Northern Illinois University

COMMITTEE ON THE UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

142nd Meeting
Tuesday, October 9, 2012
Lincoln Residence Hall – Multi-purpose Room

MINUTES

APPROVED

Present: T. Bough (VPA), G. Chen (EET), D. Cho (Student/SA Rep), K. Chung (HHS), W. Johnson (LIB), V. Krishnan Palghat (BUS), M. Mehrer (LAS), W. Pitney (EDUC), M. Stang (Ex Officio, Student Housing Services),

Absent: A. Birberick (Ex Officio, Vice Provost), J. Jones (Ex Officio, Associate Vice President, Student Affairs), R. Layfield (Student/Campus Activities Board), M. Lilly (UCC Rep), J. Zambito (Ex Officio, Student Involvement and Leadership Development)

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

M. Mehrer made a motion to accept the agenda with the addition of two items under new business, seconded by T. Bough. Motion passed.

A report from Affirmative Action and Diversity Resources Committee representative, W. Johnson

M. Mehrer – email from Presidential Commission on the Status of Minorities member, Wei Luo

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

W. Johnson made a motion to accept the minutes from the September 11th meeting, seconded by D. Cho. Motion passed.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. REPORT FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE TO THE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND DIVERSITY RESOURCES COMMITTEE

W. Johnson reported that the Affirmative Action and Diversity Resources Committee has chosen disability access for its focus this year. He will make a report later in the year.
B. PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF MINORITIES REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

M. Mehrer reported that he was contacted by Wei Luo from the Presidential Commission on the Status of Minorities. The PCSM is requesting information pertaining to the composition of the university’s committees, specifically minority representation, to be compiled in a report for President Peters. It was decided that each member of this committee will be sent an email from the committee secretary asking to self-report based on the categories currently used by Human Resources.

C. TOUR OF RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

Michael Stang briefly outlined the housing materials he provided for committee members; these included the housing booklet sent to admitted students and other housing and dining information. Today’s tour would begin with Lincoln Hall, followed by Grant C tower (renovated last year) and ending at the new residential complex.

Stang spoke about the renovation projects that had recently been completed, as well as the ones that are currently in process. All the facilities had to be equipped with sprinkler systems prior to January 2013. With the addition of the new housing complex and the renovations, NIU offers a broader range of housing options for students. Other discussion topics during the tour included the accessibility issues regarding some of the older facilities; Lincoln is not accessible. The costs associated with renovations vs. demolition. The various improvements were evident throughout the tours of the facilities.

After the tour the group had a brief discussion. The committee expressed their concerns regarding the disparities in the three facilities that they visited today. Many asked how NIU compared with other universities. Stang indicated that NIU is comparable to other state universities. Private institutions are typically ahead of NIU due to them not relying on appropriations. He explained that the new facility helped NIU make progress. Also, because of the use of an outside company the building was able to be finished in a more timely fashion. Other topics included energy consumption among facilities and housing’s impact on learning outcomes. Stang also stated that changes made were a direct result of input from the students - what they wanted.

Bough emphasized that focusing on the issues, such as seen today, fit within the duties of this committee and that is why he was reluctant for the committee to take on other duties as presented at the last meeting. For the next meeting, Pitney will draft a document indicating the committee’s position on this particular subject to be forwarded to the appropriate parties.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne Ratfield