COMMITTEE ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION  
Altgeld 203  
March 21, 2011  
1:00 to 3:00 PM  
(#4, 10-11)  

APPROVED

Present: Jessica Braley (HHS), Karen Brandt (HHS), Dave Changnon (Acting Assistant Vice Provost), Jessamin Cooke-Plagwitz (LAS), Billie Giese (VPA), Denise Hayman (CHANCE), Sheryl Honig (EDUC), Sarah McHone-Chase (LIB), Wei Luo (LAS), and Charles Petersen (BUSE)

Absent: Greg Ammar (LAS), Pat Anderson (Alumni), Abul Azad (CEET), Paula Hastings (LAS), Patty Hurney (CEET), Daniel Kempton (Honors), Kristin Preihs (LAS), and Cason Snow (UCC/LIB).

Other: Joanne Ganshirt (Honors/Recording Clerk).

I. NEW BUSINESS

A. Selection of EUTA winners

Score rankings of each committee member were presented. HONIG/McHONE-CHASE MOVED TO NAME THE TOP THREE RANKED NOMINEES AS WINNERS OF THE EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING AWARD. THE MOTION PASSED. Michael Konen of the Department of Geography, Michael Morris of the Department of Foreign Languages, and Brendan Swedlow of the Department of Political Science were named EUTA recipients. Other nominees were Tim Aurand, Department of Marketing; Keri Burchfield, Department of Sociology; Betty Helen La France, Department of Communications; Chih-Chen Lee, Department of Accountancy; Amy Ozier, School of Family, Consumer, and Nutrition Sciences; Joseph Stephen, Department of Mathematical Sciences; and Kevin Wu, Department of Psychology.

B. Selection of EUIA winner

PETersen/Luo MOVED TO APPROVE JEANNE JAKUBOWSKI, DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, AS THE WINNER OF THE EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE INSTRUCTION AWARD. THE MOTION PASSED. Other nominees were Matt Swan of the Department of Communications and Joan Petros of the Department of Management.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Discussion of questions raised during grant process

1. Should there be a cover page (with faculty name, dept., title of project, etc.) and could we somehow include a departmental/college sign-off on this page?
Committee members discussed including a cover page to ease the evaluation process. Members requested a cover page be created to include signature lines for the department chair and college dean.

2. Should there be a maximum page length (i.e., no more than 10 pages, not counting the cover page)?

Committee members decided grant proposals should be no longer than five (5) pages not including the cover page.

3. Should those writing the proposal have to follow a standard format for the proposals...and if they don’t then they could be returned to the author?

Committee members were in agreement that everyone requesting funding through the CIUE grant program should use the form posted on the website. Any grant proposal submitted without the form will be returned and resubmission requested on the proper form. It was suggested that the form be modified to have pop-up boxes explaining what is needed in each.

4. Do we need letters of support or even a departmental/college signature on these proposals? (this goes to the idea mentioned above for the cover page)

This question was answered in question 1.

5. How do we fund projects that are already under way in a course (during the spring semester)? How quickly can funds be gotten to an individual?

Changnon said that funds could be allocated to projects for a current course, but they would not be released until after May 15. Committee members agreed this would be a good policy.

6. If a faculty member requests the entire $3500 for salary, should they briefly describe what they are going to do in association with that funding?

Committee members agreed that a well-written proposal should clearly define exactly what kind of and how much work will be done to earn the salary. This should already be a part of the proposal.

7. The service learning component is added to the summer salary grant. If a faculty member does not want the salary what application form should be completed, stay with the summer grant, add service learning to the $1,000 improvement grant, or create a separate grant form?

Committee members agreed all service learning grants should be submitted on the Summer Improvement Grant form that includes salary. This would include service learning proposals in which the professor is not requesting a summer salary, but is asking for over $1,000 in support.
8. Do we need to have specific dollar allocations for each grant type?

This question was asked during a meeting last semester to be sure that proposals submitted by students, for software development, or instructional support of no more than $1,000 were given equal footing for approval. The committee agreed that no set amount should be set for each grant type since the number of submissions changes each year.

9. Is it possible to set up a policy that the grants should automatically be approved based on the rankings and monies available? Discussion could then be held on any other grants if funds allow.

Brand said she likes having the discussions about the grant proposals. It allows for committee members to give reasons for their scores. Through the discussions committee members are able to point out good or bad aspects of the proposals that other members may have missed. The discussions allow for great flexibility in awarding grant monies. The committee members agreed that the discussion should be continued.

B. Discussion of questions raised during EUTA/EUIA process

1. What is meant by 50% teaching load? Is a team-taught course equivalent to a normal course?

This question was asked by a college who wished to nominate a faculty member who team taught a large major course. The nomination form is unclear on how to determine the 50% teaching load. Brandt said the form should ask for the number of undergraduate sections taught by each faculty member nominated. The language should clearly state the number of courses taught over the three prior years. Committee members noted that some courses are taught multiple times so the language should acknowledge that fact. The teaching requirement should be changed to read: “Over the last three years, the nominee should have taught a minimum of six (6) evaluated course sections at the undergraduate level.”

2. Are average grades needed to evaluate nominations?

Committee members decided average grades were not needed.

Committee members also discussed the student evaluation sections. Brandt said she noticed some of the nominations used quotes from the attached recommendation letters in the comment section. This meant the comments were all the same and were of no help. She suggested limiting the number of comments submitted. Braley said she found herself drawn to the nominations with the most comments. Even though she said she knew it was not an
indication that this person was better than another, she still kept going back to those nominations. Honig said the comments that showed different ways the nominee was a great teacher were very beneficial.

Committee members decided the comments should focus on quality of comment not quantity and that no more than 25 comments should be submitted for each nominee. (It was later discovered the nomination form already limits the number of comments to two pages.)

C. Approved grant for summer 2011 faculty member leaving NIU

Changnon asked the committee to consider defunding one of the grant proposals approved at the February 21 meeting because the professor was leaving NIU at the end of the academic year. He suggested the sentences “Proposals submitted by faculty members who will not be continuing at NIU in the next academic year will be considered. Such proposals must clearly state that the faculty member will not be continuing at NIU and must address the specific details of how the results of the project will be utilized by other faculty.” be removed from the form.

Brandt agreed that was a good idea. She then asked why there was a new proposal submitted to the committee. Changnon said the professor who was leaving was trying to show that the outcomes of the grant could be used by several different courses. However, there is no way to make one professor use materials from another professor in the courses taught. Brand said with the newly submitted proposal, the committee has funded a proposal that no longer makes sense. Changnon said the professor was trying to use the language regarding continuing employment as a way to get the funding.

Brandt said there are two issues. First, proof is need that faculty will use the outcomes of the grant and that is not available. In fact, the department chair sent a letter stating the course for which the grant was given will not be offered once this faculty member leaves the university. The second issue is the resubmission of a grant proposal too late to be considered. Changnon said when he communicated his concerns to the professor he asked for proof of use of information not a new grant proposal. Brandt said this would be a precedent and asked if the committee wanted to set such a precedent.

HONIG/BRALEY MOVED TO DEFUND THE GRANT PROPOSAL. THE MOTION PASSED.

PETERSEN/HONIG MOVED TO ADD THE WORD NOT AS FOLLOWS: “Proposals submitted by faculty members who will not be continuing at NIU in the next academic year will NOT be considered. “ AND TO REMOVE THE NEXT STATEMENT “Such proposals must clearly state that the faculty member will not be continuing at NIU and must address the specific details of how the results of the project will be utilized by other faculty.” THE MOTION PASSED.
III. ADJOURNMENT

HONIG/McHONE-CHASE MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. THE MOTION PASSED. The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m. The next meeting will be held on April 11 at 1 p.m. in Altgeld 203.