NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

ADMISSIONS POLICIES AND ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE
(APASC)

Minutes of Meeting #192
December 10, 2014

APPROVED

Present: A. Birberick (Vice Provost); P. Braun (UCC); S. Johnston-Rodriguez (EDU/SEED); M. Kolb (Associate Vice Provost); S. Marsh (BUS/MGMT); E. Mogren (LAS/HIST); M. Myles (ADVISING DEANS); M. Parks (VPA); J. Umoren (HHS); J. Wolfskill (LAS/MATH); D. Zinger (EET/TECH)

Ex Officio: C. Garvey (ADMISSIONS); K. Saalfeld (TRANSFER CENTER)

Absent: S. Eaton (Ex-officio EDUC SERV & PROG); J. Ross (HHS/Student); J. Stevens (LAS/Student); E. Weldy (V.P. STUDENT AFFAIRS/ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT);

Visitors: J. Montag (REGISTRATION AND RECORDS); J. Ratfield (VICE PROVOST ADMIN. ASST); D. Smith (CATALOG/ CURRICULUM COORDINATOR); M. Pickett, (AAC Director)

I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

M. Myles made a motion to adopt the agenda, seconded by S. Marsh. Motion passed unanimously.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Approval of minutes from November 12, 2014 meeting

S. Johnston-Rodriguez made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 12, 2014 APASC meeting, seconded by J. Umoren. Motion passed unanimously.
III. OLD BUSINESS

CHHS - School of Nursing GPA rationale

Associate Dean, Beverly Henry was present for this part of the discussion. Wolfskill asked what kind of appeal or reconsideration procedure is in place. Henry indicated there is an established appeal procedure which will not change if the GPA increase is approved. A faculty committee, the chair and, finally, a college review committee are involved in that process. Wolfskill asked the number of students affected by this change. Henry indicated it is a minority number. She added the change is based in part on the GPA as it relates to students not passing the licensure exam. It doesn't do the students any good if the lower GPA is acceptable if they can't pass the licensure exam. Henry also indicated that a remediation course was created to assist with students' knowledge and skill levels. A brief discussion regarding what happens to the students that aren't able to continue took place. Some students find another major with the college while others select another major at the university or pursue a degree at a community college.

A motion to accept HHS #6 and #7 was made by J. Umoren, seconded by M. Myles. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE VICE PROVOST

Vice Provost Birberick advised the committee of some items that would be coming to them in the near future. PLUS language is moving through the curricular process. The framing language was approved unanimously by the General Education Committee and last week was unanimously approved by the UCC (Undergraduate Coordinating Council). It will go to the University Council in January. This is the portion of General Studies which includes the foundational studies and knowledge domains. Each department currently offering general education courses will be asked which domain they feel their courses belong in.

Birberick also mentioned an upcoming change to Teacher Licensure that will be coming through. It is a state mandated requirement - a middle grades program which must be in the 2015 catalog. A committee made up of individuals from the College of Education and Liberal Arts and Sciences have been working on this program for the past several years. Birberick indicated that it may be necessary for this committee to hold an additional meeting in order for these materials to move through the curriculum committees.

Birberick talked about the implementation issues surrounding the PLUS suggested changes. She indicated that the PLUS Task Force has completed their report and therefore finished their charge. There will be implementation teams to deal with the various issues such as the writing infused courses and UNIV 301. Both were recommended by PLUS task force to become requirements. Some of these will be issues handled by APASC. She will be reaching out for volunteers to serve on these implementation teams.
Birberick announced that Associate Vice Provost Michael Kolb is leaving NIU. He has accepted a position in Colorado. She praised his work with the curricular reform and thanked him for his service. Ed Klonoski from the School of Music, will serve as Acting Associate Vice Provost beginning in January. A formal search will follow.

**UNIV 101 and UNIV 201 Suggested Graduation Requirement**

Birberick gave background. The course descriptions for UNIV 101 and 201 have been revised. The changes make the course more academically focused. The catalog language was approved by the CUC and will go to the UCC.

It was asked if any 201 sections would be offered online. Kolb indicated that at this point none were online but discussion were taking place with First & Second Year Experience to address that population.

J. Montag said implementation is a concern. He believes that it can be handled behind the scenes by his office but the problem will be what happens after that first year - when the students haven't taken the course. Are they allowed to continue on? M. Myles added implementation is also a concern of the Advising Deans. They are supportive of the course itself but struggle to see how it will be enforced and the impact on advising.

There was a lot of discussion concerning students not registering for the course in the first year and what could be done about that. Discussion included the various impacts on continuation of studies as well as graduation. Birberick said that she felt that APASC's role was at a higher level - not that it shouldn't be concerned about the implementation but more about the policy while realizing that whatever needs to be done for the implementation can be worked out with the advisors, etc. It is also about messaging about PLUS and its requirements through Orientation and other means.

Marsh questioned the language in the description - calling it an introduction to NIU but then allowing a valid substitution from another institution. Her point being that if the course is that important - why offer a way for students to take the course elsewhere. Johnston-Rodriguez wanted to know how the course was going to be different, switching from an orientation-type course to a course with more academic content - that difference hasn't yet been shown. Wolfskill presented his reservations about the idea - not only its implementation but he doesn't agree that all students should be required to take the course. He doesn't believe that all of them need it. Birberick pointed out that even some of the best and brightest, Honors students, those who have high ACTs or GPAs struggle during their first year. Birberick said the course was more about shared experiences, like the Common Read - which is a proven high impact practice (HIP). It is also about bringing together students from different backgrounds as well as intellectual levels to interact and bond with fellow classmates. Kolb taught a pilot section of UNIV 101 which was composed of incoming freshmen, first-year students. Kolb said some were well prepared while others were not and ultimately dropped out. He and Dr. Gebo worked very hard to incorporate collaborative learning into the class. They had the students work
together in class but also expanded their network beyond the classroom - learning that they can have things in common with students from other majors/colleges.

Part of the discussion also addressed the University's retention efforts. Both J. Montag and K. Saalfeld pointed out how getting students to connect and stay at the university is a main focus. Montag suggested trying the implementation and then review the results and make changes as needed. Mogren felt a mixed message was being given. On one hand there is a desire for students to find connections with the university which leads to retention; however, on the other hand we are discussing a possibility of that requirement being waived. Mogren was confused about the institutional importance of the course. Various committee members stated that part of the problem was that the content of the course is being changed and that isn't known. In addition, the implementation process raises questions without answers and that has some members feeling uncomfortable with the requirement. M. Pickett suggested striking out the language where it mentions that the requirement can be filled through an approved equivalent. It was suggested that some colleges may wish to develop their own version of UNIV which is why the equivalent language was included.

Kolb provided information based on how the PLUS Task Force examined this issue. One of the main things undertaken was bench marking other institutions. There is data from across the country that a First-Year Experience course is really critical. This is true whether the course is like NIU's UNIV course or more academic, such as a seminar. As a High Impact Practice, the Task Force felt strongly that the university should make UNIV a requirement. It would give the university the opportunity to show students the pathway to degree completion. Kolb said perhaps applying the requirement to true, first-year students rather than transferees or degree completion students. That would enable the removal of the language dealing with the equivalent course. There was further concern voiced about the change in the UNIV 101 course content, which has not been presented.

S. Marsh made a motion to amend the UNIV 101/201 language to read:

A student earning a baccalaureate degree from NIU must complete either UNIV 101 or UNIV 201 as a requirement for graduation. UNIV 101 is offered to first-year students and available only in their first two semesters at NIU. UNIV 201 is offered to transfer students having at least 12 or more semester hours at time of transfer and available only in their first two semesters at NIU. Students who have already earned a baccalaureate degree are exempt from this requirement as are students officially enrolled in degree completion programs (a link to the 3+1 programs will be included for clarification).

seconded by E. Mogren. The motion passed with 5 in favor and 4 opposed to the revised language.

Wolfskill revisited the information provided that roughly 60% of first-year students already voluntarily enroll in the class. He suggests that data on those students as well as the ones who don’t enroll be collected. Other committee members pointed out that data
would have to be collected on impact on retention, etc. with the changes in the course content and those data reviewed. Pickett asked if there was data on HIPs that would assist in the evaluation. Kolb indicated there is national data that can be used. Marsh said that if the current data shows impact then it follows that amping up the content would show at least equivalent. Several members voiced concern from their colleges about the new content of the course. Mogren focused on what information the members would like to receive. One item is the syllabus proposed for the course - what content changes are being made. Any data currently available including longitudinal data. Pickett added the Advising Deans had questions pertaining to enforcement of the requirement as well as how the course would be staffed and the implementation.

Due to the lateness of the hour, Wolfskill made a motion to table the issue of making UNIV 101 and UNIV 201 a graduation requirement, seconded by Umoren. Motion passed unanimously.

V. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn @ 5:15 p.m. was made by M. Myles, seconded by S. Marsh. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Ratfield
Administrative Assistant
Office of the Provost