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 May 5, 2005, meeting were electronically approved.

B. Introductions

Committee members introduced themselves and stated which department they were representing.

C. Catalog Editor Search Update

E. Seaver reported that the search is in progress to fill the Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator position which is vacant due to the retirement of Kay Van Mol in the spring of 2005. Candidate interviews are currently underway, and it is hoped that an individual will be identified soon to fill this position.

III. Reports/Minutes from Standing Committees

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

Since there was no continuing member on UCC to report on the last APASC meeting, E. Seaver provided the report of the April 27, 2005, meeting.
E. Seaver noted that the one item of significance at the April 27th meeting was the grading system issue. The issue of proposing a change in the present grading system was passed on to UCC from the Executive Secretary of University Council. At the direction of UCC, APASC essentially spent much of last year reviewing a proposal to modify the undergraduate grading system, proposing to change from a straight A-B-C-D-F letter grading system to some other scale grading system such as a plus/minus system. The committee collected information from the colleges, in particular from the student advisory committees. In reviewing all of the information that was presented to APASC during this past year, the committee has determined and is reporting back to UCC that there does not appear to be sufficient nor majority support for changing the grading system at this time. UCC will now have to decide on how it wants to respond back to University Council with regard to this issue.

M. Van Wienen asked to what extent the main activity was done in polling different groups about their feelings or interest in changing the grading system. He also asked if there was a component of institutional research reporting regarding the systems used at this university and other universities, etc., that would create some sense of what NIU’s cohorts at similar universities are doing in order to begin to determine what the advantages of changing the system might be. He observed that it appears that the main polling was done of the different NIU colleges. E. Seaver responded that Don Larson, Executive Director of Enrollment Services, Registration and Records, brought to the committee a lengthy document that showed the kind of issues and data that would need to be addressed. It included comparisons and how this issue would relate to grade inflation, as well as questions that needed to be asked. He said that, as the committee discussed these and other issues brought forward early in the semester, the committee asked for feedback from the College Councils and the respective faculty groups, but the one thing that the committee felt very strongly about was that they needed to get the feel of the students. Students have been involved with this issue all along, and from the information gathered from the student groups heard from, it appeared that there was not a general support for moving in this direction. In particular, the groups that were most against a change were the Honors Program; those groups felt that it would have more of an effect on those students than it would have on others. For example, if a student receives all A’s now, he earns a 4.0, but if an A- is added then the GPA is no longer a 4.0. The last information the committee wanted was to hear from the individual colleges, thus the student advisory groups were asked since these groups are comprised of representatives from all of the departments. E. Seaver stated that the committee felt they looked at the issue very rigorously in terms of advantages and disadvantages. They did not feel there was a real advantage to make a change in that direction at this time.

Other APASC discussion revolved around dismissals and reinstatements; however, this issue was tabled until the 2005-2006 academic year.
For the benefit of new UCC members, E. Seaver explained that APASC deals with the admissions policies and academic standards, such as limited admissions, limited retention, changes in admission requirements, etc. He said that during this academic year, other than items that may come through on a regular basis as to programs seeking limited admissions, etc., any program that is going through a program review that has a limited admission and/or limited retention part to their program has to be reapproved at the time of the program review. Thus, those will be a part of the APASC process for this year.

E. Seaver made a motion to receive the April 27, 2005, minutes of the Admissions Policies and Academic Standards Committee meeting. The motion carried.

B. General Education Committee – D. Rusin

D. Rusin gave a brief overview of the General Education Committee responsibilities. He explained that GEC monitors the general education program on campus which includes both the distributive studies area and the core competencies. The committee reviews how the individual courses fit into the program, making sure that each of the courses adheres to the general education goals. E. Seaver also noted that assessment of general education will be the focus of the General Education Committee this year. He explained that one issue raised in the North Central Association accreditation a few years ago was what appeared to be the lack of a plan to assess the general education component of the institution. Over the summer there has been some work done but the committee will focus primarily this year on general education assessment. He explained that the review cycle has been adjusted so that there will not be routine reviews this year; however, any new proposals for general education will be reviewed as they are submitted.

C. Honors Committee – W. Goldenberg

W. Goldenberg gave an overview of the Honors Committee. He stated that one valuable item that the Honors Committee oversees is the EYE grants program which is a fund that students may apply to for grants. The grants are similar to research grants in that a student may apply for funding by writing a grant application. Students gain experience in writing grants and are able to develop a fund for research that they want to do, which could cover travel, supplies or other things that they may need. This is annual spring activity of the Honors Committee.

In addition, reports are heard at each Honors Committee meeting from the Director of the Honors Program regarding his activities, the Assistant Director who advises many of the students, and the coordinator of activities. The committee also hears from student members on the committee as to their needs, complaints, etc.

E. Seaver added that the Honors Program will be bringing a consultant to campus this year to do a review of the Honors Program.
D. Committee on the Improvement of Undergraduate Education – M. Van Wienen

Giving an overview of the committee responsibilities, M. Van Wienen explained that the main task of this committee is to fund and support proposals submitted to the committee for projects for the improvement of undergraduate education. He stated that the committee spent some time last fall refining the language on how the proposals were described and the information that is put out to the faculty. Last spring the committee received many proposals requesting funding for various projects supporting undergraduate education. The committee funded approximately half of the proposals submitted.

He went on to say that the other task of this committee is to receive and review applications for the Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award (EUTA). This process culminates with the awarding of three faculty members being named for this award.

Reporting on the April 18, 2005, meeting, M. Van Wienen stated that the committee discussed the expansion of the Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award, and it was approved at the end of last year, via committee motion, that CIUE recommended the creation of a new teaching excellence award for instructors rather than an expansion of the EUTA. The committee also moved to form a subcommittee which would work over the summer to develop procedures, criteria and application forms for the new award. The subcommittee is to report on its progress at the first CIUE meeting of the 2005-2006 academic year.

M. Van Wienen made a motion to receive the April 18, 2005, minutes of the Committee on the Improvement of Undergraduate Education. The motion passed.

E. Committee on the Undergraduate Academic Environment – E. Seaver

E. Seaver stated that the CUAE committee has suffered over the past two years with a lack of identity and lack of direction. At the last CUAE meeting of 2004-2005, the committee spent time trying to develop some direction. Included in the UCC annual report was a list of several items that were discussed as possible topics for the 2005-2006 year. E. Seaver met with the Vice President for Student Affairs and discussed making better use of this committee, trying to understand where they are going with the whole undergraduate experience, wrapping this around the concept of student satisfaction and retention/graduation, thus merging what is done academically with the experience the students have from the other activities that they participate in. The committee is looking to UCC to help in providing some direction as to where that committee sees CUAE going in the future. He anticipates that the first CUAE meeting may result in requesting to have a dialogue with not only the
representatives from UCC but also additional representatives from this group who could communicate what UCC feels should be the direction.

C. T. Lin added that there has been a lack of student input as to what kind of environment they desire to have. He noted that in the past, the committee has been proactive, and meetings were held in different locations in order for committee members to observe and get a feel for the student environment which gave committee members a good feel for the student environment.

E. Seaver stated the committee is also responsible for the awarding of the Undergraduate Student Opportunities in Artistry and Research (USOAR) annual student awards. He reported that these awards were valuable and will be continued through 2005-2006.

F. Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum – E. Seaver

E. Seaver gave a brief overview of the Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum, stating that all curricular items come through this committee for approval. He went on to explain that the Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator works very closely with the chair of this committee to get things in order for the committee to review, develops the consent agenda, develops items that need to be on the agenda for approval, and works with the college curricular deans. One change for this upcoming year will be that the Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator will also have the same role on the General Education Committee. The Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator will work with all of the curriculum committees, including Committee on Initial Teacher Certification and the Graduate Council Curriculum Committee, to be the liaison in the Vice Provost’s office. The role of the Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator will change also as the transition is made to an electronic, database driven, catalog. He noted that printed catalogs will still be available although the number of printed copies will be significantly reduced.

E. Seaver also informed the committee that Don Larson, Executive Director of Enrollment Services, who has been overseeing the transition to the online catalog, has announced his retirement which will be effective October 1, 2005. A search will be underway soon for a replacement.

IV. Other Reports

A. University Assessment Panel – P. Webb

P. Webb reported that the university has satisfactorily met the mandates of the IBHE. The UAP has also conducted a survey of NIU students and their experience at NIU at the end of their first year.
E. Seaver announced that Carolinda Douglass will be serving as the Acting Coordinator of Assessment Services for the university for the upcoming year.

V. **Old Business**

(There was no old business.)

VI. **New Business**

A. **Representatives for Standing Committees for 2005-2006**

E. Seaver asked for representatives to serve on the UCC standing committees for 2005-2006. The following committee members will serve as indicated:

- APASC - N. Boubekri
- CIUE - M. Van Wienen
- CUAE - C. T. Lin
- CUC - W. Goldenberg
- GEC - D. Rusin, E. Wilkins
- Honors - L. Derscheid, J. Gau

B. **Selection of UCC Faculty Representative and Student Representative to the University Assessment Panel**

P. Webb will serve as UCC Faculty Representative to the University Assessment Panel. As no student committee members were in attendance, a student selection will be made at the next meeting.

C. **Date/Agenda for Annual UCC Retreat**

E. Seaver asked for suggestions for a date and agenda topics for the annual UCC Retreat. He suggested that committee members give some thought to issues that might be addressed, such as issues that relate to undergraduate education in general. Also, a number of issues that relate to retention/graduation could be addressed.

E. Seaver announced that Orientation has now become a part of the Division of Student Affairs, in an attempt to continue to develop a more expanded first year experience and to focus on that. In conjunction with this, it might be possible that Vice President of Student Affairs, Dr. Brian Hemphill, could be asked to address the group regarding a number of initiatives that are being done now that are different, new or expanded on.

After additional discussion, it was decided to table the topic of a retreat until the next UCC meeting.

VII. **Adjournment**
The meeting was adjourned at 1:58 p.m. The next UCC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 6, 2005, beginning at 1:00 p.m. in Watson Hall 233.

Respectfully submitted,
Mollie Keller