MINUTES

Approved

Present: A. Doederlein (LAS), W. Goldenberg, (VPA), D. Gorman (LAS), J. Hansen (BUS), B. Hart (VPA), Isabel (HHS), C. Jones (LAS), R. Kilaparti (EET), C. T. Lin (LAS), K. Mantzke (BUS), B. Montgomery (HHS), S. Morris (HHS), E. Seaver (Vice Provost), D. Shernoff (EDU), C. Snow (LIB), J. Stephen (LAS)

Absent: M. Kostic (EET), C. Malecki (LAS), E. Wilkins (EDU)

Guest: D. Smith, Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator

I. Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made by E. Seaver, seconded by C. Snow, to approve the agenda. The motion carried.

II. Announcements

A. Introductions

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

B. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by E. Seaver, seconded by C. Snow, to approve the minutes of the May 1, 2008, Undergraduate Coordinating Council meeting. The motion carried.

C. Student Information System Update

E. Seaver reported that the new student information system, MyNIU, is now up and running and continues to be an evolving process. He said that the first step in the process was to get the catalog implemented, and that has been completed. In continuing to move forward, additional functionalities will be determined and added as they are identified by various groups and committees across campus.
III. Reports/Minutes from Standing Committees

E. Seaver asked current standing committee representatives, even if there is currently no report to present, to provide UCC members with an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the committee they represent.

A. Admissions Policies and Academic Standards Committee

(There was no report.) W. Goldenberg explained that the work of the APASC committee relates to academic matters such as approval of limited admissions programs, add/drop and withdrawal policies.

B. General Education Committee

(There was no report.) D. Gorman gave an overview of the work of the General Education Committee. He said that the GEC does a range of things with regard to the general education program, such as approving and reviewing general education courses from each department, overseeing the entire general education program and making recommendations. He noted that during this upcoming year, the committee will be spending the year reviewing and discussing the general education program and its goals.

E. Seaver added that the GEC recently sent a team of faculty (GEC members and a few other individuals) to the general education institute sponsored by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). A proposal about general education review was developed, submitted to, and accepted by the AAC&U. The team worked with representatives from AAC&U as a group on the concept of reviewing the general education curriculum at NIU, something which has not been done to any great extent since 1983. Out of those discussions, it was determined that the piece of the process that was missing was to first identify what the goals are for the baccalaureate degree at NIU. Also, as a result of the discussions, a steering committee and task force were developed that will spend this academic year reviewing and developing a set of student learning outcomes for the baccalaureate degree at Northern. He explained that this will then drive a campus wide discussion and the development of goals by GEC for approval by UCC by the end of the academic year. He noted that the following academic year would not only be a review of general education but also a review of all programs as to the contribution to the baccalaureate goals. More information will be distributed to campus as the steering committee’s work progresses.

J. Stephen asked if there was a problem with the current general education goals. E. Seaver answered that the feeling of the General Education Committee was that many of the current general education goals are not measurable. He said that the committee desired to have a campus discussion about the goals to determine whether the campus feels the current goals are sufficient. One issue that arose is that the Higher Learning Commission was not really satisfied with NIU’s evaluation of general education. He added that the General Education Committee has been trying
to develop an assessment plan because many of the goals of the general education program either can not easily be measured or are almost impossible to measure. However, he noted, before the issue of the contribution of general education can be addressed, the bigger issue of what the goals of the baccalaureate degree at NIU are needs to be focused on. The discussion about the general education piece of that will follow after the discussion about the goals for the baccalaureate degree. He added that another facet of the issue is how well faculty and students know what the goals of the baccalaureate degree are as the goals are not well articulated.

J. Stephen asked if assessment of the general education program as a whole is still being discussed. E. Seaver responded that a general education committee has been working on assessment plan over the past two years, or longer, but one of the problems which arose was determining what was really being measured and what could be measured.

D. Gorman reiterated that the General Education Committee will continue to spend this academic year talking about the aspect of reforming the general education.

C. Honors Committee

J. Hansen reported on the April 25, 2008, meeting of the University Honors Committee and gave an overview of the committee’s responsibilities to advise, monitor, evaluate and make recommendations for the improvement of the University Honors Program.

J. Hansen made a motion, seconded by C. Snow, to receive the April 25, 2008, minutes of the University Honors Committee meeting. The motion carried.

E. Seaver announced that Dr. Nancy Castle, College of Health and Human Sciences, has been appointed to serve as Interim Director of the University Honors Program for 2008-2009, while a search for a new director is conducted. He also noted that Daniel Kempton, Department of Political Science, will serve as faculty chair of the University Honors Committee for 2008-2009.

D. Committee on the Improvement of Undergraduate Education

(There was no report.) E. Seaver noted that the primary focus of the CIUE committee is the Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and Instruction Award processes. The committee also accepts proposals for and makes determination of the recipients of a series of undergraduate improvement grants that are awarded during the spring semester.

E. Committee on the Undergraduate Academic Environment

(There was no report.) J. Isabel gave an overview of the work of the CUAE committee. She described that the committee looks at and makes recommendations for the safety and security of students on campus. Topics are wide-spread, and
various guest speakers are regularly scheduled to provide updates and/or presentations related to the environment that supports the academic mission of the university.

F. **Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum**

(There was no report.) E. Seaver said that this committee’s work revolves around the approval of undergraduate curriculum. The committee reviews recommendations from the colleges, makes referrals to other committees or groups when additional input is needed, and tries to resolve conflicts about non-duplication.

IV. **Other Reports**

A. **University Assessment Panel**

E. Seaver stated that this committee oversees the assessment plan for the department, colleges and other units on campus. There is a review cycle for assessment plans and programs submitting yearly assessment data. This committee works with Virginia Cassidy, Vice Provost for Academic Planning and Development, and Carolinda Douglass, Director, Assessment Services.

V. **Old Business**

There was no old business.

VI. **New Business**

A. **Selection of UCC Faculty Co-Chair for 2008-2009**

Art Doederlein volunteered and was approved by the committee to serve as Faculty-Co-Chair for 2008-2009.

B. **Representatives of UCC Standing Committees for 2008-2009**

The following UCC members were approved to serve as faculty representatives to UCC standing committees for 2008-2009:

- APASC – William Goldenberg
- CIUE – Kate Mantzke
- CUAE – Jeanne Isabel
- CUC – David Shernoff
- GEC – David Gorman, J. Buck Stephen
- HONORS – John Hansen
C. Selection of UCC Faculty Representative and Student Representative to the University Assessment Panel

Sherrill Morris volunteered and was approved by UCC committee members to serve as UCC faculty representative to the University Assessment Panel for 2008-2009. As no student committee members were in attendance, selection of a student representative will be made at a future meeting.

D. Date/Agenda for Annual UCC Retreat

E. Seaver discussed with committee members the possibility of scheduling an annual retreat. No retreat has been planned for the past few years, but prior to that UCC held a half-day retreat, usually on a Saturday morning. Last year, in place of a retreat, the committee asked Provost Alden to come to a regularly scheduled meeting to speak to the group about strategic planning. E. Seaver asked the group for their input as to whether they felt the need to schedule a retreat.

A. Doederlein commented that he remembered several years when the retreats were well attended and very productive, but more recently attendance has not been as good. He said that he felt it would be just as productive to have the Provost attend a UCC meeting and share some his plans and concerns.

C. T. Lin added that he thought past retreats were most useful when the Provost would attend. He said that standing committee chairs were also invited to the retreat which helped provide an overview and a better idea and understanding of each committee’s goals.

E. Seaver said that he felt it would be beneficial and appropriate to invite Provost Alden to attend the October UCC meeting to give an update on strategic planning and a couple of other topics. He suggested that the topic of a retreat be tabled for further discussion at the next meeting, thus giving committee members additional time to give this some further thoughts as to what a retreat might be focused on.

Upon consensus of the committee, E. Seaver agreed to talk with Provost Alden about the possibility of his speaking at the October UCC meeting.

E. Catalog Five or Six Year Clarification

A. Doederlein asked for clarification on the catalog year change from five to six years. He said it used to be that five was added to the second number of the first catalog year (2003-2004 plus five would be August of 2009). However, it appears now that Registration and Records is reading 2003-2004 as expired the fall of 2008. So, the question is, are six years being added or five years to the first number or the second number of the academic year? E. Seaver said that he would get clarification on this.

VII. Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

The next UCC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 2, 2008, beginning at 1:00 p.m. in Altgeld Hall 203.

Respectfully submitted,
Mollie Montgomery