Northern Illinois University

COMMITTEE ON THE UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

140th Meeting
Tuesday, April 10, 2012
Altgeld Hall 225

MINUTES

APPROVED

Present: A. Birberick (Ex Officio, Vice Provost), K. Bak (Student Association, K, Chung (HHS), W. Johnson (LIB), R. Layfield (Campus Activities Board), M. Manderino (EDU), G. Schlabach (EDU/UCC Rep), D. Sinason (BUS), M. Stang (Ex Officio, Student Housing Services), B. Wardell (VPA), J

Absent: J. Camery (Student/EDU), G. Chen (EET), J. Jones (Ex officio, Associate Vice President, Student Affairs), M. Mehrer (LAS), J. Zambito (Ex Officio, Student Involvement and Leadership Development)

Guests: T. Griffin, Ombudsman, Julia Spears, Coordinator of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Sinason suggested amending the agenda to move the presentation by Julia Spears, Coordinator of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning to the beginning of the meeting. Schlabach made a motion to accept the agenda as amended, seconded by K. Bak. The motion carried.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Approval of Minutes

W. Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by G. Schlabach. Motion passed.

B. Presentation – Update on USOAR Guidelines for 2012-2013, Julia Spears

After coming to the committee last year to introduce a two time a year submission process for the Undergraduate Special Opportunities in Artistry and Research program, Julia Spears returned to report on the results of the new process. The fall submission deadline was October. The colleges reviewed and ranked their proposals and then the university selection committee made final decisions in November. Students were notified of the USOAR awards in December. In the fall, twenty-two projects were funded involving thirty-three students that represented all the undergraduate colleges. The application process was opened up again in January. Deadline for submission was the first week of February. Five projects were funded the second round. Seven students were involved. The College of Education was the only college not funded in the second round only because no proposals from that area were submitted.
Julia pointed out the large discrepancy in the number of awards between the fall and spring. She attributed the difference being the first year for the two-time submission and a late start in the fall. She also indicated the numbers showed the growing interest in this type of program. Despite the large interest the funds available for distribution remain at $50,000.

Julia indicated that for the upcoming year she recommends the two time submission process continue but suggests that all the deadline dates be published at the same time.

Schlabach asked if students whose proposals don’t make the rankings out of the college are they likely to also submit the information for Undergraduate Research & Artistry Day or do they get frustrated and give up. Julia indicated she was did not keep that information. She did say that they are intentional in their invitation to any student who has done a capstone project, is working with Honors, has done URAP, USOAR or has participated in any other program that is geared toward undergraduate research or artistry. She mentioned from the fall to spring they did have three resubmissions that showed significant improvement.

Julia encouraged the committee to continue with the two-time submission process. Griffin asked about feedback concerning the amount of time needed at the college level for the process occurring twice. Julia indicated that they didn’t receive a lot of feedback. She stated that if the program is going to continue with the two time submission the information will be disseminated earlier and allow for better plan, etc. She also indicated that they are seeing more student projects supported with university dollars representing a larger diversity of colleges/departments than they have in the past; which she views as a good thing.

Sinason asked how the information is disseminated to students. Julia said the information is sent out several ways. Information is sent to any individual that served as a mentor in the past, all the department chairs, deans and mass email to students. Julia indicated she thought that some student self-select out of the process. Sinason suggested in courses where all students are funneled through – having instructors take 5 minutes to make an announcement – that would aid in the dissemination of the material. Sinason suggested that when students receive so many emails the tendency is to scan and delete. Julia also said flyers are created and sent out. Chung asked if it is possible to have a website with all the research opportunities in the university. Chung said it would be good to include data on how many apply and receive funding. Julia indicated OSEEL.niu.edu has this information on it. The application information is included. They also try to showcase different students and their projects and the website contains blogs and other items. Chung suggested adding the research opportunities to the main university website would be another way to get the information out. It was suggested that perhaps a link could be added for student research opportunities.

Julia indicated that there has been more information in the last year than has been seen in the past. The Northern Star – there are Research Rookies, this program, USOAR, URAP, etc. and a new opportunity called Undergraduate Research Assistantships which will allow students to be paid, $10/hr for 10 hrs/wk to work with a faculty mentor on a research project either fall, spring or summer. Those positions will be announced at the end of the month.

Julia spoke about the Undergraduate Research & Artistry day, April 24. She said about 245 students participating this year – there are about 168 posters. Bak asked how many outside people will be attending the event. Although Julia wasn’t sure how many would come through – she wants to encourage all NIU students to go through the event in hopes of
III. **OLD BUSINESS**

Sinason reviewed the five meeting topics that had been discussed at the last meeting.

1. The spiritual environment for the undergraduate – outside of the classroom. What can be done talking to the campus ministry group.
2. Having Denise Hayman, Director of CHANCE; speak about the program, which will be celebrating their 45th anniversary as well as their receipt of an NSF grant for underrepresented groups going into STEM fields.
3. Universal design, Greg Long, chair, PCPD.
4. Esprit de corps
5. visit to the new dorm

Sinason asked if anyone had any additional topics. Birberick suggested general education as a topic since a General Education Coordinator is in the process of being hired and she thought the committee may be interested in the work of that person. She indicated it would be an opportunity for input and sharing information to committee members respective areas.

Campus wide technology as a topic was also suggested. Having someone from ITS and obtaining information both from the faculty and student aspect.

The issue of faculty respect on the student evaluation was revisited by Sinason. He handed out materials provided by Charles Downing. Downing brought this material to the subcommittee he is on and they have approved it. Sinason pointed out the highlighted area on the third page. These materials will be going to University Council’s next meeting which is tomorrow (4/11). Griffin clarified that only the highlighted material contains change, the rest of the information is current.

IV. **NEW BUSINESS**

Sinason moved on to the overview of the current years activities. Birberick spoke about the diverse topics handled by the committee this year. She mentioned the topics ranging from the student environment; talking about changes in orientation, brought Chief Grady in who talked about safety on campus. Issues that were dear to the committee were revisited such as spirituality and the language issue and there is something on paper that is going to be put forward on one of those issues. Time was also spent talking about what kind of role this committee was going to have besides being the recipient of information. The committee is still struggling with that and establishing an action plan, small or large. Sinason said that looking at the list of topics for next year, the committee could find opportunities for actions to be taken.

After a brief discussion, Sinason moved without objection that selection of the committee chair will be held at the first meeting of the committee in the fall.
V. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Schlabach at 2:40 p.m., seconded by Chung. **Motion carried.**

*Respectfully submitted,*
Jeanne Ratfield