COMMITTEE ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION
Altgeld 203
September 14, 2010
1:00 to 3:00 PM
(#1, 10-11)

APPROVED

Present: Abul Azad (EET), Jessica Braley (HHS), Karen Brandt (HHS), David Changnon (Acting Associate Vice Provost), Joseph Flynn (EDUC), Billie Giese (VPA), Denise Hayman (CHANCE), Daniel Kempton (Honors), Earl Seaver (Vice Provost), Laura Vazquez (LAS).

Absent: Pat Anderson (Alumni), Wei Luo (LAS), Brian Mackie (BUSE), Sarah McHone-Chase (LIB), and John Ye (LAS).

Other: Joanne Ganshirt (Recording Clerk/Honors) and Julia Spears, (Coordinator for Engaged Learning).

I. Approval of Agenda

BRANDT/AZAD MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. Seaver asked to move the election of a committee chair to New Business, Item B. THE AGENDA WAS APPROVED AS AMENDED.

II. Introduction of Committee Members

Committee members introduced themselves.

III. Approval of minutes from April 26, 2010 meeting

BRANDT/AZAD MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION PASSED.

IV. Old Business

A. Distribution of EUTA, EUIA, and Grant Proposal Forms

Seaver explained to committee members the Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award nomination form, the Excellence in Undergraduate Instruction Award, and the four grant proposal forms would be approved at the next meeting. Committee members were encouraged to review each of these forms and be prepared to discuss any changes that may need to be done before final approval.
V.  New Business

A.  Request to include service learning funding in grants

Seaver told the committee members that part of the strategic plan for NIU is engaged learning. To that end, the university is trying to identify what engaged learning is currently being done on campus. The university is also trying to define engaged learning. He introduced Spears as the coordinator as well now coordinator of engaged learning how to do and promote service learning. This includes the new learning communities and website.

Spears is working with a cross-campus committee to identify existing mechanisms for using service learning in courses. Information on service learning one of the components found on the NIU website that is available for faculty, staff, and students to use. The proposal presented to CIUE (see below) fits into NIU’s strategic plan and works well with baccalaureate review. Spears added her committee will work on a draft definition of service learning. She is requesting that language be added to the CIUE grant proposal forms that would allow for funding for service learning.

Brandt asked Spears to give an example of service learning. Spears said she sent student in one of her courses into the community to work with a food pantry and other such organizations. There are five criteria to use when looking at a course syllabus to see if the project qualifies as service learning. The criteria includes the number of hours in students are in the community, the activity is mutually beneficial, and a reflective component. There are different looks to the service learning activities. Some have all students in one location, while others give the students a variety of choices. Spears added it takes a lot of work to coordinate service learning with a course.

Vasquez asked if the service learning is only with not-for-profit organizations, and not doing work for politicians, for example. Spears said this has been a struggle. She does not want to dictate where the service is done. The reflection component is an important aspect for this. Vasquez then asked if service learning would be civic and not corporate work. Spears said that is not necessarily true. Not every corporate project eliminates the civic component. The activity should be about service and the work done, not who is sponsoring the project.

Chagngon asked if Spears and her committee would review each of the courses. Spears said all the approved service learning courses would be identified in MyNIU. Seaver added that everything is being left wide open so volunteering is not included. Service learning must be tied to a course. Chagngon reiterated that students would actually work for an outside entity; the instructor would oversee the work; and there would be a civic component. Seaver said there will be a distinction between engaged learning and service learning.
Kempton noted the University Honors Program has adopted engaged learning over service learning for its students. Does language regarding adopting service learning or engaged learning with a service component need to be adopted as a way for CIUE members to deal with this request?, he asked. He also asked if service learning is available in all colleges. Spears said all the information has not yet been gathered. Some courses are listed as offering service learning but it does not meet the criteria established. It is hoped this information will be complete by the end of the semester. NIU is falling behind the NEC schools in service learning. To help bring about a change, Spears said a website is being created to list all service learning courses. These courses will also be listed on MyNIU with special notes for students enrolling in the courses. The service learning committee will do a review of the course and look at the course syllabi in order to designate the course for service learning. Kempton noted that some courses have students doing both service learning and engaged learning and allowing the students to decide which they want to do.

Vazquez asked how this proposal relates to CIUE. Is this a suggestion that the current grant proposal forms be eliminated for one promoting service learning? She would accept adding service learning as a component. Spears said she would only like to have a line added concerning service learning as a component.

Flynn asked if the strategic plan included this as service learning or course enhancement. Seaver said CIUE is to encourage course enhancement, so its members should want more of this type of activity. The strategic planning committee has talked about offering summer grants for engaged learning. The grants would help to enhance a course by embedding it into the curriculum. This would also help faculty learn how to do engaged learning. Changnon suggested workshops be held as the service learning component grows. It is important to give enticement but that should only be part of the grant application.

Brandt asked Spears if the service learning was added to the CIUE grants would the CIUE committee members make the decision on whether or not it meets the criteria of a service course. Spears responded by asking if the rubric asks for the final outcome? Brandt said the committee needs to prioritize the grants. How will the committee know which service learning project is better? Spears said a statement could be added to the rubric to identify service. When the course is uploaded is when the final decision on it being a service course will be made.

Seaver said a rubric for service learning could be given to CIUE members. Vazquez said a letter of support for the service learning project could then be submitted. Azad suggested that the service learning committee could rank the proposals. The grant proposals with a service learning component could be evaluated and ranked by the service learning committee, then sent to CIUE for final evaluation and ranking with the remaining grant proposals. Kempton noted there are too many grey areas in the service learning criteria for CIUE members to determine the quality. Brandt added that approval by the service learning
committee would allow CIUE members to move forward on those grant proposals in the same manner as the other proposals.

Spears asked the committee if the service learning component could be something supported by CIUE. Members of CIUE could make recommendations on what would be needed to add this component. Vazquez said language is needed outlining exactly what is meant by service learning.

B. Election of Chair

Brandt offered to chair the committee during the fall semester. Mackie was named chair for the spring semester.

VI. Announcements

Seaver informed the committee that he will be assuming the lead in the Phase III portion of the strategic plan. Changnon will now be sitting in on all the committee meetings.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m. The next meeting will be held on October 11, at 1 p.m. in Altgeld 203.
Proposed Inclusion of Service-Learning as a "Funding Priority" in CIUE Grants

Primary Goal: To provide NIU faculty with support and resources necessary to integrate service learning into their course(s).

Background on Service Learning
As recognized by the Carnegie Foundation, NIU is a "community engaged" institution. There are many opportunities for students to get involved in real-world activities. A number of departments and majors already have a strong service learning presence. We would like to recognize those who are engaging their students in the community and encourage others to consider turning their course into service learning courses. Additionally, this initiative works to implement "Goal 3.1.7: Create a formal Service Learning Program" (pg. 11) from the Presidential Task Force on Curricular Innovation.

Draft Service Learning Definition:
"Credit-bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs, and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of curricular content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility" (Bringle and Hatcher, 1995).

Advantages:
- Integrates Service Learning activities into an existing funding mechanism that faculty already are familiar with and know how navigate.
- Aligns internal funding opportunities with strategic initiatives.
- Offers faculty additional time/resources needed to cultivate relationships with not-for-profits, community organizations and other service partners essential in adding service learning components to an existing course.
- Allows the Service Learning Advisory Committee (SLAC) to collaborate with CIUE on an initiative that will support the improvement of undergraduate education while being responsive to our strategic plan.
- Provides more students the opportunity to engage their academic knowledge in real-world settings.

Funding Source: CIUE - Instructional Research and Improvement Grant ($3500)
"Enhancement of course delivery - the development of programs to assist students in existing courses, the preparation of audio-visual aids, the design of programs to improve the communication skills of faculty."

Timeline: Include service learning as a funding priority in the 2010-11 call for proposals. SLAC can draft 1-2 sentences to include in the grant materials.

Service Learning Advisory Committee
Marilyn Bellert, J.D. Bowers, Nancy Castle, Omar Ghreyeb, Becky Harlow, Judith Hermanson, Murali Krishnamurthi, Jane Mall, Lesley Rigg, Deborah Robertson, Gretchen Schlabach, Earl Seaver, Julia Spears