NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

ADMISSIONS POLICIES AND ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE
(APASC)

Minutes of Meeting #169
April 13, 2011

Approved

Present: A. Radasanu (LAS); S. Arnett (HHS); J. Wolfskill (LAS/MATH); P. Hartman (EDUC/TLRN); E. Klonoski (VPA); D. Zinger (EET/TECH); M. Pritchard (Council of Adv. Deans); D. Wade (BUS/MGMT); B. Goldenberg (UCC)

Ex Officio: S. Eaton (EDUC SERV & PROG); D. Changnon (VICE PROVOST); E. Seaver (VICE PROVOST); K. McCarthy (STUDENT AFFAIRS)

Absent: M. Gillis (TRANSFER CENTER); B. Hemphill (STUDENT AFFAIRS);

Students: Ashley Warren (HHS); Paula Hastings (LAS)

Visitors: S. Warber (REGISTRATION AND RECORDS); L. Allison (REGISTRATION AND RECORDS); D. Smith (CATALOG/ CURRICULUM COORDINATOR); Erik Calmeyer (STUDENT ASSOCIATION); Josh Venaas (STUDENT ASSOCIATION)

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

I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

   D. Wade requested to move IV New Business up to III and Old Business to IV.

   It was moved by D. Wade, seconded by M. Pritchard to adopt the amended agenda. Motion passed.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

   A. Electronic Approval of Minutes (03/02/11)

   B. Report from Advising Deans

       M. Pritchard indicated that there was no report from the advising deans.

III. NEW BUSINESS

   A. Curricular Item referred by CUC

       • COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, Curriculum Committee Meeting #9, 1/25/11
D. Wade stated that this was just reiterating the requirements for teacher’s certification of a “C” or better.

**D. Wade moved to approve the catalog change. P. Hartman seconded. Motion carried.**

B. Limited admissions proposals from both the College of Education and Health and Human Sciences for the Early Childhood Studies Interdisciplinary Major

**D. Wade moved to approve the limited admissions proposals for the Early Childhood Studies Interdisciplinary Major from both the College of Education and the College of Health and Human Sciences. M. Pritchard seconded. Motion carried.**

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Faculty Senate Recommendation to Adopt a Plus/Minus Grading System

D. Wade indicated that advisors in each of the colleges have concerns with the plus/minus grading system. Some concerns from the advisors were:

- Increased number of student complaints
- “C” or better is mentioned more than 100 times in the undergraduate catalog
- The issues of “C” or better for teacher certification
- The repeat policy of a “C-”

D. Wade stated that there was a failure to resolve, but an expression of concern regarding the role of the “C-” grade with the “C” or better and most notably the repeat policy when the “C” or better needs to be met. Currently a “C-” would not be a repeatable class. It would require a modification and revision of the policy to permit repeating “C-” courses and there might also be are also financial aid issues, to consider.

M. Pritchard said that financial aid will only pay for a student to earn credit in a course twice. She stated that this is a new policy starting in July.

D. Wade indicated that APASC’s charge is to make a recommendation to the UCC of change or no change. The UCC will either approve our recommendation and send it to the University Council for a final vote or return it to us for reconsideration.

**J. Wolfskill moved to recommend no change in the university’s grading system. P. Hartman seconded.**

D. Wade asked if APASC were to pass something involving the plus/minus grading system, would we want to do that prior to the repeat policy or would we want them to go up together. We have to make a “C-” repeatable if we are going with a minus policy.
P. Hartman stated that the College of Education did not realize keeping the current grading system was an option and that is what they wanted.

Some comments that were made:

- One student said she was in favor of the plus only grading system because when she is in the “B” range it is a high “B” and that would help her GPA. She was not in favor of the plus/minus because of the possibility of receiving an “A-” rather than an “A”.

- There was discussion about making the grading system mandatory. E. Seaver said our present grading system is not mandatory. He stated that it is not mandatory now that a professor use the current full grading scale.

- P. Hartman stated there is the impression that if a professor chooses not to use the plus/minus it will not affect a student’s grade, but it will. She said that students may choose to go shopping for a professor that will use the plus/minus grading system.

- E. Seaver stated that the plus/minus grading system could be a disadvantage to students trying to get into a limited admissions program.

- D. Wade asked how a plus only grading system could ever hurt a student assuming we are on a 90/80/70 grading threshold.

- J. Wolfskill said if the policy of a particular instructor, department or course is a rigid grading scale then he agreed with D. Wade that it would only benefit the student. J. Wolfskill said that a uniform grading scale was not the reality in his department. He stated that faculty members have the freedom to make the call of the grade.

- J. Wolfskill stated that there would be a greater volume of student appeals with professors to increase a grade to the plus of that range.

- Student from Student Advisory feels that the plus only system keeps students engaged.

- Student Advisory student stated that they had a petition for student feedback on the plus/minus grading system. They plan to start a petition regarding the plus only system.

- D. Wade stated that he would rather refer this back to the Faculty Senate with the information that APASC has gathered and let them reconsider rather than APASC doing nothing at all.

- Student from Student Advisory stated that even with the plus only grading system there is going to be the concern that there are two grading systems. There will be different GPAs within cross section courses. He believes
that the student majority is in favor of no change at all. However, they plan to still send out a petition regarding the plus only option.

- D. Wade stated that the plus/minus or the plus only grading systems would allow faculty to make finer grade distinctions.

- S. Eaton stated that we (APASC) are muddying muddy water. Faculty are not going to grade the same way.

- J. Wolfskill used the analogy of the Hippocratic oath - “Do no harm”. He stated that some faculty with a different grading system may believe they are giving a more just or fair assignment of grades. However, there would be numerous ramifications many of which are impossible to predict or defend against.

- D. Wade stated again that he agreed with the fact that the plus/minus system could harm students. He stated that he did not feel the plus only system offered the same potential for harm.

- Student said that if none of the grading scales are mandatory. Why can’t we put the plus only into effect and then the professors can choose whether or not to use it.

- D. Wade responded that there is no correlative or numerical number associated with the plus/minus. He said it would not count as a 3.33 or 3.5, but the 3.0 without an endorsed system.

D. Wade reiterated the motion on the table that APASC recommend to the UCC that no change be made to the grading system.

Voted: Yes - 9, Opposed - 2

Motion carried.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Minutes submitted by Lisa Allison.