M I N U T E S  
(Approved)

I. Adoption of Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was made and seconded. The motion carried.

II. Announcements

A. Electronic Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the April 6, 2006, meeting were electronically approved.

III. Reports/Minutes from Standing Committees

A. Admissions Policies and Academic Standards Committee – E. Seaver

E. Seaver reported that at the March 29, 2006, APASC meeting the committee approved three requests for limited admissions. He explained that the three submissions are a part of the program review process which requires that any program that has limited admission or limited retention must forward the requests to APASC for approval.

In other business, APASC received an update on faculty oversight of the Academic Advising Center.

J. Corwin made a motion, seconded by B. Wilkins, to accept the March 29, 2006, minutes of the Admissions Policies and Academic Standards Committee. The motion passed.

B. General Education Committee – D. Rusin
D. Rusin reported that the major focus of the General Education Committee during this year was assessment of general education. The committee has been looking at tools for assessing the general education program and has now broken into subcommittees to look at the different goals of the general education program. He said the committee will be looking to see whether the courses that say they are highlighting those different objectives are actually doing a good job at meeting those objectives.

The committee also held discussion on the issue of diversity in general education as a follow-up to the presentations to the committee by J. Ivan Legg, Executive Vice President and Provost, and Deborah Pierce, Director, International Programs.

In other action, the committee approved the resubmission of ECON 160 for general education and began to look at the ILAS 100 submission, which was continued to the next meeting.

**D. Rusin made a motion to accept the March 23, 2006, minutes of the General Education Committee. The motion passed.**

At the April 20, 2006, GEC meeting, the committee discussed the ILAS 100 submission for general education credit, and, as there was not a quorum present, the GEC concluded the discussion at the next meeting.

Diann Musial was selected to serve as chair of the General Education Committee for 2006-2007.

**D. Rusin made a motion to accept the April 20, 2006, minutes of the General Education Committee. The motion passed.**

D. Rusin reported that the April 27, 2006, General Education Committee minutes reflect the fact that the committee electronically approved ILAS 100 as a general education course.

Jim Corwin asked about the “secret student” idea referred to in the minutes. B. Wilkins explained that the committee was trying to think of other ways in which to obtain evaluation/assessment data, and this was a creative idea that the student representative from GEC put onto the table. D. Rusin explained that the idea was similar to the secret shopper program that is used in commercial efforts to help determine how well a business is doing. The committee felt it was a clever idea as a means to obtain evaluation/assessment input from a student actually enrolled in a particular class. A. Doederlein commented that a similar effort conducted via telephone was not a successful one. E. Seaver indicated that the secret student idea will not be implemented.

D. Rusin explained that the problem the committee is facing is that the data the committee has is very incomplete and inconsistent. The committee did try to look at the alumni surveys. B. Wilkins pointed out that information was being gathered from four different surveys which were not related. D. Rusin noted that the surveys were not designed for this particular purpose, but the committee was using this means of data collection simply because the instruments were already developed and in use. Since the surveys were developed for other purposes, not much data was collected.

E. Seaver explained further that the 2004/2005 outgoing chair of the General Education Committee was charged with trying to see what data were available and could possibly be used to help with the general education assessment plan. In part, this was driven by the fact that the North Central Association visit resulted in findings that the university did not have a well-established assessment plan for general education. Information was compiled and presented to the committee in the fall with the idea that the committee would review
what was already there and discuss what new instruments could be created. After GEC subcommittees looked at the data by goal, it was concluded that the data already available are not very usable. He stated, however, that there are some other things that will be implemented for general education assessment. For example, in the fall, a writing task is being looked at which might be similar to the upper division writing task that is currently used for assessment. In this writing task, a student’s written sample which has already been used for the class will be submitted to the English Department for assessment and will be evaluated by a set of reviewers. He pointed out that this is different than the upper division writing assessment process in which class time has to be relinquished to the Assessment Office to be used specifically for that purpose. He said that the committee is also going to look at assessing the technology skills for incoming students.

D. Rusin made a motion to accept the April 27, 2006, minutes of the General Education Committee. The motion passed.

C. Honors Committee – L. Derscheid

L. Derscheid reported on the April 7, 2006, meeting of the University Honors Committee in which the Director reported that he had looked at 29 capstone projects and announced that the Department of Management was adding a new seminar. He reported that there will be 137 graduates for spring/summer, which is average for graduating honor students. The Assistant Director’s monthly report shows a 16% increase from 2002 to 2006 for students pursuing honors and upper division honors. Minority enrollment shows a 10% increase from 2002-2006, and a 16% increase is shown from 2002-2006 in total numbers of students by gender. She commented that the program is looking stable, although enrollment is somewhat lower than April 2005. Other agenda topics included a report from the Program Coordinator, Honors Seminar requirements and EYE Grant proposal review and approval.

The committee also discussed the Consultant’s Report. On behalf of the Undergraduate Coordinating Council (UCC), L. Derscheid reported to the Honors Committee that UCC has requested copies of the executive summary from the consultant’s report and has requested that Michael Martin, Director, University Honors, make a presentation to UCC in order for this committee to gain a better understanding of the Honors program.

L. Derscheid made a motion to accept the April 7, 2006, minutes of the University Honors Committee. The motion passed.

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

M. Van Wienen reported that the committee discussed a suggestion made by a student member of the committee to have a bank of syllabi from past general education courses available in a centralized location so that students could be better informed selectors of courses. Such a bank of syllabi would enable students when selecting courses to see the syllabi of a certain professor who taught a particular course in the fall and was offering a course for the spring in order to find out in advance what kinds of reading, what kinds of topics, and the way that that professor taught that particular course. He said that the CIUE committee is forwarding this proposal to UCC for its input on this matter.

A second item addressed by the committee was the review of the guidelines for the Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award and the Excellence in Undergraduate Instruction Award. The review was found to be necessary based on confusions that were apparent from the nomination packets that were submitted. M. Van Wienen noted that it is evident that fine tuning is needed in the directions and the language on the application form
in order to obtain more consistency between the information being requested and the information which is actually submitted in nomination packets. The committee will be looking at the documents over the summer in order to have revised packets ready for the fall 2006 nomination process.

M. Van Wienen made a motion to accept the April 3, 2006, minutes of the Committee on the Improvement of Undergraduate Education. The motion passed.

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

C. T. Lin reported that three guests were present at the March 21, 2006, meeting of the Committee on the Undergraduate Academic Environment (CUAE). Denise Rode, Director, Orientation Office, reported on the First Year Connections and the UNIV 101/201 programs. In her presentation to CUAE, D. Rode reported that the REACH program had contacted, via peer student callers, over 1,000 first-year freshman students who were not connected in any formal way with any other university program. Students were contacted in an effort to connect them with faculty, staff and upper-class students who could be positive factors in the students’ successful experiences at NIU. She said that faculty and staff are currently being recruited to serve as instructors for the UNIV 101/201 courses. It is hoped that a larger pool of instructors from the ranks of the tenured faculty, in particular, can be developed. She asked CUAE members for assistance in encouraging faculty members to consider this teaching opportunity.

Another guest, Rena Cotsones, Executive Director of NIU Community Relations, gave CUAE an overview of the City of DeKalb/NIU partnership. She pointed out to the committee that it is important that NIU have a positive relationship with business, local government and community leaders so that problems that may arise can be resolved smoothly. She said that this year, the university and community are coming together to plan a joint NIU homecoming/City of DeKalb 150th anniversary parade. R. Cotsones also informed the committee that she will be serving on the Board of the “Renew DeKalb” organization that is being established, and she, as well as Brian Hemphill, Vice President, Student Affairs, will attend meetings that will include discussion of what students want in order to encourage them to stay in town.

The third guest at the meeting, Bob Albanese, Associate Vice President, Finance and Facilities, gave the committee an overview of NIU campus parking and the bike program. He explained that the parking program at NIU is a self-supporting, self-funded unit; no state tax dollars are directed to support parking. Income from permits and fines provides the major revenue for campus parking. He reported that improvement projects for the upcoming year include reconstruction of the fieldhouse parking lot to reorient all parking spaces in a different direction in order to create additional spaces, as well as provide additional lighting and improving pedestrian traffic flow through the lot.

B. Albanese also reported that an on campus bike loan program is currently being investigated. The program would make bicycles readily available to students during the good weather months. He pointed out that a previous bike loan initiative, the Red Bike Program, was not a successful endeavor due to the fact that the program was not properly structured. Bike paths will also be looked at in conjunction with the development of roadways on the west campus.

The committee also discussed with Mr. Albanese the possibility of closing Normal Road to vehicle traffic to create a pedestrian walkway. B. Albanese offered to raise this issue with
the City of DeKalb, although, he noted, in the past the City has been resistant to this idea.

C. T. Lin made a motion to accept the March 21, 2006, minutes of the Committee on the Undergraduate Academic Environment. The motion passed.

F. Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum – W. Goldenberg

W. Goldenberg reported that at the April 20, 2006, meeting of the Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum, it was announced that President Peters and the Board of Trustees had approved the Minor in Cognitive Studies. The committee also reviewed all the contract majors for each college and approved the report that was submitted, as well as approved a new Certificate of Homeland Security. He noted that the new certificate is the first in the State of Illinois and has received major media attention, thus attracting positive attention to NIU. A scholarship has been granted to be awarded in conjunction with this certificate as well.

W. Goldenberg made a motion to accept the April 20, 2006, minutes of the Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum. The motion passed.

IV. Other Reports

A. University Assessment Panel – P. Webb

In the absence of meeting notes, Paul Webb reported that at the last meeting of the University Assessment Panel, the committee spent time reviewing and discussing funding requests from Housing and Dining.

V. Old Business

A. Report on Faculty Senate/University Council Recommendation about the report from UCC regarding the Academic Advising Center

E. Seaver reported that the UCC minutes regarding the report from UCC had been submitted to Paul Stoddard, President, Faculty Senate, and Secretary, University Council, and that he had met with Dr. Stoddard regarding the issue. He reported that Dr. Stoddard had no immediate feedback to convey to UCC, however, Dr. Stoddard did point out to him that the report from the Rules and Governance Committee of Faculty Senate discusses developing a regular reporting procedure which would include reports at the beginning of the year as well as at the end of year.

E. Seaver reported that Dr. Stoddard also pointed out that a Faculty Senate member, Art Doederlein, currently serves on UCC; however, if there is no current member of UCC who is also a Faculty Senate member, the Faculty Senate will appoint a member to attend and participate in UCC meetings. That individual will provide a report to Faculty Senate at its second meeting of the year of an overview of UCC plans for the upcoming year and what items may be coming forward. An end of year summary report of UCC activities will also be made to Faculty Senate. E. Seaver said that Dr. Stoddard had no questions or concerns to bring forward from Faculty Senate at this time.

VI. New Business
A. Honors Program – Michael Martin, Director

E. Seaver introduced Michael Martin, Director, University Honors Program. He indicated that Dr. Martin was in attendance to answer questions or discuss issues raised at the April 2006 UCC meeting per the request of committee members. He noted that copies of the Executive Summary of the External Review Report of the University Honors Program were distributed to committee members in agenda packets prior to the meeting. He also pointed out that the Honors Committee is working with the executive summary as a regular part of their agenda.

M. Martin reported that the Honors Committee is establishing a strategic planning committee that will begin meeting in the fall 2006. He said that this committee will not only look at the issues identified by the outside consultant but will also work on developing a five-year strategic plan for the Honors Program.

J. Corwin asked if there is any plan for an increase in funding as indicated in the consultant’s report. M. Martin said that there is no doubt that NIU’s program, at less than $300 per student, is dramatically under funded in comparison to the national average of $600 per student. He said that fact shows up the most in the development of honors seminars. Over the last eight to ten years, NIU has actually reduced by about half the number of honors seminars per semester with almost twice as many students. He noted that in order for every current honors student to have one seminar per year, sixty sections of undergraduate courses must be offered; there are now roughly twenty. Sixty sections would cost approximately $300,000, so in order to bring NIU in line with the rest of the country, it would take a substantial increase in funds. M. Martin said that he is preparing a proposal to present to the new Provost that essentially looks at different sizes of the honors program and numbers of seminars that each student might take per year and what that might cost. He indicated that similar verbal plans have been submitted for the last four years with no response. He commented that the operating budget has stayed the same for the last four years, even though the size of the program has increased by 150%.

C. T. Lin commented that it is his observation that there doesn’t appear to be much difference between honors courses and regular courses; they seem basically the same. He thinks the honors program should be more specifically suited to honors students, something different from what is now in place. M. Martin clarified that Dr. Lin was referring to the mini-sections which are small course sections incorporated into a larger class where there might be anywhere from two to ten honors students. He explained that, depending on who is teaching the class, the students may have an extensive amount of extra work and/or contact with the professor. In some cases, the professor meets with the honors students separately one day per week as a seminar, and they may have a different, more stringent set of requirements from the other students. He noted that the consultant took issue with the fact that most of the current program consists of mini-sections (approximately fifty per semester), and there are ten seminars. Numerous mini-sections does not correspond to the criteria that the national organization sets as a fully developed honors program. He said that within the given Honors Program budget, there is not enough money to fund seminars, and the cornerstone of every honors program is the honors seminar. Normally, a seminar is comprised of twenty students and taught by a senior faculty member, which is basically the industry standard, and the current Honors Program does not meet the industry standard.

J. Corwin asked if there is any data recorded regarding individuals that the honors students conduct research with, papers that may have been published, presentations at professional meetings, etc. M. Martin said that this is done informally now, but a more formal data collection is going to be done in the future via means of a one-year or two-year follow-up. J. Corwin commented that, from his experience, he hasn’t observed that honors students actually get into labs any sooner than the regular students. He emphasized that early
Mentorship is one of the true benefits of an honors program because individuals who have intellectual talent and interest above and beyond are mentoring the students potentially all the way through. M. Martin said that he agreed, but in programs that have faculty mentoring there is a staff member in place who is assigned to coordinate the program, and funding is not currently available to be able to support that in the present honors program.

M. Van Wienen commented that he hoped the funding request proposal that will be submitted will not be at the lowest end of the funding plans, and he asked how well the Honors Program was tied into the fund-raising efforts of the university. M. Martin indicated that he hoped to be able to acquire funding enough to be able to offer one seminar per year per student. He also said that he, along with E. Seaver, met with Mallory Simpson, President of the NIU Foundation, and her staff and made a strong appeal to the development area for their involvement. E. Seaver commented that the focus of the development area is moving toward endowments, endowed faculty and endowed scholarships, shifting somewhat from the “bricks and mortar” focus of recent years. As the focus moves even more in the direction of endowments, the Honors Program will be able to make a stronger appeal.

E. Seaver said that there are fundamental issues that have to be addressed, the largest of which is the size of the program. He explained that the size of the program can be looked at in one of two ways: by how much money it would take to sustain 1200 honors students or by what size honors program fits both the quality aspects of the program and the funding.

E. Seaver remarked that the consultant was hired, first and foremost, with the idea of finding out what would be needed for the Honors program to become an Honors College. He said that it is evident from the consultant’s report that we are not ready for that move, and there are lots of steps that need to be taken first. J. Corwin asked if the consultant gave any suggestions for remediations, such as redistribution of funds. E. Seaver answered that some suggestions were given for some aspects of how other programs are run, but no specific recommendations were given as to how to acquire funds. M. Martin noted that he attends meetings with other honors directors in the state once a year, and he is aware of a number of different models of honors programs, many of which work very well, but are considerably higher funded.

E. Seaver said that the consultant’s report will be directed to the new Provost who will be starting in July. He also noted that the honors strategic planning task force will keep UCC informed of steps being made.

B. Election of Faculty Chair for 2006-2007

E. Seaver asked for nominations of continuing and/or new members to serve as Faculty Chair of UCC for 2006-2007.

A. Doederlein nominated Buck Stephen, a new incoming UCC member from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. M. Van Wienen nominated Linda Derscheid, a current and continuing member of UCC. By majority vote of raised hands, Linda Derscheid was elected Faculty Chair of UCC for 2006-2007.

C. Proposal from CIUE - Syllabi

M. Van Wienen brought forward the following proposal from the Committee on the Improvement of Undergraduate Education (CIUE):
In response to student requests for more open access to course syllabi, it is proposed that an on-line location to house recent/current syllabi for all courses at NIU be created to be used for future semester course registration. CIUE is interested in pursuing the proposal and seeks UCC input.

He noted that CIUE is interested in UCC’s overall impressions of this proposal, as well as concerns or ideas relative to feasibility, and how it may be implemented.

B. Wilkins commented that she sees it valid to make course descriptions and goals available; however, she is not in support of making course syllabi available on the web. Syllabi change often from semester to semester. She said that individual assignments are the purview of the faculty member, and she feels that this would be a “shopping adventure” for the students. P. Brown stated that she somewhat does that now and that a disclaimer should be noted on the page stating that this “is subject to change at any time.”

L. Derscheid pointed out that the financial cost to do this might not be feasible, with the current limited university resources as there would have to be someone assigned to do this. M. Van Wienen said that this issue did come up at CIUE, and it was noted that the administrative staff of every department already collects paper copies of syllabi. The difficulty of asking for an electronic copy of the syllabi would not be prohibitive from a work standpoint; however, the question of who would put the syllabi together on the Blackboard site would then be the issue, and the committee did not have a definite answer for that. C. T. Lin pointed out that some departments already have syllabi online, and it might be a good idea to survey departments to see how many are already doing this.

E. Seaver said that this issue has surfaced twice in the last few years, once through the General Education Committee from the Student Association. He noted that for many of the general education courses, there are expanded descriptions of those courses online through Registration and Records, so many of the faculty in departments have provided a more expanded version, although not a full, syllabus of what is listed in the catalog. A. Doederlein noted that students also have the ability to visit any department and obtain a printed copy of a course syllabus.

M. Van Wienen said that students want available to them electronically what is already available on paper, and this is basically an issue of paper versus electronic. He went on to say that since the information is already available, why not make it available easier and control the process with a disclaimer. He suggested that a straw poll of the committee be taken, and he would report back to CIUE what approach UCC would like to take on this issue.

E. Seaver commented that students essentially would like it to be mandatory that the most recent syllabus for the class would be posted; however, faculty own the syllabus so this would have to be a volunteer effort on the part of faculty.

M. Van Wienen called for a straw poll of UCC members as to whether UCC members would be in favor of CIUE in pursuing the issue of online syllabi. Results of the straw poll showed that two members of UCC were in favor of CIUE pursuing the issue, with nine UCC members not in favor of CIUE pursuing the issue. M. Van Wienen will report results of the straw poll to CIUE.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m. The next UCC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 7, 2006, beginning at 1:00 p.m. in Altgeld Hall 203.
Respectfully submitted,
Mollie Keller