Northern Illinois University

**COMMITTEE ON THE UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT**

154th Meeting
Tuesday, February 10, 2015

**MINUTES**

**APPROVED**

Present:  T. Bough (VPA); Ed Klonoski (Acting Associate Vice Provost); D. Lonergan (ULIB); V. Krishnan Palghat (BUS); J. Stafstrom (UCC); M. Stang (Ex Officio, Student Housing Services); J. Zambito (Ex Officio, Student Involvement and Leadership Development)

Absent:  S. Barrett (HHS); M. Cravens (Student-LAS); S. Friedman (CAB representative); A. Martin (SA student representative); J. Stevens (Student-LAS); M. Tucker (Ex-Officio, Student Affairs & Enrollment Management)

I. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A motion was made by D. Lonergan to approve the agenda, seconded by V. Palghat. The **motion passed unanimously**.

II. **Approval of Minutes from November 11, 2014 meeting.**

V. Krishnan Palghat made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 14, 2014 meeting, seconded by D. Lonergan. **Motion passed unanimously.**

III. **OLD BUSINESS**

E. Klonoski said that UNIV 101 is in a different place than it was in November. He talked about how the members of APASC had a lot of good questions regarding making it mandatory and the new course content. He indicated that because the new content has not been completed, the proposal to make it mandatory was withdrawn. The new content is still being developed. In addition Klonoski mentioned that a meeting with Michael Day and some potential pairing of first year composition and peer advocate program with UNIV 101. He said that there will be some common core elements to UNIV 101 that would include ePortfolio, MAPWorks, the PLUS model, a common read, some other academic components, allowing some flexibility beyond those components. Klonoski said once the content is more defined he will bring the information back to this committee for feedback.

There was discussion about the increase in the number of sections needed if the course becomes mandatory. There are a sufficient number, around 80 during the fall - so additional sections will be needed in the spring semester. Currently recruitment of additional instructors is being done. Klonoski mentioned Vice Provost Birberick suggested that Presidential Teaching Professors as well as those nominated and selected for Excellence in
Undergraduate Teaching be contacted to serve as UNIV instructors. Based on information from the PTPs that taught - it is absolutely necessary for UNIV instructors to have experience teaching 18 year olds and feel comfortable with them. Klonoski added that there will be less reliance on the book - it will be more for reference because it contains a lot of very useful information. Klonoski also said that many models are being examined in the redesign of the course. Lonergan mentioned that he has heard very favorable comments about non-faculty members teaching the course. Both Bough and Klonoski agreed. As an evaluator of new instructors, Bough said he has witnessed this. Klonoski said the course evaluations supported that as well. Advisors scored particularly high according to Klonoski. There was discussion regarding whether or not adjunct faculty could teach UNIV 101. Zambito said they may not be familiar with campus - Klonoski added that could be included in the training. Lonergan asked about advanced graduate students teaching. Stafstrom asked if there were any institutional restrictions on who could teach. Klonoski indicated the only thing he was aware of was that undergraduates can't teach undergraduates. Stafstrom asked about sections in the residence halls. Stang said there are less held in the halls than before, but there is interest in teaching as well as room availability.

Bough asked the status of the committee's suggestion of a $500 stipend or a free credit hour for payment to Peer Instructors. Klonoski said as far as he knew that was still on the table. It was a budgeted item in the proposal. Zambito agreed that the peer instructors are a critical piece of the class. She said many times the students rely on the peer instructors for advice, etc. Bough emphasized that pay for the peer instructors is a high priority for the committee.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Klonoski presented information on the PLUS curriculum. The framework for the curriculum has moved through the GEC, certain components through APASC, and CUC; in addition the UCC accepted the minutes from those committees and the University Council accepted the UCC minutes.

The PLUS curriculum is composed of three large components: 1) the baccalaureate High Impact Practices, 2) four general education areas of study, and 3) PLUS thematic pathways (optional). Klonoski stated that one of the main comments received about the curriculum was that more writing was needed. This is being addressed in two ways: one in the general education component and one in the baccalaureate component. Two upper-division writing infused courses were proposed by the PLUS Task Force. These can either be in the major or within the general education. The suggestion was 3000-3500 word writing assignment - can be broken down into several smaller assignments or one large assignment. Currently there are several courses that meet the suggested threshold to be considered writing infused which includes that the writing component of the course be worth 1/3 of the grade. Klonoski indicated that the standards selected are similar to those used in writing across the curriculum programs from across the country. He said there will be an implementation team.
that will select the standards and R&R would code the courses as writing infused to enable tracking to ensure students meet those requirements.

There will be a First-year Experience component, which was already talked about (UNIV 101). The implementation of that will be moved to 2016 as the changes in the course are made.

Klonoski said that an Engaged Learning activities component is part of the High Impact Practices suggested. He talked about non-credit bearing activities that would allow for a transcript notation. The activities will be connected to the student learning outcomes and will include a reflective assignment in order to qualify. The Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning (OSEEL) will oversee determination of acceptable activities. This is another component still being developed but is based on AAC&U standards.

A career success course (UNIV 301) is another component Klonoski talked about. Like 101, this would be a one hour course. It can be offered in majors, meaning equivalent courses could be developed or approved to fulfill the requirement. UNIV 301 could be the catch-all for students whose majors don’t offer such a course. He said that this could be another touch point for ePortfolios. Since ePortfolios will be introduced in UNIV 101 - students will be urged to participate but ePortfolio will not be required. Klonoski said that the university is expanding the Blackboard platform to include an ePortfolio offering. He also indicated that the community colleges as well as other four-year institutions are working on ways that will enable students to bring their ePortfolios into NIU seamlessly.

Klonoski next talked about the four areas of study in general education are replacing our distributional studies and core competencies. The core offerings are being replaced by foundational studies, which have broader labels than previously (i.e., a math class is referred to as quantitative literacy). The core offerings will remain unchanged until Fall 2016 except for the English requirements. English 104 will be replaced by 203 A, B, C and D. He explained how the different 204 sections would focus on one of the three knowledge domains, except 203A will include all the knowledge domains. The knowledge domains will replace the current distributional studies. Currently LA&S offers approximately 97% of distributional studies courses. The domains allow for a broader range of courses.

Other changes to general education include the reduction of total number of required hours from 39 to 33 hours. The hour reduction is to allow for the programs on campus that require more than 120 hours for completion. The second change is a limit of two courses from a single department. This is to allow for greater content exposure. In addition, with the added flexibility of the domains, an increase in upper-division courses within general education is desired. Klonoski also said that up to 6 hours of major program requirements may be counted for general education requirements if listed as such.
Klonoski then explained the Pathway concept, basically an overlay on the knowledge domains that gives the course work a more focused path. The pathways will contain approximately 25 courses that address a particular theme. Currently the pathways are being developed. He also explained the difference between a pathway focus (one course from each knowledge domain within a single pathway) and a pathway minor (one lower-division course from each knowledge domain plus three upper-division courses from two knowledge domains within a single pathway).

Klonoski said that currently the course rollover is going through the general education committee. This is where departments with general education courses are identifying which knowledge domain their courses fit into. They are also required to indicate which two of the eight baccalaureate student learning outcomes the courses addresses. This will aid in the assessment as courses that focus on certain learning outcomes will be reviewed together. Klonoski added that the course rollover information as well as other information is available on the PLUS website.

V. ADJOURNMENT

D. Lonergan made a motion to adjourn @ 3:25 p.m., seconded by V. Palghat. Motion passed unanimously.