Northern Illinois University

COMMITTEE ON THE UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

133rd Meeting
Tuesday, March 8, 2011
Neptune Central Residence Hall – Northeast Meeting Room

MINUTES

Approved

Present: T. Bough (VPA), C. Carger (EDU/Substitute for M. Koss), D. Changnon (Ex Officio, Acting Associate Vice Provost), G. Chen (EET), W. Johnson (LIB), M. Koren (HHS), D. Lotshaw (LAS), D. Sinason (BUS/Substitute for C. Downing), M. Stang (Ex Officio, Student Housing Services)

Absent: J. Brunson (Ex Officio, Student Affairs), A. Dreessen (Ex Officio, Student Involvement and Leadership Development), P. Hastings (Student/LAS), E. Hoffman (Student/EET), A. Phillips (Student/Student Association), G. Schlabach (EDU/UCC Rep)

Guests: Jeff Daurer, Director, Capital Budget and Space Planning

T. Griffin, Ombudsman

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by D. Lotshaw, seconded by D. Sinason, to adopt the agenda. The motion carried.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the February 8, 2011, will be distributed and approved electronically.

III. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business, however, Griffin asked about the status of the spirituality document that was approved at the November CUAE meeting and received by UCC at its March 3, 2011, meeting. He asked if CUAE should follow up with UCC to ask them for a response to the request. Bough asked what kind of response would be requested, and Griffin deferred to Changnon. Changnon answered that he wasn’t clear on what kind of response would be requested. He explained that UCC typically receives the approved standing committee minutes. Unless UCC views something that the committee feels
needs further clarification or research, acceptance of those minutes is recorded in the UCC minutes which, once approved, are forwarded to University Council. Changnon also pointed out that, since UCC has accepted the CUAE minutes, he wasn’t sure that there would be any response. He added that, if discussion develops, feedback would certainly be shared with CUAE through Gretchen Schlabach, the CUAE representative on UCC. Griffin pointed out that there had been much time spent writing the recommendation, and he would prefer to see it not be neglected.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Residence Hall Tour

Mike Stang, Executive Director of Housing and Dining, escorted the committee on a tour of the Neptune Residence Halls. The tour also included a brief walk-through of the housing and dining bakery facility where a member of the bakery staff provided an overview of the bakery operations. In a follow-up discussion with committee members, Stang answered questions pertaining to room amenities, occupancy numbers, labs and tutoring centers, dining options, as well as future plans for renovation and new construction.

Bough shared that last year, after the committee’s previous tour of several residence halls, it was pointed out that Neptune Central has developed a very successful student culture in which students honor and respect each other thus creating a good community atmosphere. Stang added that the living/learning communities are conducive to this as these students have a lot in common which helps to build this kind of environment. He said students are eager to have places to gather, particularly with regard to gathering spaces for smaller groups.

Chen asked about the heating and ventilation system in the residence halls. Stang explained that the heating and cooling system is a forced water system in which hot and cold water is circulated through heating pipes. With this type of system it is difficult to maintain consistent temperatures throughout the building. Jeff Daurer added that the spring is a difficult time for heating and cooling as the outside temperature can elevate or drop drastically from day to day. The heating systems in these buildings are large, and as the buildings are older, they are not well insulated; thus, as a result, it does take some time to reach a particular temperature. He said the heating or air conditioning system is either on or off, and rooms are not equipped with individual thermostats, so, temperatures fluctuate from room to room.

Chen also asked how often the fire alarms are tested each semester. Daurer said that the fire alarms are tested annually. Stang added that drills for students are carried out each semester to instruct and demonstrate the procedures to be used for evacuation.

B. Campus Facilities Improvements Update

Jeff Daurer provided the committee with an update on campus facilities improvements and construction projects scheduled for the upcoming months. Daurer said that
planning is currently underway for significant work on residence halls. Work is about to begin on a third party public/private project residence hall, which has not yet named. The residence hall will consist of two five-story buildings with a community center building connecting the two. This new facility will be a 1000-bed facility specifically for first-year freshmen and will be built in the location of the current married student housing building. Demolition of the existing building currently on the site, as well as the parking lot, is scheduled to begin in April, and approximately three weeks after the demolition is complete construction will begin on the next residence hall. Completion date is set for August 2012.

Daurer described that the inside design of the new residence hall will be a set up of forty “clusters” or pods with twelve students housed in each cluster. Each cluster will have a living room/social area, a kitchenette, and six bedrooms, each with its own bathroom. Each bedroom will house two students. An adjoining CA will be located in the middle of each set of two clusters. A 500-seat dining area will be located in the community center located between the two buildings. The dining area will be designed as a food court concept rather than the traditional cafeteria model. Also located in the community center will be workout facilities, a large recreation room with a fireplace, gaming stations, and the central office area. No computer labs are planned for the residence hall as everything in all of the buildings will be equipped with WiFi.

Bough asked if the on-campus student population was expected to increase in order to fill the new residence hall. Stang answered that is possible, but the current plan is to close the south side of Grant when the new facility opens, with the anticipation that the south side of Grant will eventually be renovated. Stang also said that residence hall fees vary, but the new building will be the most costly for students.

Daurer went on to report that the Grant C residence tower has been under renovation and will be back in operation for the fall 2011. The tower will now house thirty-four students per floor, rather than the fifty previously accommodated on each floor. The building also will now be completely WiFi and provided with new furniture. The bathroom configurations will be set up so that there is more privacy. He added that Grant D tower will then be closed for renovation with expected completion for fall 2013. The central corridor and middle core dining area will then be upgraded by fall 2014.

Other upcoming improvement projects scheduled include the following:

1) Stevenson Towers – sprinkler retrofits – summers of 2011 and 2012

2) Gilbert Hall – in design stage to convert to 294-bed residence hall - currently hiring architect – will be bid in fall 2011 – expected opening fall 2013. Stang noted that the current thinking is that this residence hall will be designated for juniors and seniors only.

3) Intramural fields west of Stevenson Towers – architect selection underway – included will be turf fields, lighting, rest rooms, walking track – activities will include lacrosse, rugby, football, soccer, baseball - from Auxiliary Facilities Services (AFS) bond sale – funds can only be used bond facilities
4) Holmes Student Center – included will be updates to book store (AFS Funds)

5) Roadwork and walking paths on central and west campus (AFS Funds)

6) Parking Lots – between seven and nine parking lots will be upgraded over the next three summers (AFS Funds)

7) Campus electrical infrastructure improvements – the first of four phases to replace significant quantities of underground utility loop, transformers, and the replacement of four of five substations – the hope is to also improve aesthetic appearance of some of the substations - later phases scheduled every two years after (AFS Funds)

8) Performance Contracting – used to replace systems that are old and use too much energy – University hires company that specializes in recovering their fees from the anticipated cost savings - improvements such as replacement of motion activated light switches, insulated steam pipes, etc. – no up front cost to university, university realizes significant energy cost savings – cost savings have to be realized before contractor gets paid

9) Cole Hall – completed demolition, ready to replace floor in one auditorium that will be reopened, other auditorium will house Anthropology Museum and a computer lab – reopening planned for fall 2011

10) Stevens Building – currently in design process

11) East Chiller Plant – now fully operational

12) Capital renewal funding in 2010 was used for roof replacements on nine buildings

Carger asked if there were any plans to remove asbestos from any campus buildings, in particular Graham and Gabel Halls. She indicated she is concerned for herself, our students, and the small children that are in the nursery there. Daurer noted that this is certainly a matter of concern. He said that the environmental health and safety department does make sure that maintenance occurs in areas where there is asbestos on campus. It is regularly maintained so that it is not able to be pried up and is not causing problems for our students or children that are in the building.

Sinason pointed out that when the east chiller plant was built, there was a loss of an estimated 50-60 parking spaces. Individuals who formerly parked in the area where the new plant was built have now moved to other lots causing there to be less parking spaces in other lots. He asked if there was any plan to put in additional parking on that side of campus, specifically for faculty. He said that at certain times it becomes very difficult to find parking. Daurer responded that there are certain days/times when it is more difficult to find parking. He said that the university has had professional parking
studies done, and it is known when and where the parking issues arise. The parking study, however, has shown that there is a surplus of parking on 80% of this campus. Daurer added that there is a plan to make some additions in the section of campus noted by Sinason. The plan will include making some additions for commuter students and most likely for faculty, as well.

Griffin asked if there were any considerations for developing some wind-generated energy on campus. Daurer responded that the university has considered that possibility, however, the university's location is not favorable, and it is quite costly. Daurer pointed out that these things must be thought through in order to find the best way to take advantage of green opportunities. He said that one of the best green ways the university saves energy is by insulating its buildings and replacing windows.

A brief discussion followed, and Daurer addressed questions from committee members.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 12, 2011, at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mollie Montgomery