Northern Illinois University  
COMMITTEE ON THE UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT  
129th Meeting  
Tuesday, September 14, 2010  
Altgeld Hall 225  

MINUTES  
Approved  

Present: T. Bough (VPA), J. Brunson (Ex Officio, Student Affairs), D. Changnon (Ex Officio, Acting Associate Vice Provost), G. Chen (EET), C. Downing (BUS), A. Dreessen (Ex Officio, Student Involvement and Leadership Development), W. Johnson (LIB), M. Koren (HHS), M. Koss (EDU), D. Lotshaw (LAS), G. Schlabach (EDU/UCC Rep), E. Seaver (Ex Officio, Vice Provost), M. Stang (Ex Officio, Student Housing Services)  

Guests: T. Griffin, Ombudsman  

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA  

A motion was made by W. Johnson, seconded by M. Koss, to adopt the agenda. The motion passed.  

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS  

A. Introductions  

Committee members introduced themselves and indicated which college and/or department they represented.  

B. Approval of Minutes  

A motion was made by G. Schlabach, seconded by C. Downing, to approve the April 13, 2010, minutes of the Committee on the Undergraduate Academic Environment meeting. The motion passed.  

C. Introduction of Acting Associate Vice Provost  

E. Seaver announced that, due to some re-organization within the Provost’s Office, he will be taking over the strategic planning responsibilities previously held by Harold Kafer, who recently retired. Seaver introduced David Changnon, newly appointed Acting Associate Vice Provost. Seaver informed the group that Dr. Changnon will be assisting him with numerous duties and will have chair responsibilities for all of the UCC standing committees.  

III. OLD BUSINESS  

A. Residence Hall Recommendation Update
As follow up to the committee’s residence hall tour and discussion at the March meeting, T. Bough reported that a memorandum expressing the support of the CUAE committee for prioritizing the renovation of the residence halls has been prepared under his signature and will be forwarded to the appropriate offices within the next few days. For the benefit of new committee members, a short overview discussion of the committee’s March meeting discussion was held to provide background and rationale for the committee’s decision to develop and submit the residence hall recommendation.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. CUAE 2009-2010 Annual Report

T. Bough explained that the CUAE Annual Report provides an overview of the committee’s work during the 2009-2010 academic year. The report is incorporated into the annual report of the Undergraduate Coordinating Council which is submitted to the University Council at the end of each academic year.

B. Review of CUAE Agenda Topics and Schedule for 2010-2011

T. Bough reviewed with committee members the CUAE agenda and discussion topics for 2010-2011 which were tentatively established at the committee’s last meeting in April 2010. He encouraged committee members to feel free to request specific topics and/or other suggestions for guest speakers.

C. Review and Approval of USOAR Guidelines

E. Seaver provided a brief overview of the guidelines and brochure for the 2010-2011 Undergraduate Special Opportunities in Artistry and Research project. He noted that there have been no changes, other than clarification language, in the guidelines from last year. He noted, however, that in the upcoming spring semester, there will be some proposed changes brought forward for the committee to review. He also announced that the newly hired Coordinator for Engaged Learning, Julia Spears, will be now be overseeing the USOAR program as well as another new undergraduate research program, Research Rookies.

G. Chen asked if there was a means in place to measure the long term success of this program. E. Seaver responded that, although no systemic means of assessment or identifying success of this program has been put in place, the awarding of all of the funding has never been an issue with this program. He said that the hope is that the existence of this program as a high-end engaged learning activity will assist the university in recruiting academically talented students. G. Chen suggested that a multiple-year assessment that would measure input and output leading to greater research programs in the future might be one way to measure success.

G. Schlabach made a motion, seconded by M. Koren, to approve the Undergraduate Special Opportunities in Artistry and Research Guidelines for 2010-2011. The motion carried.
D. Ombudsman’s Report

T. Griffin distributed an informational pamphlet that provided an overview of the services provided by the Office of the Ombudsman. He emphasized that the Office of the Ombudsman offers neutral, confidential assistance to all members of the NIU community. During 2009-2010, 1,100 individuals, of whom approximately 700 were undergraduate students, contacted the office of the Ombudsman.

Griffin provided a comparison of NIU undergraduate issues with other similar institutions of higher education. He noted that at NIU increases are being seen in the number of concerns related to issues of student misbehavior and judicial affairs, the behavior and professionalism of staff, and student academic probation/dismissal.

Discussion followed centering on the “campus climate” issue and faculty and student codes of conduct. E. Seaver commented that there is a need for a culture across the campus to be student centered. He added that the recommendation to have a student-centered campus climate has evolved out of the retention subcommittee of the strategic planning enrollment management committee. Seaver pointed out that there are some areas of campus that have tried to work on creating more student-centered environments within their particular offices. He added that it might be possible to bring in a guest speaker from one of these areas to provide an overview of the particular things that have worked and those that have not.

T. Bough suggested that this topic be further discussed either in conjunction with the Foundations of Excellence® presentation in October or continued at the November meeting. He proposed an ongoing discussion of all aspects of the teaching equation – professionalism, professional expectations, courtesy, honesty, integrity, mutual respect – from both the faculty and student sides. He asked committee members to begin brainstorming about what it would look like to create a faculty equivalent for the classroom application of the Multi-Cultural Transformation Institute. He proposed the possibility that this might be a two-day version of the application to the academic classroom for teaching faculty. Guest speakers could be faculty experts who would address peer mentoring in the classroom and teach faculty how to teach.

M. Koren suggested that the committee ask Faculty Development to recommend a professional who could address this topic and speak to CUAE. Seaver recommended that Murali Krishnamurthi, Director, Faculty Development and Instructional Design, be invited as guest speaker to address this topic with the committee.

D. Changnon shared that the Provost’s Office has been considering the idea of requiring two workshops for first-year faculty to be offered in coordination with Faculty Development. The proposed workshops would center on effective teaching and learning, would include panel discussions, and would be mandatory for first-year faculty.

G. Schlabach added that she believes it would be beneficial to have some important principles and/or values identified that NIU wants its students to embrace. E. Seaver
reminded the group of the fact that there is a Northern Pact. He suggested that a representative of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management be invited to speak to CUAE about the Northern Pact as it has not been widely discussed in the academic community.

T. Griffin recommended that, in moving ahead with further discussion related to this topic, "Community Standards" be developed that would apply to everyone rather than having separate student and faculty codes of conduct.

T. Bough asked that committee members think about and identify a couple of specific items relating to this discussion that could be discussed and/or proposed and result in an impact on the campus climate in the next nine to twelve months.

E. Selection of CUAE Representative to Serve on the Affirmative Action and Diversity Resources Committee

T. Bough asked for a volunteer to serve as the CUAE representative to the Affirmative Action and Diversity Resources Committee (AADR) for 2010-2011. W. Johnson, who currently has been serving in this capacity, volunteered to serve for the fall 2010 semester. M. Koss expressed interest in serving for the spring 2011 semester. Koss will check her spring teaching schedule to make sure there will not be a conflict with the committee meeting time. Confirmation of a representative will be confirmed prior to the spring 2011.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:47 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 12, 2010, at 2:00 p.m., in Altgeld Hall 225.

Respectfully submitted,
Mollie Montgomery