Northern Illinois University

UNDERGRADUATE COORDINATING COUNCIL
193rd Meeting
Thursday, December 6, 2012
Altgeld Hall 203

MINUTES

APPROVED


Guest: Doris MacDonald, Chair, HLC 2014 Reaccreditation Steering Committee

I. Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made by J. Stafstrom, seconded by M. Lilly, to adopt the agenda with a change - moving the HLC presentation by Doris MacDonald to follow the announcements portion of the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

II. Announcements

A. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by C. Snow, seconded by J. Stafstrom, the minutes of the November 1, 2012 meeting were approved. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Ad Hoc Committee for Syllabus Policy

Birberick gave an update. She stated three members of Graduate Council had volunteered to serve. She also said that two individuals, Veysel Demir and C.T. Lin, had volunteered from this committee and she would like a third person to serve. Linda Matuszewski volunteered to serve. She also indicated she spoke with Carolinda Douglass regarding the learning outcomes issue and those do need to be included. Birberick thanked all parties that volunteered.
III. **New Business (Presentation)**

Birberick introduced Doris MacDonald, the chair of the Steering Committee for the Higher Learning Commission 2014 Reaccreditation. The Higher Learning Commission site team visit will be held March 3-5, 2014. Accreditation is that external and public assurance that gives evidence of institutional quality to the public. It is also an opportunity to get feedback, outside examination and consultation from peers who aren’t involved and don’t have any vested interest in the institution. Most importantly, at this stage, it is a chance to look at everything we do; the self-study and self-analysis across all function and facilities of the institution. She said that getting a handle on all that is comprised of was difficult. Making sure that everything is being accounted for on a huge campus like this.

MacDonald gave a little background information. The last complete review took place in 2004. HLC is moving away from the big, 10-year review process after 2014 and moving into an annual updating process with smaller time increments. In 2004 there were a couple of items that had to be addressed; that HLC was concerned about, those were: graduate learning outcomes and gen ed assessment. In 2007 we had to speak to those in a follow-up report – they will again need to be addressed in the 2014 report.

In 2010 we submitted a report on off-campus locations. It was not part of the accreditation process. It was part of a report we had to submit about those locations; the Naperville, Rockford, Hoffman locations.

A substantive change request was submitted to HLC this past year. The university requested a status change from HLC with respect to online programs. NIU is requesting to move from the first tier, which indicates fewer than 5% of our programs online to the second tier, which indicates we offer between 5-20%.

During this self-study process besides gathering data, engaging the entire campus is what the HLC expects. Not only making the campus community aware of the process but also that they can be involved. The five criterion focused on are: the mission, integrity: ethical and responsible conduct, teaching and learning, evaluation and improvement, and resources, planning and institutional effectiveness.

The first criterion that the HLC defines is the mission; that the mission guides all university operations. It is a big piece addressed at the start of the report but is also referred to throughout the report because we are speaking to how everything we do supports the mission and is guided by the mission. The revised vision and mission statement was created and approved by the Board of Trustees last May.
The second criterion is Integrity. This is ethical and responsible conduct on the part of all faculty and staff; anyone who is involved with the institution. It is also about transparency and how we present ourselves.

There are two criteria relating to teaching and learning. The first one is about the quality of what we do and that we have what we need to support what we do. Are our degree programs appropriate? Are the expectations for the students appropriate? Does the university have the staffing to support these things? There is process for staffing as well as credentialing. The other teaching and learning piece is about evaluation and improvement. This is where assessment comes in and also program review questions. Are we doing what we say we are doing? Are we looking at what we are doing and evaluating that we are doing it well and are we making changes or using the feedback from our evaluations to make changes where we’re not doing things as well as we hoped we would.

The last criterion is resources, planning and institutional effectiveness. This includes everything from where we are going with Vision 2020, strategic planning to the finances – dealing with the late funding from the state.

MacDonald stated that once the self-study report is completed and submitted to the HLC, they will be looking for evidence of continuous improvement; assessment and evaluation; and focus on student learning outcomes. There will also be reflection on the institutional mission as well as examination of strategic planning and priorities. She said the HLC is also changing its own mechanism to change to annual updating. They are going to look at our plans and where we are every year.

MacDonald indicated that in August of 2013 a copy of the report will be available online to the entire NIU community to review and give feedback. At the end of the fall semester, the document will be submitted to the HLC electronically. There will be a virtual resource room as well as a physical resource room and there will be a few actual hard copies of the report on campus. She explained for the site visit, 10-12 consultant/evaluators from other HLC schools will come to campus. They will verify, judge our compliance, consult and make recommendations. During their visit there will be planned and spontaneous meetings throughout campus; these will include faculty, staff and students. Within 30 days of the visit they will provide a team report and recommendation. NIU will then have a couple weeks to respond to the report/recommendation.

Lastly she asked everyone to commit to the process. Respond to requests for information and action. Encourage colleagues, students and others to participate. The process is a way to celebrate what we do well and how we are able to face challenges. Get to know the new statement of vision, mission and values. Spread the word if you can. She indicated the PowerPoint presentation is on the HLC site visit website (niu.edu/HLC). Questions can be addressed to Doris or any steering
committee member. More information pertaining to the HLC itself can be obtained from their website.

Reports/Minutes from Standing Committees

A. Admissions Policies and Academic Standards Committee

Keddie reported that the committee accepted the 2011 annual report and selected a chair at the September 5th meeting. In addition she said there was discussion regarding a request from the College of Education regarding lowering the GPA requirement from 2.75 to 2.5 for the Vision Impairments and Special Education. The reasoning for this is to be in line with the state requirement. Some of the committee members felt that was a lowering of standards. Lacking rationale, the item was returned to the COE.

Keddie reported at the October meeting, discussion regarding the GPA requirement for the Early Childhood Studies program, which both COE and HHS had to request. Once again she indicated the discussion was regarding the lowering of standards versus making the requirements more uniform. The issue was sent back to both colleges.

Keddie indicated that there was a discussion regarding transfer credit allowed from community colleges. Currently students are allowed to apply a maximum of 66 credits to their degree. They are required to take 54 credits at NIU. Birberick said the request to APASC was for allowing only 66 hours come in. Birberick said currently all hours come in, they show up on a transcript but the 66 hours that are being applied toward the degree can be chosen from the entire set of credits. It is between the department/program to determine what the courses articulate back to gen Ed or major coursework. It provides convenience for students who may change majors during their time at NIU. The advising deans are pleased with the system as it stands now. The APASC committee voted to leave the current policy unchanged.

A. Keddie made a motion, seconded by S. Conklin to receive the minutes from the September 5, 2012 and October 31, 2012 APASC meetings. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Committee on the Improvement of Undergraduate Education

Stafstrom stated that he had discussed the information in the October 8th meeting minutes at the last UCC meeting. He said that the call for applications for the Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and Instructor awards has been posted to the web.
Baker made a motion to receive the minutes from the October 8, 2012 CIUE meeting, seconded by Keddie. **Motion passed unanimously.**

C. **Committee on the Undergraduate Academic Environment**

M. Lilly said the October meeting of CUAE consisted of a tour of various residential facilities. The group toured Lincoln Hall, Grant South and the New Hall to get an idea of the living conditions for the students. It was noted that while the new residential complex is quite nice there is quite a bit of disparity across the different residential complexes and this impact this could have on our students. It was decided that the chair of the committee (Bill Pitney) would draft a document to pass along to Housing as well as Student Affairs and Enrollment Management that talks about the committee’s observations and encourages continual progress with renovating the older facilities.

Baker made a motion to receive the minutes from the October 9, 2012 CUAE meeting, seconded by Snow. **Motion passed unanimously.**

D. **Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum**

Aase highlighted the minutes indicating there was some discussion regarding student learning outcomes and where they are to be placed in the catalog. He mentioned the committee chair does a good job of calling out the normal changes that don’t warrant discussion versus ones for new courses, things that come up through APASC. He summarized the activities of the various colleges. He mentioned the VIBE system and how it is working well for the committee. He also mentioned the wording changes for the APPM as it relates to minors, certificates, majors and double majors.

Baker made a motion to receive the November 8, 2012 CUC minutes, seconded by Lilly. **The motion passed.**

E. **General Education Committee**

VanderSchee reported that the committee is still working out the details of where the assessment data is coming from. In addition they discussed getting access to the information they needed. They are also working on changes to the Bylaws to clarify what role the GEC has as well as its authority.

Baker made a motion to receive the minutes of the October 18, 2012 meeting of GEC, seconded by Snow. **Motion passed unanimously.**
F. University Honors Committee

Baker stated that he would be on sabbatical in the spring so Goldenberg would be the UCC representative to the Honors committee. He highlighted the minutes from the October 5th meeting pointing out the assessment rubric for the Honors professor.

A motion was made by Snow, seconded Demir to receive the minutes of the October 5, 2012 meeting of the University Honors Committee. Motion passed.

IV. Other Reports

A. University Assessment Panel

In the absence of J. Isabel, Birberick stated that the UAP notes are informational only and encouraged members to read them if they had not already done so.

V. Old Business

Birberick spoke about the plus/minus grading issue. University Council had sent the issue back to UCC due to “insufficient student input”. They did not have the 2/3 vote to overturn UCC decision. The students submitted a petition to President Peters, per Article 3 of the NIU Constitution requesting that the issue be put on the UC agenda. UC voted 28-22 in favor of the plus/minus system.

Stafstrom said at the University Council meeting there was a group of about 30 students holding signs. They were very respectful. Stafstrom said that President Peters spoke not only as the University President but as a past student and faculty member encouraging the students to continue to affect change and the way that needs to be done is by changing the Constitution and Bylaws.

Birberick thanked Snow, Stafstrom and Aase for being representatives of UCC at the University Council meeting. Stafstrom thanked Birberick and Snow for their presentations at the UC meeting.

Birberick indicated that Advising and individual programs will disseminate information pertaining to the change in grading policy. It will also appear in the Undergraduate catalog.
VI. **New Business**

Snow was contacted by the Presidential Commission on the Status of Minorities to collect information on the minority representation of UCC. He had a prepared ballot for committee members to complete. He passed those out and committee members filled them out and he collected them. The information will be forwarded to PCSM.

VII. **Adjournment**

On a motion by Snow, seconded by Lilly, the meeting was adjourned @ 2:10 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Jeanne E. Ratfield*