase in others.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

• The purpose of the change was that small colleges were being disadvantaged by the top ten percent system and there were students in some colleges who were granted “With Distinction “with much lower GPA’s than in other colleges. Although the percentage increase for small colleges appears to be very large, the numbers are actually quite small. The purpose of this decision was to even out the GPA’s for determining distinction between colleges.

• It was pointed out that one of the main reasons for making the change was that NIU was out of step with almost all other colleges in relation to awarding Degrees with Distinction.

• The initial proposal for the change was brought forward to APASC from the Advising Group.

It was moved by D. Wade, seconded by C. Rollman, that APASC reiterate its support for the change and forward back to the Undergraduate Coordinating Committee. It was also suggested that APASC forward the data that was reviewed in considering this change to the UCC. Motion passed.
IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. FCNS Requests

D. Wade distributed memos from the School of Family, Consumer, and Nutrition Sciences regarding changes made in three of their major programs. They responded to APASC requests for justification of the minimum grade of “C” requirements specifically as it pertains to the defacto establishment of a Limited Retention Program. It was pointed out that last year APASC formulated criteria for determining whether a proposal constituted a Limited Retention Program. A minimum grade in a certain course was considered to be one of those criteria.

D. Wade pointed out that the department disagrees, arguing that these changes do not constitute a limited retention request. The Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum, however, forwarded these changes to APASC because they felt that it in fact was a limited admission request.

Because this language was determined by last year’s committee, E. Seaver will retrieve the language that was approved for defining a Limited Retention Program and forward it to the Committee for review. D. Wade indicated that we do not have problem with the “C or better” requirement, but there is catalog copy that must be drafted and justifications that need to be written for approval. It is important that this information be included in the catalog for the student to be aware. It was pointed out that there was not an explanation in the memos as to why these changes would not constitute a Limited Retention Program. All programs meeting the criteria identified need to be justified whether identified as a formal Limited Retention Program or not.

It was moved by D. Wade, seconded by R. Blecksmith, to refer these requests back to the department with a copy of the language identifying the criteria that constitute a Limited Retention Proposal. In the response it will be indicated that the Committee does not find anything objectionable with the proposal, but it must formally come forward in any case. Motion passed.

It was moved by R. Blecksmith, seconded by D. Wade to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Don Larson.

ps: apasc124/WP10