Northern Illinois University

COMMITTEE ON THE UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

141st Meeting
Tuesday, September 11, 2012
Altgeld Hall 225

MINUTES

APPROVED

Present: A. Birberick (Ex Officio, Vice Provost), T. Bough (VPA), G. Chen (EET), D. Cho (Student/SA Rep), K. Chung (HHS), J. Jones (Ex Officio, Associate Vice President, Student Affairs), V. Krishnan Palghat (BUS), M. Lilly (UCC Rep), W. Pitney (EDUC), M. Stang (Ex Officio, Student Housing Services), J. Zambito (Ex Officio, Student Involvement and Leadership Development)

Absent: W. Johnson (LIB), R. Layfield (Student/Campus Activities Board), M. Mehrer (LAS)

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

T. Bough made a motion to accept the agenda, seconded by W. Pitney. Motion passed.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Birberick asked everyone to introduce themselves and indicate which area they represented.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. ELECTION OF FACULTY CHAIR

Birberick said the first order of business was the election of the Faculty chair. She directed the committee to refer to the membership list for those eligible to be chair. She asked for nominations. Chen nominated Bough, who declined. Birberick explained the duties of the chair. Pitney nominated himself. Elected by acclamation.

B. ACCEPTANCE OF CUAE 2011-2012 ANNUAL REPORT

Bough made a motion to accept the 2011-2012 CUAE Annual Report, seconded by Krishnan Palghat. Motion passed.
C. SELECTION OF CUAE REPRESENTATIVE TO SERVE ON THE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND DIVERSITY RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Bough nominated Wendell Johnson to continue to serve as the CUAE representative on the Affirmative Action and Diversity Resources committee, seconded by Lilly. **Motion passed.** Chair Pitney will email Johnson to inquiry whether he wishes to continue. If he does not, the issue will be brought up at the next meeting.

D. SCHEDULE FOR DISCUSSION TOPICS FOR 2012-2013

E. FOUNDATIONS OF EXCELLENCE

Birberick indicated that D and E roll in together. She said that last year there was discussion about what we want the meetings to look like, who we want to have come in and speak to us, and what the role of this committee could be. The members from last year wanted to do more than just sit and listen to reports. They wanted to have some kind of input. Birberick referred to the committee’s duties. There is a place for members of this committee to actually have input and to make recommendations.

Referring to the agenda, Birberick pointed out the ideas for meeting topics/speakers that the committee talked about at the last meeting the previous year. She added E – Foundations of Excellence and she indicated that the committee had been given a handout of the Executive Summary. She explained that Foundations of Excellence was a self-study that was done from 2008-2010. She indicated there is a full report. What it talked about was bringing all aspects of campus life together, the academic, the co-curricular, and the student affairs to create a first-year college experience that was meaningful for the students, faculty and all involved. The importance of first-year was essential for student success and student retention. One of the recommendations that came out of this group was to create a first-year advisory committee to work on issues, and to help coordinate and be involved with the first-year experience. Birberick pointed out that it fits into the duties of this committee - she pointed out duty A – promoting a campus atmosphere which will be maximally conducive to learning, etc. It fits also with some of the other duties listed. She thought this committee would be a good candidate to serve as the advisory committee based on its listed duties and the diversity of its membership. Birberick suggested bringing in Gip Seaver and Denise Rode to speak at the committee’s next meeting. She referred the committee to the Executive Summary, which shows what was done. It talks about practices and what students and faculty think works and what doesn’t work. Some of the issues have been addressed, while others have not. Birberick emphasized this could be the opportunity for this committee to give some input, do some shaping, and fill the need that members felt was missing.

Bough said that it sounded like a substantial addition to the duties of the committee. Birberick indicated that the committee’s duties would have to state the advisory role...
specifically. He urged caution in taking on a role that large but indicated he was willing to discuss it. He feels the committee’s other duties would get pushed out of the way if they took this on. He said it is a necessary and important role and something that needs to be done. Birberick said the advisory board would oversee the implementation of an action plan. Which is why she suggested having Seaver and Rode speak to the committee to clarify exactly what the role would be.

Bough indicated that, in his mind, one of the other duties of the committee, item D-to evaluate the impact of campus housing policies and facilities – might be of equal importance. He said he has seen the new dorm. It is fantastic, however the difference between the new dorm and the oldest facilities – the dichotomy is shocking. It would be interesting to go to the new dorm and then see what Mike and his team are doing with the housing facilities from the 60’s.

J. Jones indicated another approach would be to look at the current duties, look at which one isn’t being performed well or as well and focus on making improvement there. Birberick agreed, saying this is the opportunity to go back and revisit the function of this committee. Bough said the name of the committee is the Undergraduate Academic Environment – housing is intrinsically linked to the success of the kids – that is where they spend most of their time. One of the duties of the committee, as it stands right now, is to support that and be an advocate for even more change.

Bough supported the suggested topic of hearing from Denise Hayman/CHANCE saying that fits the duties of the committee. He suggested the committee do more of that. He mentioned in the past talking to the academic advising people – that program has changed significantly over the last 2 or 3 years, which is when they were last heard from. Let’s really take a look – let’s interview our own students. He said those types of things are mission critical to the whole university. He indicated that he doesn’t understand enough about whole first-year experience to effectively comment as an advisory board. Birberick did say that a lot of the suggestions from the report have already been implemented.

Birberick said she thought some of the committee’s time this semester should be used to figure out what this committee needs to be about as we move forward in the future. Do we sit down and rethink our duties? Do we want to be involved with Foundations of Excellence; and if so to what degree? Are there other things we want to be involved with?

Pitney asked if it was reasonable to have Denise and Gip come in and speak about this report and the first-year experience as an exercise in exploring some of the recommendations that were made, and see if any fit within the current duties or if anything resonates with the committee; not necessarily the whole advisory
component. Birberick said the committee might be able to recommend how an advisory board should look.

The committee discussed the schedule for the next few meetings.

October 9 – Residence hall tours (newest facility as well as an older facility)

November 13 – Foundations of Excellence with Gip Seaver and Denise Rode and Denise Hayman/CHANCE

At the suggestion of Jones, committee members agreed that the information presented by Seaver/Rode be structured in such a way that it can be aligned with the duties of the committee.

Birberick indicated that a group that she is involved with will want to present the National Survey Student Engagement (NSSE) results. They want to share where NIU fits when compared with some different groups (Great Lakes, Carnegie, etc.) in 2009 versus 2012.

February 12, 2013 - NSSE results and Committee duties discussion

Pitney asked about the other items from the list of topics – specifically the spiritual environment. Bough said that the committee spent a lot of time on that subject, involved many across campus, and took it to various other committees with no result. Bough indicated there was not a collective will for it on campus. Stang said it would be interesting if the NSSE data again shows that is an issue with the students. Bough said if that was the case then the committee should revisit the issue.

The items for the March and April meetings will be decided after the first of the year.

V. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Lilly, seconded by Bough. **Motion carried.**

*Respectfully submitted,*
Jeanne Ratfield