Committee for the Improvement of Undergraduate Education  
September 12, 2011  
(#1, 11-12)  

APPROVED

Members Present: Pat Anderson (Alumni), Abul Azad (EET), Anne Birberick (Vice Provost), Amanda Cecchi (HHS), Jessamine Cooke-Plagwitz (LAS), Joe Flynn (EDUC), Kenneth Gasser (LAS), Billie Giese (VPA), Denise Hayman (CHANCE), Kitty Holland (LAS), Christopher Jones (Honors Program), Nora Lindvall (SA), Brian Mackie (BUSE), Mark Mehrer (LAS), Kathleen Musker (HHS).

Members Absent: Patty Hurley (EET) and Sarah McHone-Chase (LIB).

Others: Joanne Ganshirt (Recording Clerk/Honors Program)

I. Approval of Agenda

MEHRER/AZAD MOVED TO ACCEPT THE AGENDA. THE MOTION PASSED.

II. Introductions

Members of the committee introduced themselves.

III. Election of Chair

AZAD/GIESE MOVED TO NAME MACKIE CHAIR FOR THE FALL SEMESTER AND MEHRER FOR SPRING. THE MOTION PASSED.

IV. Old Business

Mackie explained that each year the committee is charged with awarding grants and awarding the Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching (EUTA) and Excellence in Undergraduate Instruction (EUIA) Awards. Each year committee members review the application and nomination forms to make sure everything is in place for proper evaluation of grant proposal and award nominations. The evaluation rubric is now attached to the forms for applicants and nominators to see. Mackie said any problems with the forms will be discussed at the next meeting so the forms can be distributed in late October. He asked committee members to review each form for any corrections or clarifications that might be needed.

Jones asked if there were any issues from last year. Ganshirt said the only major concern with EUTA award concerned faculty involved with team-taught courses. This was not totally resolved. Giese pointed out a few changes to forms. The
major change was the addition of a service learning component to the Instructional Research Grant ($3500). Everything else went smoothly, she said, except one grant application she thought was too long.

Mackie asked committee members be green and not print out all the forms. Birberik suggested projecting the documents for discussion. Members were asked to make notes about each form. The referenced items could then be discussed and changed during projection.

V. New Business

Birberick asked the committee members to consider making changes to the way the monies are distributed for the Instructional Research Grant ($3500). She suggested a model similar to the multi-cultural course transformation seminar held each summer. The grants could be awarded then those faculty members would be asked to attend a training workshop during the summer to learn about transforming a course. Upon completion of the workshop, half the money would be given. When the grant has been completed a workshop could be given to the committee on the course that was transformed. When this part is completed the second half of the award would be paid. Birberick said this issue came about because the question of accountability was broached. Are people really completing these grants? Are students really benefiting? Some faculty members apply year after year. If the committee could get people together in a seminar they could share ideas. The next year those faculty members would be able to be mentors to new applicants. Slowly this would build a new way to teach courses. This would be accountability for courses taught. Giese asked who would do training. Birberick said someone could be brought in to conduct the workshop. Assessment could be built into the course that would meet the baccalaureate outcome. If the committee is interested Birberick said she has a presentation that could be made at the next meeting. Is the committee interested in exploring a new way to distribute money for these different grants? Birberick said she want to know who has received these grants in the past and if the causes are being taught. She noted the committee has not closed the loop in assessment.

Mackie said grant recipients must submit reports, but not the type this change would require. Grants have been given to modify courses not create a new course. Do we want to create a new course? he asked. Birberick said a new course does not need to be created. Instead, faculty members need to think about new ways of doing the courses. She attended a conference on course redesign and wondered if there are ways to rethink the old model of teaching. This has been done at other universities.

Azad asked if Birberick is thinking the committee should make suggestions on changing the framework of the grants. Birberick said she is suggesting changes to the framework on how grants are awarded. If the committee awards 4-5 grants, in May the recipients would then attend a workshop to learn how to develop the
outcomes and assessments, how it would tie into the baccalaureate goals and general education goals, and resources needed. The redesign would be completed over summer and then a presentation given. The committee would then be able to slowly build a group of faculty to serve as mentors.

Holland said as she looked at the grants it appears many grants are given to do capital improvement and other general course updates. There is a real need for this. Would capital improvement and course redesign compete for the same money? she asked. Birberick said she chose the instructional research grant because there are other smaller grants that could be used for capital improvement. The instructional improvement, microcomputer software, and student grants would allow for infrastructure. The research grant could still include some infrastructure because it would be written into the grant.

Giese questioned the timing of the training. She said the grant proposal would already be written before the workshop is held. She suggested the training would be better held before the grant was written. A faculty member could attend the workshop and then think about how to incorporate that information into the grant proposal. To do this after the award has been made may be too late. Birberick said that training is the wrong term. The faculty member would know what the project would be and the workshop would be to help with engagement in the process of redesign of a course. The workshop would give them an outline to follow. Giese said she still thinks it would be better to have the workshop before the proposal is written. Flynn said he agrees with Giese. Faculty should have access to this information through Faculty Development. There should be a summer workshop for faculty to create redesign, but he does not know if it should be attached to an award.

Birberick said this would be a reward to learn to do the redesign. The committee would be asking people to say “this is what I want to do in this course.” Giese asked how evaluation by the committee could be done if there is not a clear idea of what the grant recipient would do. She noted that during the evaluation process last year the grants were given to creative proposals. Mehrer asked if this needs to be attached the instructional research grants or if it could be done through a different mechanism. Birberick said this is the committee for improvement of undergraduate education and these kinds of ideas for changes should be fostered within. She again asked if committee members would be willing to think about changes if materials were presented at the October meeting.

Following further discussion, MEHRER/FLYNN MADE A MOTION INVITING BIBERICK TO MAKE A PRESENTATION, GIVE FURTHER DETAILS, AND CLARIFY THIS PROPOSAL AT THE OCTOBER MEETING. THE MOTION PASSED.

Mackie said he would also like to require more than just a one-page report from grant recipients. This is a separate issue from that previously discussed. He
would like to require more than just a piece of paper. This will also be discussed at the next meeting.

VI. Adjournment

GASSER/FLYNN MOVED TO ADJOURN. THE MOTION PASSED. The meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m. The next meeting will be held at 1 p.m. on October 10 in Altgeld 203.