I. **Adoption of Agenda**

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

II. **Announcements**

A. **Electronic Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the November 4, 2004, meeting were electronically approved.

III. **Reports/Minutes from Standing Committees**

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

K. Millis reported on the September 29, 2004, APASC minutes. The committee discussed a concern brought to them regarding unwritten/hidden prerequisites for certain classes. This issue came up when a case arose in which a professor told a student that, in order to really succeed in the course, he needed to take course “x.” The course was not in the syllabus and, therefore, not in the catalog. Discussion revolved around what a necessary prerequisite was versus a suggestion just to help a student through. Further discussion led to the decision that a memo would be drafted to the advising deans to remind chairs and faculty to conform to the prerequisites.

E. Seaver noted that there needs to be clarification of what prerequisite means. If a prerequisite is not just a designated required course but one that faculty feels students need in order to have a realistic chance to be successful in the course, and students need to take the course, then, that, in the minds of APASC, really reflects a prerequisite, and those should be in the catalog. Language to clarify what a prerequisite really means will be drafted by APASC, and, once approved, communicated to the curricular, advising and academic deans.

K. Millis reported that APASC also discussed the issue of degrees of distinction and changing the grade point requirements. Included in the APASC minutes as an attachment is catalog change language changing from percentiles to GPA’s and the rationale that would make this more in line with other
universities. On the back of the minutes, a table shows frequency changes that would result. This table was presented at APASC two meetings ago and shows what other universities use as criteria. This information was requested by UCC.

A. Doederlein distributed a table with data from 2003 showing the numbers of undergraduate degrees from each of the colleges for the entire year under the current system with summa being in the top one percent, magna being in the next four percent, and cum laude being the next five percent. He pointed out that, when comparing the chart that’s provided in the APASC minutes under the plan currently being used, with the proposed new plan, there is a distinct increase in the percentage of students being awarded distinction under the proposed system in both the College of Education and the College of Visual and Performing Arts. Both would go up respectively, 213.79% and 281.82%. He pointed out that in viewing the average grade given, at various levels of coursework in the six undergraduate colleges, the average grade is very different, resulting in the extraordinary increase in distinction going specifically to two colleges. He said that difference causes him to wonder about a blanket system. He said he would oppose the changes that APASC wants to make because he thinks distinction should be measured according to the colleges and their grading policies as opposed to “one size fits all” university policy that doesn’t lead to equity.

E. Seaver indicated that A. Doederlein is suggesting that the recommendation in the change in the groups of distinction not be approved.

D. Rusin asked if APASC had noticed this same anomaly and what their consensus was. E. Seaver explained that this proposal originated with the college advisors. The proposal that came to APASC came from the advising deans. They discussed the issue of a percent system versus the grade point average. The rationale for making the proposed change is that it seems to be consistent with what other universities do and gives students advance notice of what you need to do to reach the specific levels. Under the current plan, if it’s the top one percent, students might not even know if they’re going to graduate with distinction until grades are posted after graduation. This was brought forward because, until all grades are posted and everything is reconciled, students really don’t know where those cutoffs are.

A. Doederlein then stated that the two arguments for the new system would be 1) students would know their standing, and 2) the university would be more in line, consistent, with other universities in terms of grade point average.

L. Townsend suggested that UCC request comparative figures as to what percentage of students get awards for each college, specifically, May 2004 graduates, including the total number graduates in each of the colleges, to compare the old distinction to the proposed distinction.

A motion was made by D. Rusin, seconded by M. Van Wienen, that the Undergraduate Coordinating Council request that the Admissions Policies and Academic Standards Committee revisit the issue of the proposed change in degrees of distinction. Motion passed.

After additional discussion, it was also decided that it would be helpful to have a breakdown by department regarding the total graduates for the entire year. E. Seaver will also investigate the possibility of obtaining comparable data from another institution or two.

A motion was made by K. Millis to accept the September 29, 2004, minutes of the Admissions Policies and Academic Standards Committee. Motion did not pass.

K. Millis reported that APASC, with regard to other issues, did begin discussion on the proposed grade change policy, and the issue has been tabled since there are data and questions still being addressed.
E. Seaver provided two points of clarification from the September 29, 2004, APASC minutes:

1) A. Doederlein had questioned whether APASC had begun developing catalog language for the Advising Center. The Advising Center is working on catalog language, and some draft language has been developed and circulated to a number of groups, including the college advising deans and directors. The process of getting feedback is underway now, and it will come to APASC, but it will go through the advising group first. Further discussion will be necessary before it comes to APASC.

2) Limited retention language has been approved by APASC. APASC did approve language about limited retention requirements and limited admission as well as proposed catalog language for the 2005-2006 undergraduate catalog; however, the language was approved too late to be included in the 2004-2005 catalog.

Since the September 29, 2004, minutes of APASC were not approved, discussion on additional items reported in that set of minutes was tabled.

B. General Education Committee – D. Rusin

D. Rusin made a motion to accept the October 21, 2004, minutes of the General Education Committee. Motion passed.

D. Rusin reported that the General Education Committee is beginning review of the core competency courses. Also, he reported that GEC held a retreat on October 29, 2004. The main agenda topic at the retreat consisted of a review of the process the committee would use to review courses and a practice review session.

C. Honors Committee – M. Mehrer

M. Mehrer made a motion to accept the October 1, 2004, and November 5, 2004, minutes of the Honors Committee. Motion passed.

M. Mehrer reported that the Honors Committee has been reviewing honors enrollment numbers, noting that, after a temporary rise in the number of honors students participating last year, the numbers have dropped back down again for this year which is within the ordinary range.

Referring to a ten percent increase in honors participation in a one-month time period, D. Rusin asked if this was a normal annual increase time and asked how Honors does their recruiting. M. Mehrer answered that the fall is the normal time for increase in participation so this was not unusual. E. Seaver stated that the Honors Program reviews grade point averages and then invites students accordingly.

M. Mehrer reported that the November 5, 2004, meeting of Honors was held in the Honors residency hall, which is located in Douglas Hall. He stated that the honors residence hall has quite a number of good infrastructure features, including one floor which has a 24-hour “quiet zone” feature/policy. They also have a lounge set up for the Honors students and a computer lab.

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

No Report.

E. Committee on the Undergraduate Academic Environment – C. T. Lin
C. T. Lin made a motion to accept the minutes of the October 12, 2004, and November 9, 2004, Committee on Undergraduate Academic Environment. Motion passed.

C. T. Lin noted that since he had reported on the October 12, 2004, minutes of the CUAE at a previous UCC meeting, he would only report on the November 9, 2004, minutes. At the November 9, 2004, CUAE meeting the committee broke into small discussion groups to begin preliminary discussion on initiatives for this year. Major discussion was concentrated on student concerns. Students were asked to express safety and environment concerns. One issue brought up was the possibility of providing students with the locations of the campus emergency call boxes. E. Seaver noted that the emergency call boxes are noted on the new campus map.

D. Rusin asked about the USOAR Orientation workshops, and E. Seaver stated that two orientation sessions were held this year. Attendance at the sessions wasn’t as high this year; however, he noted that USOAR applications usually are more than the number of workshop attendees. Faculty have become more familiar with the application process over time and are able to walk students through the process themselves.

F. Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum – E. Seaver

On behalf of CUC, E. Seaver made a motion to accept the November 11, 2004, and November 18, 2004, minutes of the Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. Motion passed.

E. Seaver reported that nothing controversial is reported in the minutes, however, there were a number of sets of minutes that were forwarded to APASC with questions about limited admission and limited retention programs. Based on a situation from last year, the language was approved by CUC contingent on approval of APASC. The items of major concern were in the College of Education and the College of Health and Human Sciences. To summarize, there was one course in the College of Education which had been approved previously to have the 2.5 GPA to be admitted to that course. The department came forward requesting a 2.75 GPA for ETR 440, thus, it was to go to a minimum of 2.75 from a 2.5. The APASC committee approved that, and there wasn’t a feeling that it needed to go back through any limited admission process, etc. Also noted in the minutes are a number of additions that CUC forwarded to APASC. Under Kinesiology and Physical Education, CUC approved adding things like CPR, filling out applications, etc., all being consistent with many of the other clinical programs. The College of Health and Human Sciences forwarded a number of courses with a grade of C or better for prerequisite courses. CUC determined that that was in fact the development of the limited retention process within those two of departments or two areas of emphases in that department. APASC has asked the college to come forward with an application for a request for a limited retention program. The college is now in the process of developing proposals for those areas. That approval has been tabled contingent on receiving the application from the College of Health and Human Sciences.

IV. Other Reports

A. University Assessment Panel – P. Webb

P. Webb reported that most of the committee’s work now will be concentrated in language changes and making revisions to the assessment guidelines.

V. Old Business

A. Graduation with Distinction
E. Seaver reiterated notes of the discussion held earlier in this meeting with regard to information being requested by UCC. The committee is requesting more information on graduation with distinction.

**B. Advising Center – Catalog Language**

E. Seaver stated that language is being developed to go through the curricular catalog change process.

A. Doederlein distributed UCC minutes of May 6, 2004, and pointed out that if the language that is being developed continues, it appears, in his opinion, that a Dean’s position will be needed, and, therefore, it will have to be forwarded to University Council.

**VI. New Business**

A. A. Doederlein asked to propose that the Undergraduate Coordinating Council be involved more in the issue of enrollment management and admissions standards. He feels enrollment management could benefit from the UCC’s oversight. It’s come to his attention recently in comparing the number of majors and the various programs throughout the university, there’s a lack of correlation between the number of declared majors and the number of actual graduates. Often these are referred to as displaced persons, persons who are admitted and stay declared but never graduate because of the fact of enrollment management, grade points, etc., taking these students away from the courses that they actually need to get degrees in – programs they are being declared in. He thinks that we are seeing an enrollment decline already because of that. He predicts that we are going to see even a greater decline, because, as word gets out that one can get into Northern but can’t get classes at Northern, there will be a decline. He feels the perception will be that one can get a major and graduate from Northern but not in anything that you have any interest in pursuing. Looking at the September 10th enrollment figures at Northern and the most recent data available on graduation numbers from the same programs might result in enrollment management issues that have not been approached in the past.

E. Seaver asked A. Doederlein to clarify what he was asking. A. Doederlein explained that, when talking about limited admissions, it doesn’t target the students who are limited retention students. He would like to have the ten-day enrollment information that basically shows how big the university is, information that breaks out every department, emphasis, college, including a document that shows for all of those same units, how many students graduated for the year 2004. He thinks that if graduates from all of the different programs one can graduate from, as well as declared majors in all those same units, are compared, there will be some discrepancies that identify where there are displaced persons. He suggested that UCC might want to appoint a committee to be involved with this.

D. Rusin commented that he appreciated the concern about enrollment management, but he indicated he wasn’t sure what the committee would gain from this exercise. He pointed out that some students are not prepared for the difficulty of the major until they begin classes in their major, and, thus, they don’t finish. A. Doederlein stated that he feels the committee will gain some qualitative information about the problem of displaced majors.

K. Millis asked if part of the goal of the Advising Center was to address displaced students and to look at this data. A. Doederlein stated that the Advising Center, as he understands it, is to deal with incoming freshmen and the fact that they often leave because they don’t have an idea of where they might belong.

E. Seaver noted that the Advising Center will service any undecided freshmen, sophomores, transfers, or others. He also stated that another goal of the Advising Center is to work with the colleges and the departments to help address the issue of the displaced student. They will try to marshal all of their resources and assist the colleges and the departments to try to help these students.
M. Mehrer suggested that the committee look at multiple-year numbers that would more clearly show trends. L. Townsend noted that, in the past, reports have been issued regarding displaced students, and she suggested that possibly we could get this information once again.

E. Seaver stated he still was not clear on what the committee is requesting. The official ten-day count from everything broken out by freshmen, by class, by major code, can be provided. Graduation rates, retention data, etc., even by department, by college, can also be looked at.

A request for the following was made by A. Doederlein:

1. The number of declared majors as of September 10, 2004 – aggregate numbers - it does not need to be broken down by class.

2. The number of graduates from the same departments for the total year 2004 – similar to the handout he distributed to the UCC committee at this meeting.

C. T. Lin questioned what the committee would do with the data. A. Doederlein answered that the committee could look at the data and see if there are obvious inconsistencies. If so, then this could be assigned to a committee, probably APASC, to investigate further. His concern centers around the students who are declared but who are not going to graduate in their declared department.

It was suggested that the committee look at a multiple year breakdown over the past several years of the number of students who actually graduated in each major versus how many are majoring that same year; then look at the trend, and note if there are departments that consistently have many more majors than they graduate.

L. Townsend asked if there had ever been a study done or students interviewed, or asked to complete a questionnaire, about what happens throughout the program. E. Seaver answered that some data has been gathered as students withdraw from the university; however, that has been spotty in the past, although we now are looking at the possibility of doing exit interviews when students leave to learn more about why they leave. He stated that some information is known; some have majors not offered here, some are financial, quite a bit across the board. There are some pockets of data here and there related to retention but that does not directly address the issue of the displaced person. He said the fundamental issue that most all of us look at up front is that as programs come online as limited retention and limited admission, the Provost’s Office has taken a pretty hard stand as to whether these need to go through the curricular process. He explained that is also why, during the last year, we are enforcing the existing rule that says if a department has a limited admission program, it must get that reapproved as part of program review, and, thus, the push for limited retention. He said that, as more and more of these programs come online, we now do not have as many majors for those students who do not get where they want to be. There is a great deal of concern in the Provost’s Office as to how to help these students. Some of it is helping to make better decisions when they start; that’s where we really feel we needed a more campus-wide attempt to try to help those students get to be where they are going to be happy. He continued by saying that right now students tend to gravitate toward a small number of majors that are relatively open or are open primarily in Liberal Arts and Sciences. The Provost’s Office does designate highly impacted programs; those are the ones where the upper division students are going.

E. Seaver stated that he can provide to UCC the official head count for the total freshmen. He also noted that he takes exception to A. Doederlein’s statement that students are not being attracted to the institution, as A. Doederlein has concluded by reviewing the fall numbers. E. Seaver explained that that number was a managed number because it still is among the top three highest freshman classes in history of the last eleven years of this institution. E. Seaver stated that he can provide the committee with the ten-day head count and the ten-day head count for all of the majors for their review.
A. Doederlein stated that he liked M. Mehrer's idea of looking at ten-year figures, because that would show trends. He feels seeing trends is going to be an important part of this, so if the committee had a ten-year look at majors and a ten-year look at graduations that would take into account some of the issues; the fluctuation could be seen in declarations and graduations. E. Seaver said that information could be put together.

S. Beyer remarked that, first, a problem should be defined, and then an end result decided so it's clear what is being looked for and what data will be needed. It can then be decided what the committee will do with the numbers and how it they are interpreted. He also noted that it appears that a few individuals are still not clear as to what the committee wants and whether this is going to be helpful.

C. T. Lin questioned what the committee will be doing with the data, if the committee can do something about it, and to whom the issue would be addressed. A. Doederlein responded that there is a lot of data about displaced students that he feels bears investigation. He continued by saying that, assuming that patterns emerge from the investigation, any number of committees might be assigned the task of further studying what emerges.

E. Seaver stated that ten-day enrollments by program can be run as well as graduation rates for multiple (ten) years.

VII. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:02 p.m. The next UCC meeting is scheduled for February 3, 2005, beginning at 1:00 p.m. in Altgeld Hall 203.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Mollie Keller*