Northern Illinois University

UNDERGRADUATE COORDINATING COUNCIL
129th Meeting
Thursday, November 4, 2004
Watson Hall 233

MINUTES
(Approved)

Present: S. Beyer (BUS), A. Calloway (Student/BUS), L. Derscheid (HHS), A. Doederlein (LAS), W. Goldenberg (VPA), D. Gough (HHS), J. Katz (Student/LAS), C. T. Lin (LAS), C. Marcus (Student Association), M. Mehrer (LAS), K. Millis (LAS), D. Rusin (LAS), D. Sinason (BUS), L. Townsend (EDU), M. Van Wienen (LAS), P. Webb (LIB), E. Wilkins (EDU)

Absent: M. Barnes (VPA), N. Boubekri (EET), E. Seaver (Vice Provost)

Guest: K. Van Mol (Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator)

I. Adoption of Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was made by L. Derscheid and seconded by K. Millis. The motion carried.

II. Announcements

A. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of October 14, 2004, meeting were distributed and will be electronically approved. Any changes, corrections, etc., and/or approval should be emailed to M. Keller no later than November 11, 2004.

III. Reports/Minutes from Standing Committees

A. Admissions Policies and Academic Standards Committee – K. Millis

K. Millis reported that at the September 29, 2004, meeting, the committee discussed prerequisites that are not listed. The committee moved to table the issue and examine it further at the next meeting.

K. Millis stated that the committee also discussed and approved a change in the criteria that are used for awarding Degrees with Distinction. Currently, awards are given based on a percentile system. It was found that many universities use grade point average systems. It was pointed out that a student may not be eligible for a distinction award at NIU but his/her current status could meet eligibility for the same award from a comparable university. The committee discussed the issue and passed a motion to change from a percentile system to a grade point average based system, with the grade point average being based on the student’s last sixty hours at NIU. K. Millis explained that the rationale for this was to keep NIU more in line with other universities, and students would have a better idea of where they stood near graduation. Criteria approved by the committee for grade point averages at the time of graduation in order to be eligible for Degrees of Distinction are as follows: Summa Cum Laude, 3.90 through 4.00; Magna Cum Laude, 3.75 through 3.899; Cum Laude, 3.50 through 3.749.
A. Doederlein asked if research had been done to determine how the number of students would be affected. He asked K. Millis to request that APASC provide UCC with informational figures showing the probable increase in the number of awards and the proposed catalog copy. In addition, he also recommended that this proposed change be addressed and discussed by the Undergraduate Coordinating Council.

K. Millis also reported that APASC discussed the potential grade change policy, and the issue has been tabled while the committee waits for additional figures from Registration and Records.

A. Doederlein asked if APASC had begun developing catalog language changes to accommodate the new Advising Center. K. Millis will follow up and request a status update from the committee.

In conjunction with this, K. Van Mol inquired as to the status of catalog changes involving moving the limited admission section and adding department retention requirements which were approved by APASC during 2003-2004. K. Millis will also ask APASC to move forward on this.

B. General Education Committee – D. Rusin, E. Wilkins

A motion to accept the minutes of the September 23, 2004, General Education Committee meeting was made by D. Rusin and seconded by K. Millis. The motion passed.

D. Rusin reported that during 2004-2005 the General Education Committee will be reviewing the core competency courses for mathematics, English, and communication. He also noted that Craig Barnard, Coordinator of Assessment Services, has offered to assist departments in the assessment of their general education courses.

Also at the first GEC meeting, Craig Barnard, Coordinator of Assessment Services, announced that a portfolio informational workshop session is being planned for March, 2005. He will provide the committee with additional information in the near future.

C. Honors Committee – M. Mehrer

M. Mehrer informed UCC that admissions figures reported at the October 1, 2003, Honors Committee meeting revealed that in 2003 there was a significant rise in admissions to the Honors Program, and in 2004 the numbers declined, bringing participation back to a normal level. A. Doederlein requested that the Honors Committee report to UCC on how this fluctuation in participation has affected the Honors floors residency pattern.

D. Committee on the Improvement of Undergraduate Education – M. Van Wienen

(No committee report.)

E. Committee on the Undergraduate Academic Environment – C. T. Lin

A motion was made by C. T. Lin and seconded by L. Derscheid to accept the minutes of the September 14, 2004, meeting of the Committee on the Undergraduate Academic Environment. The motion passed.

(No committee report – reports on previous two meetings given at last UCC meeting.)

F. Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum – D. Gough
D. Gough moved to accept the minutes of the October 14, 2004, meeting of the Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum. The motion passed.

D. Gough reported that the CUC minutes reflect the fact that the committee resolved the previously tabled FCNS issue in the Health and Human Sciences #14 minutes regarding proposed revisions to the requirements in the emphases under the major in family and child studies. The committee discussed the issue at length and passed a motion with the changes in FCNS catalog language to approve the revisions to the emphases in the major in Family and Child Studies, with the change of “with consent of adviser” to “in consultation with adviser.” Rationale for the change was to provide students with diverse options and give them flexibility regarding the choice of courses as the field expands.

IV. Other Reports

A. University Assessment Panel – L. Townsend

L. Townsend reported that the University Assessment Panel received a report from the Illinois Board of Higher Education listing points that the Board would like the committee to address. Among the issues noted are the placing of greater emphasis on individual student needs as students move around from institution to institution looking for specific courses, the matter of students handling their own curriculum, and the issue of online course instruction. Further information will be reported to UCC as the committee begins addressing issues in the report.

The panel also discussed feedback from the Online Course Survey Report. L. Townsend reported that most students surveyed are completing online courses from their homes, in particular graduate students. The survey indicated that the overall satisfaction with online courses varies with the level of the student groups. The older, the more mature the student, the more likely they would like online instruction as they can fit it in with their other responsibilities. The majority of the students surveyed indicated that their ability to use technology had increased. Although this was a small study, it serves as a positive result in terms of what we’re doing here at NIU, and students seemed to be satisfied.

After UCC members held some discussion on the online course issue, A. Doederlein requested that the University Assessment Panel be asked to engage the Faculty Senate and the Academic Planning Council in the issue of online course instruction.

L. Townsend also reported that the panel received a document from the Higher Learning Commission stating what we should do in terms of assessment. Most programs on campus have submitted at least the beginning of an assessment plan. The document states that we should continue to do what we are doing. Faculty should be encouraged to find out what their students think of the program and use the information that they get from their students to improve programs and continue to show that our students are in fact learning more than they did before.

V. Old Business

(No old business.)

VI. New Business

(No new business.)

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:16 p.m. The next UCC meeting is scheduled for December 2, 2004, beginning at 1:00 p.m. in Watson Hall 233.
Respectfully submitted,
Mollie Keller