I. Adoption of Agenda

Seaver suggested revising the order of the agenda to receive the report from the Admissions Policies and Academic Standards Committee first and move the report from the Committee on the Undergraduate Academic Environment to the end of the other committee reports. He explained that guests Mary Pritchard and David Wade were in attendance to answer questions regarding the APASC committee report, and this would require them to stay only for the first portion of the meeting.

A motion was made by Schlabach, seconded by Reeves, to approve the revised agenda. The motion carried.

II. Announcements

A. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the December 9, 2010, Undergraduate Coordinating Council meeting were electronically approved.

III. Reports/Minutes from Standing Committees

A. Admissions Policies and Academic Standards Committee

Goldenberg reported that at the November 10, 2010, meeting of APASC, the committee approved a request for limited retention in the proposed Minor in International Marketing and several curricular items forwarded by the Committee on the
Goldenberg made a motion, seconded by Reeves, to receive the November 10, 2010, minutes of the Admissions Policies and Academic Standards Committee meeting. **The motion carried.**

Goldenberg also reported on the December 8, 2010, meeting of APASC. The committee discussed and approved amended language for both the academic integrity catalog language, which is included in the Misconduct Policy Language, and the revised Procedures for Appealing Allegedly Capricious Semester Grades and /or Grade Penalties for Violations of Academic Integrity of Undergraduate Students. The committee also discussed and reviewed the Certificate in Public Sector Leadership referred by the CUC and referred that certificate back to the department for rationale regarding the requirement of the 3.0 GPA.

Nicolosi asked whether the Academic Integrity Language had actually been voted on by the University Council. Seaver provided some background, stating that this wording initiated in Faculty Senate with the original language being brought to APASC for consideration last year. He said that APASC made a recommendation, and UCC then looked at the recommendation as a walk-in item prior to receiving the minutes from APASC and developed different language that went to the catalog. When the APASC minutes from last spring did come forward, it was pointed out to UCC that, if those minutes were to be approved, there would be two different sets of catalog language in existence with each one stating something different. To resolve this issue, a subcommittee comprised of two members of APASC (David Wade and Mary Pritchard) and two members of UCC (Orayb Najjar and Paul Stoddard) was formed and charged with developing language that would be acceptable to both committees. Seaver explained that reports from UCC are forwarded to University Council for their review and acceptance. University Council may either choose to accept the minutes from UCC or return them to UCC for reconsideration.

Najjar commented that the Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct has now published language that is different and contradicts some of the language that has been decided on. She noted that this language was just forwarded recently. Seaver clarified that UCC deals with catalog language, and the language now before this committee is language for the catalog and the Academic Policies and Procedures Manual (APPM) as it relates to the proposal made by the Ad Hoc Committee to deal with the
difference in the two sets of wording between that approved by APASC and that approved by UCC. David Wade added that the language in the APASC minutes contains the original language which was approved by UCC last May. He explained that the only language being dealt with is the last sentence which reads:

In cases where a student feels the penalty of less than or equal to an F in a course is excessive and/or inappropriate, an appeal of the penalty only may be made through the grade appeal process.

Wade said the original policy that came from Faculty Senate placed that appellate procedure through the College Council. Many individuals felt that the College Council was not the appropriate place for the appeal, so, as a result of the Ad Hoc Committee discussion,

it was determined that the departmental level would be the more appropriate body for the appeal, and the grade appeal policy procedures should be edited to modify the wording in order to accommodate that appeal process. He added that the language now before the committee includes the amendments to the APPM to accommodate the new action, a couple of editorial changes, and the addition of the above sentence. Seaver further clarified that the language coming forward designates a different faculty body for the appeal than what was originally proposed. The language currently in the Student Code of Conduct is the language from last year that runs parallel with what was approved last year.

Baker asked for clarification on which documents and/or pages of the paper copies of the language provided is currently being discussed and on the table. Wade replied that the APASC minutes of December 8, 2010, were currently on the table being discussed, with pages five through nine of those minutes being the pages showing the proposed language changes highlighted in yellow. Baker indicated that there was a lack in clarity, and Najjar agreed. Wade asked for insight into what specifically was lacking clarity. Baker replied that innumerable communications have been received from department chairs and faculty members objecting to the language. He emphasized that these are very serious matters which essentially affect faculty integrity. Wade responded that these APASC minutes could certainly be returned to APASC, but the committee would need to have some further direction. Baker repeated that there is a lack of clarity. Wade again asked that it be pointed out where the lack of clarity is. Najjar suggested that comments submitted from other professors in the Department of Communication be shared. Wade said that the only language that might be interpreted as unclear might be “excessive and/or inappropriate penalty” as that phrase is not well defined and that wording is included in the sentence on page five, which is the only sentence being
revised. Baker said that there was objection to the wording “excessive and/or inappropriate.” Baker quoted an email received from Associate Dean Sue Doederlein which reads “several chairs noted that the language on page 8, Item d. states that the grade penalty was excessive and/or inappropriate and merits further consideration.” It is felt that the word “was” should be replaced with the words “may have been.” Wade agreed and apologized for that inconsistency in the wording. Pritchard commented that issue was brought up and discussed at the last APASC meeting, and Wade said that he has gotten assurance from the APASC committee that they are willing to accept that editorial change in the language in the APPM. Seaver will make sure that change is made and will be reflected in the UCC minutes.

Baker asked if the comments submitted from faculty members and chairs could be forwarded to be included as an attachment to this UCC meeting minutes.

Seaver reiterated that the key sentence is the last sentence . . . “In cases where the student feels the penalty of less than or equal to an F in the course is excessive and/or inappropriate, an appeal of the penalty only may be made through the grade appeal process.” Najjar asked for clarification on what is excessive and what is inappropriate and who would define these terms? Seaver noted that this same question might be asked about what the word “capricious.”

Wade described that, under the current policy, if a student commits academic misconduct and admits to it, and the faculty member has a penalty in the syllabus, then the faculty member may give the student an “F” or less in the class. The issue is then considered done, and the student is referred to the Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct. If a student disputes whether they actually are or are not responsible for the academic misconduct, then that issue goes to the Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct, and a hearing is held on that matter through that office. If the Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct reaches a decision that the student is responsible, the decision of that office on the finding of being responsible is binding. That office may then offer a suggestion of a penalty other than the penalty accorded by the faculty member, but the faculty member has the ultimate discretion as to what he/she wants to do. Wade provided an example, stating that, if everyone is in agreement that the student is responsible, and the Judicial Board has said that they don’t feel that an “F” in the course is appropriate, but the professor does, the professor’s decision rules. At that point, there is nothing a student may do; there is no further
appellate process to appeal the penalty. He pointed out that this change in wording will offer an opportunity for that student to challenge whether the penalty fits the crime.

Wade explained further, using another example, that if a faculty member decided to put on his/her syllabus that a cell phone ringing in the class constitutes academic misconduct and an “F” in the class, a student would clearly be guilty of that if the cell phone went off during the class. The Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct could then only find the student responsible, and an “F” in the class would be given. Wade questioned whether we are willing to deprive students of an appellate procedure that allows them to challenge what they believe might be excessive or inappropriate penalties based upon the nature of the academic misconduct. He emphasized that currently there is no body that can look at that type of issue. He pointed out that in the original discussions and proposal, Faculty Senate believed there should be an appellate body, and they opted for that body to be the College Council. He said there was agreement that the College Council is probably not the appropriate body since it represents all the departments in the college. Thus, the departmental level was felt to be the appropriate mechanism, as is the case in the grade appeal process, rather than creating another mechanism or committee to handle such appeals. Wade explained that, in conjunction with this, the Grade Appeal Procedures language in the APPM has been modified to accommodate this appellate procedure.

Wade went on to say that, in answer to the question as to how to define excessive and/or inappropriate, that grade appeal hearing board would be making those decisions on a case by case basis. Najjar asked what happens if this decision is being made after the student has done something wrong, because, at that point, what is being said is that what is in the syllabus doesn’t apply any more. She asked then what the professor should do in that case, redo all the grades? Wade replied that this circumstance would only apply to the student who has been found responsible of academic misconduct either voluntarily or through the hearing board, and it would apply to no other students in the class. If the same penalty was imposed upon the other students in the class for academic misconduct, they would have the same challenge, either to accept the penalty or to file an appeal.

Baker said that faculty in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences are very concerned that faculty decisions and/or responsibilities will be watered down. He also said that the language of “excessive and/or inappropriate” is a very different thing from “capricious,” and the two situations should not be thrown together in the same policy. He added that capricious grading is a serious act of misconduct whereas “excessive and/or inappropriate” penalties are simply used as crutches to protect others just as some professors are harsher graders than others. Baker went on to express that, having sent his share of incident misconduct forms, he would feel much happier if the whole
Academic Misconduct procedure/policy were being challenged, as he feels that the proceedings and the process are inappropriate.

Wade emphasized that the issue being discussed here is not the Academic Misconduct Policy. He said he did agree with Baker that faculty have the ultimate prerogative to do what they want in their class as a matter of general principle. In response to Baker’s concern about whether faculty should have the ultimate prerogative without any interference and/or intrusion as to defining what academic misconduct is and assessing the penalties for that, Wade responded that, as a general matter in 99.9% of the cases, he feels they should have. However, he added, then the issue arises as to what should be done with the bad faith professor. He said there is nothing that can be done in that situation because there is no body designated to make an assessment of such a situation. He also pointed out that there seems to be an underlying subtext here that indicates the assumption that any grade appeal is won by the student. Wade suggested that hardly any of these appeal cases are resolved in favor of the student because the professor has appropriately defined what academic misconduct is and has assessed an appropriate penalty for that violation. He again asked, what should be done when there isn’t? He emphasized that’s what this wording change is dealing with. Wade clarified that doesn’t address the concern about the Academic Misconduct Policy, but, if there is a desire to modify that policy, that would have to be undertaken separately, and it would take another year to accomplish that.

Seaver informed the committee that Paul Stoddard could not attend the UCC meeting today. However, since Stoddard had been a member of the Ad Hoc committee developing the proposal language, Stoddard contacted him before the meeting to provide his insight into this matter so it could be shared with UCC. Seaver described an issue the two of them discussed that potentially could arise. He explained that, without the proposed language, the institution does not have a means to resolve the issue of the student who feels that they are not responsible for the academic misconduct. In such an instance, the student would use the policies and procedures available to them through the Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct and is found by a panel, which includes a faculty member, to not be responsible. This creates a dilemma in which the student has followed through on a process that is available to that student, the student then goes back to the faculty member to report that he/she has been found not responsible, but the faculty member tells the student that the penalty is still going to be imposed. This now creates the issue of how to resolve this situation. Seaver explained that the proposed process, which he reported Stoddard supports, would be a means to resolve this type of situation when there is a disagreement between the faculty member and another body that has a faculty member on it. This policy would provide that student the right to appeal the penalty using the grade appeal process where the decision would be made by the faculty member rather than by some other group, the College Council or the dean. The proposed language would allow this conflict to be resolved at the level of the grade appeal process.
Reeves asked if there was an approval process or review of faculty syllabi every year or if that was at the discretion of the faculty member. Wade answered that it is solely within the discretion of the individual instructor/professor. Pritchard added that syllabi are reported and reviewed in the College of Health of Human Sciences in conjunction with the Faculty Service Reports each year. Wade said each college handles this differently. Seaver added that, generally within the institution, the faculty member is responsible for the syllabus.

Lindvall commented that part of this language, from a student’s perspective, is difficult to understand. She said most students would have trouble understanding terminology related to capricious grading and the grade appeal process. She feels that, since this language directly affects students, there needs to be a way in which the average student can be helped to understand what this means and the seriousness of it, especially with regard to terms such as academic integrity. She said often times in the syllabus these terms are not explained or overlooked. She feels that there needs to be more clarity so it is easier for students to truly understand what is expected of them and how these policies directly affect them.

Morris said that she likes the wording of the proposed last sentence as it does not include the word “capricious”. She feels that a student reading the sentence will understand that it is the student’s judgment and student’s decision whether to appeal. Pritchard added that the burden of truth is then placed on the student to build a case that the penalty is excessive and/or inappropriate that would be reviewed by the departmental grade appeal committee, which, in most colleges, consists of faculty and students.

Seaver reminded the group that this goes back to the question of what is considered to be academic misconduct, and this only applies to those issues of academic misconduct. He added that this is not related to having standards but rather to what conduct falls under the rubric of misconduct because of the penalty associated with that. He summarized the rationale for the language and repeated that this issue is centered around academic misconduct and is not related to allowing students to complain because a faculty member is too harsh of a grader. He went on to repeat Wade’s statement that one of the original problems with this proposal was that the faculty did not feel that the College Council was the appropriate appellate process because all other appeals related to grades are handled within the individual department. He added that the department is the environment and culture where these decisions should actually be made rather than by individuals in other departments or beyond the level of the faculty. The feeling was to find a process that already exists that incorporates the faculty rather than trying to redesign the entire process at the department level. He emphasized that there is a process which has been embedded through the institution for a number of years now which has held up over time.

Baker asked for confirmation of a wording change for page eight, item d. Wade confirmed that the word “was” in item d. will be changed to “may have been.” The sentence will be revised to read:
Najjar pointed out that there appeared to be a mistake in the wording of one sentence on page eight of the minutes. Wade confirmed that the word “grade” should be inserted prior to the word penalty in the sentence identified by Najjar. The editorial change will be made, and the sentence will be revised to read as follows:

The Grade Review Board shall, as a result of its consideration, recommend a grade and/or grade penalty the same as or different from the grade alleged to be capricious.

Lindvall asked for clarification on the definition of academic misconduct. She wondered if there was a university-wide definition of academic misconduct that applies fully in all classes or if it was up to discretion of the individual faculty member in each class. Seaver responded that academic misconduct is defined by the Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct and documents containing information about academic misconduct are available on that office’s website.

Reeves asked if there was a formal process or mechanism for disagreeing with a faculty member’s syllabus. Wade said there is no formal process for filing a complaint about a syllabus, but a student could complain to the faculty member, department chair, or dean.

Wade commented that he feels that having an appellate process is essential to maintaining a perception of integrity of the institution and to leave students with no recourse is not the direction to be moving in terms of our relationship with students.

Baker asked for clarification as to what happens once a vote is taken on the APASC minutes of December 8, 2010, and suggested that committee members not be too impressed by the word “appellate.” Seaver commented that he was appreciative of Baker’s use of language.

Seaver explained that the UCC minutes, once approved, go forward to University Council for review. He said that University Council can either then accept them or send them back to UCC to reconsider, but basically this is not a yes or no vote by University Council. Seaver added that, if UCC does not accept the APASC minutes, they have the option of returning these minutes to APASC for reconsideration.

Goldenberg made a motion, seconded by Reeves, to receive the December 8, 2010, minutes of the Admissions Policies and Academic Standards
Committee meeting with the suggested revisions to page eight. The motion carried.

Seaver thanked David Wade and Mary Pritchard for attending the meeting and for their participation on the Ad Hoc committee which developed language. He added that he appreciates the work and the seriousness with which everyone has approached this issue.

Najjar expressed concern that the APASC minutes of December 8, 2010, did not accurately reflect the content of the discussion surrounding the academic integrity language issue. Seaver said he feels the content of committee meeting minutes is important, and increased efforts will be made in the future to make sure the minutes describe more accurately the context of the meetings. He also encouraged faculty members to provide feedback if they feel the content of what is being included in the minutes is not expressed accurately.

B. Committee on the Improvement of Undergraduate Education

There was no report, however, corrected minutes of the October 11, 2010, meeting were distributed. It was noted that this set of minutes were accepted at the December 9, 2010, UCC meeting with modifications recommended.

C. Committee on the Undergraduate Academic Environment

Schlabach reported on the November 9, 2010, meeting of the CUAE. She reported that the committee developed and approved language to encourage and support spirituality and religious growth in the NIU course curriculum. She pointed out the memorandum from CUAE chair Tom Bough to UCC encouraging support of this recommendation. The committee also received an enrollment management update from Brian Hemphill, Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, and a presentation on Themed Learning Communities by Julia Spears, Coordinator of Engaged Learning.

Schlabach made a motion, seconded by Baker, to receive the November 9, 2010, minutes of the Committee on the Undergraduate Academic Environment meeting. The motion carried.

D. Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum

There was no report.
E. General Education Committee

Seaver provided an overview of the November 18, 2010, General Education Committee meeting, noting that the focus of this meeting was on assessment, working with the new baccalaureate goals, and reviewing and revising the resubmission process in order to gather data as it relates to accreditation.

**Lin made a motion, seconded by Schlabach, to receive the November 18, 2010, minutes of the General Education Committee meeting. The motion carried.**

Seaver also reviewed the January 20, 2011, minutes of the General Education Committee meeting, noting that the committee heard a report from the General Education Coordinator and discussed the meeting schedule calendar and the general education website.

**Lin made a motion, seconded by Schlabach, to receive the January 20, 2011, minutes of the General Education Committee meeting. The motion carried.**

F. Honors Committee

Seaver reported that at the November 5, 2010, University Honors Committee meeting the committee heard reports from the director and coordinator, discussed the Enhance Your Education (EYE) grant proposal forms and evaluation rubric, and recruitment receptions for Honors students.

**Lin made a motion, seconded by Schlabach, to receive the November 5, 2010, minutes of the University Honors Committee meeting. The motion carried.**

Seaver also announced that Daniel Kempton, Director of the Honors Program, has accepted a position at another institution and will be leaving NIU at the end of June. A search will be done during this upcoming spring semester to find a replacement. It is hoped to have a new director identified by July 1, 2011.
IV. Other Reports

A. University Assessment Panel

Morris reported on three meetings of the University Assessment Panel. She reported that at the December 3, 2010, meeting, announcements were made pertaining to the Assessment Expo scheduled for February 18, 2011, and an assessment guest speaker scheduled for March 25, 2011. The committee heard details of the 2010-2011 University Writing Project and reviewed status and funding reports from several units.

Morris made a motion, seconded by Lindvall, to receive the December 3, 2010, notes of the University Assessment Panel meeting. The motion carried.

Morris reported on the January 21, 2011, and February 4, 2011, meetings of the University Assessment Panel. She shared that the committee was informed that new flip charts were distributed and heard a report from two students, Nora Lindvall and Eric Niemi, regarding the newly formed Student Advisory Council on Learning Outcomes (SACLO). Status reports and funding requests from several units were also reviewed.

Morris made a motion, seconded by Lindvall, to receive the January 21, 2011, and the February 4, 2011, notes of the University Assessment Panel meeting. The motion carried.

V. Old Business

A. Academic Integrity Ad Hoc Committee Update

This topic was discussed in conjunction with the December 8, 2010, report of the Admissions Policies and Academic Standards Committee.

VI. New Business

A. Search for Vice Provost

Seaver announced that he will be moving into the position of Deputy Provost effective July 1, 2011. Details of an internal search for a new Vice Provost will be announced soon.
VII. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

The next UCC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 7, 2011, beginning at 1:00 p.m. in Altgeld Hall 203.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Mollie Montgomery*