MINUTES
Approved

Present: I. Bhanji (Student/LAS), T. Bough (VPA), A. Dreessen (Ex Officio, Student Involvement and Leadership Development), B. Hemphill (Ex Officio, Vice President for Student Affairs), M. Lenczewski (LAS), C. T. Lin (UCC/LAS), W. Johnson (LIB), D. Pender (EDUC), E. Seaver (Ex Officio, Vice Provost), R. Shortridge (BUS), R. Tatara (EET/Substitute for D. Cesarotti), K. Wesener (Ex-Officio, Executive Director, Housing and Dining)

Absent: D. Cesarotti (EET), E. Phillips (Student/Student Association)

Guest: Tim Griffin, Ombudsman
David Changnon, Chair, Strategic Planning Curricular Innovations Task Force
Brian Brim, Project Manager, MyNIU Student Information System
Cindy Phillips, Director, NIU Telecommunications

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by W. Johnson, seconded by C. T. Lin, to approve the agenda. The motion passed.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the November 13, 2007, meeting were electronically approved.

B. Report of Strategic Planning Task Force on Student Success

M. Lenczewski stated that the report on this task force will be combined and discussed with the presentation and report from guest speaker David Changnon, Chair of the Task Force on Curricular Innovation.

III. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.
IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Report of Strategic Planning Task Force on Curricular Innovation

David Changnon, Chair, Task Force on Curricular Innovation, described that, through the campus wide strategic planning process which began last year, four strategic imperatives were identified, and two task forces were formed, one related to student success and chaired by Carolinda Douglass, Director of Assessment Services, and the other related to curricular innovation, chaired by D. Changnon. Each task force consists of about twelve individuals, faculty, staff and students, representing various aspects of the NIU campus. Meetings are held every two weeks and are open to faculty, staff and students. Minutes of the task force meetings are posted on the NIU strategic planning webpage.

He went on to say that the Curricular Innovations Task Force identified six issues that were important to the institution. From those six issues, four preliminary overarching goals were developed, each with strategies connecting back to the four strategic imperatives. Of the overarching goals developed, two deal with student successes. The first goal deals with increasing student retention and academic success at NIU; the second focuses on a positive climate at NIU. Goal three focuses on maintaining a high quality of learning for students, and goal four focuses on improving and maintaining a high quality of teaching effectiveness among faculty and staff at NIU.

He emphasized that the task forces will rely on input from CUAE and other committees in efforts to identify key actions and a timeline as to where the institution would like to see itself, both short term and long term, five, ten or fifteen years from now. He said that approximately 300 concept papers were submitted and have been reviewed by the Council of Deans and the Provost’s Office. The concept papers are now being reviewed by subcommittees such as the two task forces using thematic conversations.

With reference to the last strategy under Goal #2, “provide and enforce review procedures that hold faculty and staff accountable for delivering student-centered services,” T. Bough asked what the task force had in mind to help encourage the faculty to be student focused. D. Changnon explained that this originated with the Student Success side and relates to student advising. He said that individuals who are involved with advising need to be fully integrated into the process and understand the mechanism and what has to happen for students to be successful.
M. Lenczewski said that each one of the strategies has specific goals associated with it, and the task force is looking at other institutions for benchmarks in efforts to establish concrete ideas to facilitate these strategies. She added that best practices across campus are also being looked at to see what is being done and what is and is not successful.

C. T. Lin asked for some examples of suggested actions that might be taken that would clearly show that a change or difference is taking place. D. Changnon responded that one example might be, in order to be accountable in the classroom, looking at policy and teaching effectiveness and how faculty members are evaluated.

C. T. Lin also asked about the meaning of redefining the general education program as stated in goal number three. E. Seaver replied that currently our general education goals essentially are not measurable, and a plan to redesign the general education program is being worked on. He said that a team has been formed that has prepared proposal documents to attend a general education workshop in the spring. He said redefining the program will entail looking at the goals of general education, such as what students should do, what students should know, how students should act, all of which should come as a result of exposure to general education. He said that redefining the program will take place regardless of whether it is initiated through the strategic planning process; this has been a topic of discussion by the General Education Committee.

D. Changnon noted that the next steps will be to create specific plans of action in order to clarify how the strategic initiatives will be accomplished. He said that it is hoped that the concept papers submitted in conjunction with the strategic planning process will help with formulating those plans.

E. Seaver commented that it is important to remember that there are lots of other areas, other than the classroom experience, that help make students successful. Students are here for the whole experience, not only for classes, and there are a lot of factors outside the classroom that are addressed here related to making this an experience that will have a positive impact on them. He said that there have been some discussions about more than just what can be done to make students successful in the classroom, especially in conjunction with retention efforts.

M. Lenczewski said she will be able to update CUAE at the next meeting as to the direction the task forces will be taking and what the more specific goals are.

B. **New Student Information System Overview**
Brian Brim, Project Manager, NIU Connect, provided the group with an overview of the new system information system. He explained that the current legacy student system has been in place since the 1970’s. The new student information system project began about two years ago to replace the legacy system for Registration and Records, Financial Aid, Bursar’s Office, and Admissions processing with an integrated system that is web-based. He said that the first obstacle encountered was to determine a means to maintain standardization, and it was determined that the catalog was the best medium for that purpose. It was also important that the new system not require constant modifications which would result in expensive upgrades.

He said that in September 2007, the processing of applications for 2008-2009 began under the new system. He noted that, even though there were a few trouble areas, things have moved along very well. He said that the next production phase will be the scheduling of classes and advising, followed by enrollment for fall 2008, which will begin on April 7th. He noted that enrollment for summer 2008 classes will still be done through the legacy system, and enrollment for fall 2008 will be accomplished through the new system.

He said the new system has been equipped with two new separate tools, one of which is the application recruiting tool, Hobson’s, which has been running since June 2007, to recruit students. The second tool, which is in the process of being created, is the Data Warehouse, an analytic tool, that can be used to easily retract data from the student information system as it is needed to help make operational decisions related to enrollment, retention, etc.

Training of users for class scheduling is underway, with advisor training scheduled for March. He noted that, in order to schedule appropriate training sessions, requests were sent out to all college offices to ask for specifics on functions and to identify those individuals within the colleges who handle those specific functions. He added that some functions, such as grade entering, won’t be used until later this coming fall, so training for those functions will be scheduled as the need for that training gets closer.

C. T. Lin asked about the “friendliness” of the new system. B. Brim responded that the new system is user and student friendly. He said that since the system is web-based, so it can be accessed from any location, which will be convenient for faculty entering grades, etc. He also noted that once a change is made to a student’s information, it will immediately be reflected in all areas of the system at once so that a change will only have to be made once.
T. Griffin asked, with regard to electronic approval signatures being used in the new system, about the capability for a student to steal a password. Brian Brim said that even if a student did steal another person’s password, the student would also have to know who has the signature authority, etc. As the university system of accounts will be used, an account whose password may have been comprised can be immediately disabled or shut off in the entire system by means of the account owner making one phone call. In addition, the ability to track account transactions is built into the new system so any transaction connected with a specific account can be audited.

E. Seaver recommended that faculty members visit the “MyNIU” self-service link on the admissions webpage and enter as a prospective student to view what a that student sees. He said there is a student profile with questions to answer from which a communication to the student is generated. The system has the capability to communicate with all students with a common information area or to communicate a reminder to a student who is missing a portion of their application. Faculty will also have the opportunity to see their courses fill as students enroll.

Brian Brim said that the ITS Help Desk is being trained to answer questions and assist with problems related to the new student information system, and next year will be a time to reassess and see what needs to be changed.

C. Technology for Students

E. Seaver informed the committee that a change is being made in the way in which the university communicates electronically with students. He reported that discussions related to this have been in progress across campus to communicate that, starting with the summer term, students will not be able to forward their ZID email to alternate electronic mailboxes. He said that the ZID email system will become the university’s official avenue for communicating electronically with students, and the forwarding ability will be turned off at the end of the spring semester. The most important reason for this is that there are no guarantees that students are receiving the information sent to them from the university, and when email is automatically forwarded, there is no way to track it to confirm that students are receiving information. He said that the university is in the process of having discussions with students and student leadership to explain and clarify the reasons why the university thinks this is a good move. He pointed out that there have been multiple cases where students have missed out on such things as financial aid awards, etc., because of email forwarding that did not get forwarded. He also pointed out that this was an academic decision and not a decision made by Information Technology.
Services (ITS). He noted that this issue is also being looked at with regard to faculty email. Enhancements of the student email system, such as larger mailbox capability and storage, are also being investigated.

Cindy Phillips, Director, NIUTEL Telecommunications, distributed copies of an informational handbook, Everything Technology, that ITS, in collaboration with Housing and Dining, provides for students both in printed format and online and offered to answer any questions.

M. Lenczewski asked if there had been any suggestion of moving toward using the GroupWise email system or a similar package for student email. She said that she has had students comment positively about GroupWise. C. Phillips answered that the GroupWise package is actually a collaboration/scheduling application, and it has many features that are meant for business rather than for personal and student email. She said the GroupWise option had been looked at, but it was decided that a collaboration/scheduling business application was not a suitable situation for student email. She said that there are also some differences in cost for providing modules that students would never use. E. Seaver said that in discussions with ITS, enhancements, such as more memory, are possible options, and additional server space is being purchased.

T. Griffin indicated that he has had both parents and students ask about what issues of risk are involved on the student’s part if using certain networking websites such as face book and my space. He said he could not find any information in the distributed technology document and asked if there was somewhere online that he could refer students and parents that want to know more about what is and what is not appropriate to post on such sites and what risks they might be taking by doing so. C. Phillips responded that she would have to do some research on this, but she said that if she could find a good website that parents could use as a resource and be pointed to, she would have that information included in the next version of the student technology handbook and also forward it to him.

C. Phillips said that everyone would like the NIU campus to be an entirely wireless network, however, most campuses that have wireless networks have a central source of funding to support the costs. She explained that NIU’s technology networks are sales and service which means that NIU provides the service but only if someone buys it from them. She said the wireless coverage on campus is indicative of that because there is not complete coverage; the coverage is only available if a department or unit has decided that they want it – referred to as pockets of coverage. The areas of campus that are wireless are noted in the technology handbook and include Barsema Hall, Convocation Center, residence hall common spaces, dining hall and public areas, as well as Holmes Student Center common
areas. She said that the process of placing wireless access on the residence hall floors is underway. She added that one point mentioned by the strategic planning committee was that the students wanted wireless access wherever they go. She said that if this was viewed as a high priority in moving forward in conjunction with strategic planning projects, ITS would support the project. She added that ITS has written a funding proposal for supporting this project. She emphasized that, as the demand for wireless access increases, the university will need to look more closely at ways in which to centrally provide for wireless access.

D. Pender asked if guests on campus have access to wireless connection or if it is only specifically for NIU faculty and staff use. C. Phillips answered that ITS has just recently begun working on an avenue for open/guest access for the facilities that service large number of guests to allow guests onto the NIU network through a segmented access application. This segmented access does not allow guests access to any of the paths that would allow them to access administrative systems or NIU network file storage. She commented that open access proposes many security issues.

C. Phillips said that there are several software packages available to students. Students are eligible to purchase the Microsoft Student Select program where they can buy Microsoft products for a discount through the University Bookstore online. Also, all Provost sponsored labs that ITS manages are equipped with many software packages that students can use just by going into the lab. Department labs have academic specific application software. ITS purchases McAfee anti-virus software that is available for free to all NIU students whether they reside in a residence hall or off campus. The anti-virus program is available for download on the ITS webpage.

C. Phillips suggested that committee members should let ITS know if there is something they feel students need to know that has not been covered in the collaboration handbook between House and Dining and ITS. ITS would welcome any input on the content of the document. She said that it has also been suggested that a faculty/staff handbook be developed.

D. Pender commented that she felt it might be helpful to include a page/pages to the handbook that would concentrate on discussion board etiquette. C. Phillips replied that an email etiquette page is included on the webpage, and she agreed that a page on discussion board etiquette would be helpful. E. Seaver said he felt that this would be an important addition as students, especially freshmen, need to be made aware that it is important to think about what kinds of things they are posting on discussion boards as these sites, if they are open sites, may be viewed in the future by students’ future graduate schools, future employers, etc.
C. Phillips reported that the university has encountered some illegal file sharing issues and seems to have been a target of the RIAA. She reported that the university has had a healthy share of pre-litigation requests of our students, and some litigation has actually gone to the full court system on possession of copyrighted material that was not paid for, mostly in the realm of downloading of music. She said that approximately four years ago, NIU was approached by a couple of graduate students from MIT who said that they might have a solution to help mitigate some of the problems with illegal file sharing. The university is now affiliated with this group, called RUCKUS, and they actually have provided an application that allows an individual to legally download music, movies, and music videos, and it has worked out very well. They originally charged a semester fee for unlimited music downloads, and they have since gone to an advertisement paid format so that students can now download the music for free. The downloads have to be on the PC that they are downloading to, and it has to be connected to the NIU network. They can also pay for downloads for a portable music device for $20.00 per semester. Students and parents have found RUCKUS to be a viable alternative, and approximately 8,000 students now have RUCKUS accounts.

C. Phillips encouraged committee members to forward any suggestions and/or recommendations for the technology handbook to her.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:03 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 18, 2008, at 2:00 p.m. in Altgeld Hall 225.

Respectfully submitted,
Mollie Montgomery
Recording Secretary