Northern Illinois University

COMMITTEE ON THE UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT
150th Meeting
Tuesday, March 18, 2014

MINUTES

UNAPPROVED

Present: T. Bough (VPA), K. Chung (HHS), K. Gasser (LAS), M. Kolb (Acting Associate Vice Provost for Vice Provost Birberick), C. Lin (UCC), V. Krishnan Palghat (BUS), W. Pitney (EDUC), M. Tucker (Ex-Officio, Student Affairs & Enrollment Management)

Absent: W. Johnson (LIB), R. Moore (Campus Activities Board-student rep), M. Stang (Ex Officio, Student Housing Services), J. Stevens (Student-LAS), J. Zambito (Ex Officio, Student Involvement and Leadership Development)

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

T. Bough made a motion to accept the agenda seconded by V. Palghat. The motion passed unanimously.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion by K. Gasser to approve the minutes from the February 11, 2014 CUAE meeting, seconded by V. Palghat with minor editorial updates in the last paragraph of page 2 and the middle of the first paragraph on page 3. Motion passed unanimously.

III. OLD BUSINESS

Kolb gave an update on what was happening in terms of UNIV 101. He, along with Vice Provost Birberick, Provost Lisa Freeman and Denise Rode met with President Baker and Ron Walters to discuss the role of UNIV. They are very interested in what the thoughts are in terms of UNIV’s role. They are interested in progressing relatively quickly. They are interested in some piloting of the new UNIV configuration this next fall. Ideally, the President would like to see all the UNIV courses revamped for next year.

Kolb said he brought in the ideas of the committee as far as whether or not UNIV should be mandatory. Kolb indicated the President was noncommittal but saw the value of both alternatives. Kolb also presented the idea of the involvement of more faculty in teaching UNIV. Kolb said the President didn’t voice a preference but Kolb tried to impress on him the importance of faculty involvement if there is going to be an academic component in UNIV. Kolb mentioned whether that be team teaching with an advisor or Denise’s model of the large lecture and break-out sections. The President is in favor of a greater academic
component in the course. Models need to be submitted to the President in a short time frame.

Discussion by committee members regarding the issue of whether the course should be mandatory was again brought up. What would happen if the first semester restriction was removed? The way the course is designed lends itself for the most benefit if taken in the first semester. Kolb shared Ron Walters’ experience as he met with students who had enrolled in UNIV 101. The students believed the course should not be mandatory while Walters thought it should be (prior to meeting with the students). Walters changed his mind after meeting with the students. Another related issue – that of the additional one hour of credit to a degree program – what course be taken away from programs to allow for the one hour of addition of UNIV 101? Kolb indicated that the current models from the PLUS task force show a reduction of general education credits (from current 41 to between 33- 37) which would allow for the addition of UNIV. Bough indicated he felt strongly that UNIV should not be mandatory. Kolb also indicated that Ron Walters approached students about linking the living communities with UNIV, which Ron felt strongly about – but the students did not agree that they should be linked. The students’ thoughts were that they spend so much time with that group already – it would be better for them to get out and meet more people.

Palghat asked what the strategic goal of CUAE in terms of UNIV. Is the desire is to make the course better known, perhaps by advertising, encouraging enrollment without making it mandatory? Gasser said that initially one of the objectives was to seek an increase in funding to get tenure-track faculty more involved in the process. Gasser added another point of the previous discussion was whether UNIV would be more college-centric or broad-based. Gasser pointed out what a VP&A student has to do is very different from what a VP&A student has to do.

Lin talked about an academic component as well as a leadership component. He stressed how important getting the administrators involved. It sends a certain message when the President of the university participates in such a program. It shows the students that we care about them and we think we have a good place here and want them to be a part of it. He suggested formulating the course content involving integration of components necessary for student success.

Kolb indicated that faculty input was very important to the process. Any direction this committee can decide in terms of focus, in terms of recommendations, he could take forward and it can be used in devising the revision of UNIV and the pilots. Whatever it is that you want to see happen. Those suggestions could then be incorporated into the pilots for the fall. Further discussion took place about the content of UNIV. Bough shared with the committee what he does with when he teaches as well as what he has observed from others. He pointed out that 60-70% of the incoming class is composed of first-generation college students and they need to know what it takes to survive. He introduces them to the writing center and career services and basically what to do and where to turn if they need help. Bough mentioned that
they had previously discussed expanding the course to 15 weeks - he indicated that is where the academic component could be added. Bough also asked if e-portfolio was still being discussed and Kolb indicated that it was. It isn’t known the amount of time that would entail. Kolb stated that if there is an outcome for that class, that it is academic, then you would want it standardized to some extent, ensuring that the content was delivered consistently.

The salary options from the last meeting were discussed. A rate of $5000 was one suggestion or one month’s salary like is done for teaching in the summer. The training and planning commitment were also discussed. It was suggested that an individual could be asked to teach more than one section. Lin also suggested giving faculty more input in regard to the content would be helpful. Gasser mentioned the 2 1/2 days of training - indicating that was a deterrent. And Bough indicated that because many of the instructors are not trained teachers - the training sessions are set-up the way they are. Perhaps a lesser training could be made available for tenured faculty. Lin indicated the use of retired faculty members, especially those who had been awarded Presidential Teaching Professorships. Lin said these individuals have expressed their willingness to help and they don’t really need the extra money so this may be an option to explore.

The recommendations included:

1) Making UNIV 101 an institutional priority and send a consistent message from university personnel to students of its value. The value of UNIV 101 includes, but is not limited to:
   a) aiding in the transition from high school or two-year institutions to our four-year university
   b) promoting awareness of institutional resources
   c) orienting students to the academic expectations in higher education
   d) creating a space to discuss issues of appropriate behaviors expected of students
   e) developing and strengthening transferable skills such as communication, critical thinking and how to utilize resources for academic success
2) Enhance faculty engagement in UNIV 101 courses. Potential strategies may include:
   a) increase the compensation for teaching a course to $5000 dollars or one month of salary
   b) decrease the duration of training
   c) incentivize the training by offering remuneration
   d) promote team teaching of courses to decrease the time commitment
3) Explore, in the same semester, implementing various UNIV 101 course models including, but not limited to:
   a) college specific course
   b) dual mode
   c) intensive
   d) traditional
4) Continue to offer UNIV 101 as an elective course; do not move to make this a required course at this time.
5) Examine whether having UNIV 101 offered at no cost to all first semester full-time students would aid in recruitment, retention, and academic success
6) Explore the development of a course similar to UNIV 101 to be offered during the second semester to students on academic and/or financial probation

IV. NEW BUSINESS

V. ADJOURNMENT

C. Lin made a motion to adjourn @ 3:36 p.m., seconded by T. Bough. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Ratfield