I. Approval of Agenda
Snow made a motion, seconded by Chakraborty, to approve the agenda. **Motion passed unanimously as amended.**

II. Announcements

A. New student representative, David Chiros, was introduced and Klonoski stated that he is glad to have the student perspective.

B. Electronic approval of minutes, September 23, 2010.

III. Old Business

A. Assessment Plan.
1. Committee members received a copy of the 2010 University Writing Project Report and Analysis as well as the University Writing Project Guidelines. Douglass walked the committee through the report. She explained that two assignments from a variety of courses are provided and that the raters initially work together to calibrate the evaluation rubric, which is on page 5 of the report. With \( n = 518 \), the overall mean score was 4.13, with 4 representing “met expectations.” Figure 2 and Figure 3 (page 9) illustrate the mean score for each college and for each subscale respectively. The weakest subscale continues to be presentation. Figure 4 (page 10) is the mean for each subset in each college. The table on page 12 is the result of previous years’ feedback, adding the effect of a student’s ACT English score and use of the Writing Center. The lower scores for students attending the Writing Center may be due to the fact that students who have poorer writing skills are more apt to seek out assistance from the Writing Center. Douglass added that the plan is to ask the Writing Center to provide faculty with assistance in preparing better/clearer writing assignments. Douglass then pointed out that on page 42 it is explained how this year’s sample was developed. She added that they will accept papers from any course, but the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is used due to their size and, in 2010, they also focused on papers from the Colleges of Engineering and Engineering Technology and Health and Human Sciences. Kot asked how presentation scores continue to be below meeting expectations but everything else is higher. Douglass responded that the other scores aren’t that much above meeting expectations. Long asked what is being done to
focus more on the fundamentals. Douglass answered that there is additional support, such as the Writing Center and programs like writing across the curriculum, but, she admitted, there has not been a large-scale push to provide additional resources. Klonoski noted, however, statistics show that graduates from other institutions aren’t doing much better; this is not a problem unique to NIU. Douglass added that students who do perform better are in courses where faculty require a rough draft and that feedback provided allows for students to make revisions and improvements in their final drafts. It was clarified that students in the University Writing Project are mostly seniors, with some juniors. It was discussed that there is also a freshmen writing project, where the first paper in ENGL 103 is compared to the last paper of ENGL 104. With that study there is significant evidence of growth from the start of ENGL 103 through the end of ENGL 104. Discussion followed regarding why upperclassmen may not write as well and one theory was that many programs don’t require them to write as much when they get into their major coursework. One recommendation to incorporate more writing into course work for upperclassmen would be a requirement for a senior project or capstone under the general education program. It was also discussed that writing is only one goal for a general education course and that many courses choose some of the other goals to be addressed in their courses. In addition, many general education courses are large and it may often be difficult to grade that many writing assignments, although, Long noted that he is able to do it in his class.

2. Assessment Plan. The most recent version of the general education assessment plan was provided to committee members.

B. Baccalaureate Review Process and Update. Long reported that the Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum (CUC) approved the purpose statement and the proposed goals (critical thinking, creativity, and communication) on October 14, 2010. This will next go to the Undergraduate Coordinating Council (UCC). Long added he continues to address how assessment will be done and that Douglass has been on the Baccalaureate Review steering committee since the beginning, providing her expertise. He reiterated that assessment has been discussed all along, but the steering committee felt it premature to develop a more detailed plan until the goals and learning outcomes are approved. Long also noted that each area of the baccalaureate experience (general education, major program area, and co-curricular activities) has its own assessment process and that there currently is no central location for compiling all those data. So the Baccalaureate Review Task Force is looking at that issue as well as how to roll out the proposed goals and learning outcomes to the university community. The GEC discussed that they need to look at general education goals in relation to baccalaureate goals. Long noted that spring 2010, goal development teams drafted a number of learning outcomes and he will make those available to GEC members.

C. General Education Coordinator. It was announced that Long will be the General Education Coordinator until a formalized search can be done. This is a half-time, release position and his appointment is to get someone working in the position so that work can move forward in conjunction with the Baccalaureate Review Task Force as well as getting up-to-speed on general education assessment, getting a website up, among other related initiatives. Long noted that the GEC will continue to have a lot of responsibility and Klonoski added that there will be continuing discussion on delegating responsibilities.

D. Associate of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Proposal. Long reported that NIU’s proposal was not among the 32 applicants accepted (out of 145 proposals). Klonoski asked if Long could get a reason why NIU was turned down so that feedback could be used in subsequent proposals.
E. GEC Working Rules. Klonoski thanked Kot and Luo for the first draft of the working rules. Committee members were asked to fill in the blanks. Discussion included revising the timeline for resubmissions, whether or not colleges should be involved in reviewing resubmissions and at what level, and the guidelines the GEC should be providing to the colleges. Changnon noted that this is a living document and revisions can be made at any time.

F. Revised Rubric. Klonoski thanked Long and Snow for the draft of the revised rubric. Suggestions included adding Social Sciences to the general education classifications, changing “goal” (appears twice) on the second page to “learning outcome,” dividing the second item under pedagogy into two parts (accessibility; diverse learning styles), and changing “global learning outcomes” to “diverse perspectives.” It was also suggested that there be room for a third “learning outcome” to be addressed if need be, with the emphasis that addressing only two learning outcomes is acceptable. Discussion followed regarding how much each college curriculum committee should be asked to do regarding the resubmission, i.e., does each college have to review each resubmission and all the accompanying data in detail. There was general consensus that since the resubmission process can be burdensome, that the colleges be provided with the rubric, but that departments would be responsible for completing the rubric and the colleges would at the very least accept the resubmissions and send them forward to the GEC. The GEC also discussed their process for evaluating the resubmission and that one or two could be done as an entire committee and the remainder would be assigned to several subcommittees. How to handle the resubmissions for general education courses with multiple sections was also discussed and those courses should be addressed as such on the evaluation form.

G. General Education Website. Klonoski and Long met with Jennice O’Brien in University Relations regarding how to get the website up and running as soon as possible. Copies of the separate student and faculty pages were provided to GEC members, as well as a benchmarking document highlighting what other universities are doing with their websites. Suggestions for the website included what are the benefits of general education; assessment resources, results, and “how to” information; and more details on how the program works. Klonoski asked for volunteers to provide text for the various parts of the website.

IV. New Business

A. HIST 323 Resubmission. Committee members discussed the process for reviewing the resubmission and whether or not they would be addressed all at one time, or as they were received. It was decided that the GEC would evaluate the first two received to calibrate to the rubric then assign the remaining resubmissions to subcommittees. Klonoski asked GEC members to review the resubmission for both HIST 323 and PSYC 245 prior to the next GEC meeting. The GEC also discussed a timeline for receiving and reviewing resubmissions to be added to the working rules. It was decided that departments will be initially contacted a year prior to when their resubmissions are due letting them know that they need to be compiling their data. In April prior to when resubmissions are due, a formal letter requesting the materials will be sent to departments, with a due date to their college curriculum committees by the second Monday in October, and to the GEC by the first Monday in December. It was also suggested that any correspondence with departments and colleges make clear exactly what is expected of them and what are the colleges’ responsibilities.

B. BIOS 105 and BIOS 107. Klonoski reported that these submissions were sent through the GEC last year and the GEC requested additional information from the department. He added that he recently was contacted by Ken Gasser from Biological Sciences and was notified that
the follow-up materials are on their way to the GEC.

C. The book, *General Education and Liberal Learning*, was distributed to all in attendance. Long noted that this is a good resource for how to get things done on a campus when there is no additional money. He also asked committee members to do one or two of the readings prior to each GEC meeting. Klonoski will also be forwarding pdfs of helpful articles.

V. **Adjournment**

A motion was made and seconded to ADJOURN. **Motion passed by acclamation.**

The next meeting will be November 18, 2010, 12:30, AL 225.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Smith, Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator