MINUTES

APPROVED

Present: G. Aase/BUS; M. Ayers/LIB; W. Baker/LAS; A. Birberick/Vice Provost; T. Bouril/Student/NGOLD; P. Braun/HHS; W. Hung/EDU; A. Keddie/HHS; M. Kolb/Acting Associate Vice Provost; J. Kot/LAS, C. Lin/LAS, L. Matuszewski/BUS, K. Millis/LAS/Faculty Senate; M. Shokrani/HHS, J. Stafstrom/LAS, C. Thompson/LAS; K. Wiemer/LAS

Absent: C. Campbell/EDU; A. Coleman/Student/BUS; J. Gau/EET

Guest: A. Rosenbaum, Executive Secretary/University Council/President/Faculty Senate; D. Smith, Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator; J. Ratfield, Vice Provost’s Administrative Assistant

I. Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made by K. Wiemer, seconded by T. Bouril, to adopt the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

II. Guest – Alan Rosenbaum

Birberick reminded the committee that Faculty Senate put forward a proposal at the last meeting about changing language related to repeat. Birberick was absent but Laurie Elish-Piper compiled the concerns of the committee and Birberick wrote a memo to Rosenbaum expressing the committee’s concerns (memo attached). Birberick turned the floor over to Rosenbaum. Rosenbaum indicated that this is all related to the Senate’s desire to have a reasonable plus/minus grading system. A number of years ago they started this process. Their committee on Academic Affairs did an extremely good job of vetting the plus/minus grading system. The senators were asked to go back to their departments and poll their departments to actually take votes and get a very good idea what the faculty sentiment was and the faculty sentiment was overwhelmingly in favor of a plus/minus system - they sent forward a plus/minus system that included the A+ and C-. That was altered by UCC and APASC. Contrary to the will of the Senate, eventually an Ad Hoc committee was formed which included members of the UCC and Faculty Senate to try and iron out a plus/minus system. There was a great deal
of aggravation; people voicing concerns - as if this wasn't the predominant grading system of universities throughout the United States. One of the major arguments that was raised was what will happen to those in teacher preparation courses, where you are required to have at least a C and they would have less than a C if they received a C-. At that time and currently, the course repeat policy was that you could only repeat a D or F. You couldn’t repeat a C- and that would effectively end someone’s career. It was viewed as too much change at the time. So now after implementation of the plus/minus system with no catastrophic results, the Senate is approaching a change in the repeat policy to allow for C- grades to be repeated in anticipation of a change in the plus/minus grading system that would include C-.

He called it a forward-looking preparation for being able to add the C- at a later date. The change in repeat policy would not change anything right now. It would not negatively or positively affect the students. It would benefit students moving forward if they were successful in adding the C- into the grading scale. It would allow a student who received a C- to repeat the course. Breaking the change into parts was the Senate’s attempt to be less overwhelming than instituting multiple changes at once. Rosenbaum said that this addressed the committee's first point of what is the benefit.

Rosenbaum went on to address another concern of the committee. The UCC does not agree that the undergraduate and graduate grading systems need to be the same. The UCC cited the Law School currently has a different grading system. Rosenbaum indicated that the Law School also has a different faculty. He pointed out that the Law School only has one grading system - they do not have a separate undergraduate and graduate grading systems. Rosenbaum said the differing grading systems are more confusing for regular faculty members - whether they are grading an undergraduate or graduate course, there are different grading systems. Rosenbaum stated that the Law School argument doesn’t make sense since they don’t have a dual grading system.

In response to the third point of the memo, the UCC believes making the change at this time is premature the course repeat policy should reflect the current grading system. The change in repeat policy should not be made prior to a change to the grading system. Rosenbaum said this wasn’t a question or request for additional information but the answer to this concern is based on the history of addressing this issue and the view of too many changes at once.

The committee wanted to know the potential effect of this change in terms of NIU’s policy related to transfer and the ability to repeat a course - should the transfer policy be changed as well. What would be the effect on students. Rosenbaum said he didn’t understand this. Rosenbaum indicated that he understood that if you receive an F you can repeat it anywhere but if you receive a D you must repeat it at NIU, therefore, following the same logic you would have to repeat a C- at NIU. If the UCC doesn’t like it, the committee has the power to change it. Aase pointed
out that there was an unintended consequence of the rewording, indicating that grades less than C- would have to be retaken at NIU. Committee members discussed their concern and the implications of that.

On the matter of referring the item to APASC for review - Rosenbaum indicated that was at the discretion of UCC. He also stated that he asks the committee to consider that the Faculty Senate is the most representative vote of the faculty at this university; that the faculty has predominance in matters of academic policy and the Faculty Senate sent a motion that was passed almost unanimously.

Matuszewksi asked other than the inconsistency between the graduate and undergraduate grading scale, what’s the main motivation for wanting the C- in the scale. Rosenbaum indicated that it makes no sense not to have a C- given that we are trying to increase the validity/accuracy of grades. There doesn’t seem to be any logic - He gave the example of a grading scale with everything except a B+ - what would be the point? Rosenbaum indicated that most grading scales are either plus/minus, step or whole grading system but we don’t see a whole lot of plus/minus systems that leave out one of the plus or minuses.

There was discussion regarding the larger nature of the issue. Aase suggested that this would be an issue that all universities would deal with and asked what others do. Was that looked at? Rosenbaum indicated that the Senate looked into that and U of I changed their repeat policy to allow for the repeat of C-. Rosenbaum indicated that U of I allowed 3 or 4 repeats of a course to improve a grade regardless of what the original earned grade was. Although he couldn’t specifically remember he did say the large majority of institutions changed their repeat policy to allow students to repeat either any C- or a limited number of C-.

Once again Rosenbaum reminded the committee that the Faculty Senate represents the wishes of the faculty-at-large of this university and that this was an overwhelming vote in support of changing this policy. He asked that the vote be respected. Rosenbaum thanked the committee for the opportunity to address them on behalf of the Senate.

Birberick asked the committee for guidance in how it wants to proceed. There are multiple layers of questions not only pertaining to the repeat policy but also with the entire plus/minus grading scale. She pointed out the change in the repeat policy is not predicated upon the addition of an A+ and/or C-. She also pointed out that although the C- concern revolved mainly around licensure, a C- repeat policy applies to all students not just those enrolled in licensure courses. The licensure requirement of a C or better in coursework does not change nor any other external requirement imposed for any program/course.
A motion was made by G. Aase, seconded by Bouril for members to come to the next meeting with issues pertaining to the repeat policy. **Motion passed unanimously.** Birberick indicated they need an action plan - she could bring information pertaining to the D/F repeats. Smith will provide information pertaining to the programs/courses that require a C or better. Birberick will contact Rebecca Babel, Director of Financial Aid to talk about the financial impact of repeats. Baker also suggested a time limit be placed on the discussion because of the history of the issue.

### III. Announcements

#### A. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by W. Baker, seconded by C. Thompson, to approve the minutes of the February 6, 2014 meeting with a correction to page six, change two sentences into one and read “Aase pointed out that there is no difference in implications in the change, except for the last paragraph.” **Motion passed unanimously.**

### IV. Reports/Minutes from Standing Committees

Reports were given out of order to allow members to meet other obligations.

#### D. Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum

Aase reported a lot of changes, referring to **College of Education #6, 7 and 8.** They are totally redesigning one of their programs. They are required to create new courses instead of modifying anything they have. Good discussion – no problems/concerns. He mentioned LA&S – continued discussions pertaining to cross listings. They are dealing with multiple minor catalog changes dealing clean up issues pertaining to cross-listings. They discussed the removal of cross-listings altogether. What is the benefit? A predominant question was could the secondary department be allowed to simply list the initial department’s course to avoid cross listings and eliminate these minor updates.

Thompson questioned the issue of co-requisites and Smith pointed out that co-req doesn’t mean same semester – it means prior to or same semester and they will be taking care of this through advising.

They were also working on APPM changes. They will work on this to get the information updated.

G. Aase made a motion to receive the February 13, 2014 minutes of the CUC, seconded by C. Thompson. **Motion passed unanimously.**
E. General Education Committee

K. Wiemer reported that these minutes included discussion about the upcoming Gen Ed Symposium, which was held on January 29\textsuperscript{th}. She mentioned the Task Force has been renamed to NIU PLUS and initiated a marketing campaign to let the campus know of the refined goals of that group.

The problem of low enrollment in General Education courses is a constant discussion item for the GEC. How to show students the value of taking gen ed courses at NIU instead of community colleges, where they are generally less expensive - identifying ways of marketing NIU courses to students. What does NIU offer that students can’t get at other institutions? There was a discussion of the meaning of value. Stafstrom pointed out that Aase explained to him that it is the student that determines the value. Bouril commented that it is the high-impact practices, the engagement components and things like Research Rookies where NIU has a value that isn’t received at community colleges. Kolb added that the Task Force is focusing on integration.

Another topic of discussion for GEC is course-based vs. program-based assessment. There is repeated discussion of program-based assessment being more efficient, faster, even reflecting better since every gen ed course, along with all the other courses are contributing to different aspects of general education goals. Program based assessment essentially means that you compare what students can do/accomplish at the senior level as opposed to the freshman level, etc. and that reflects what they have learned throughout college. The Higher Learning Commission places value on course-based assessment. Courses are looked at in terms of how they meet the goals. Assessment continues to be a big topic of discussion for GEC and is in flux and will continue to changes as changes are made to the gen ed curriculum.

K. Wiemer gave an update on the Humanities and Arts Language catalog language. They are still waiting for input from the College of Education.

A motion to receive the GEC minutes from the January 16, 2014 meeting was made by W. Baker, seconded by K. Wiemer. \textit{Motion passed unanimously.}

C. Committee on the Undergraduate Academic Environment

C. Lin indicated that his name was left off the attendees of the meeting. He said that the committee struggles with finding their purpose. Topics that they could explore were discussed including, campus safety, Financial Aid, report from the Ombudsperson regarding students issues that come through that office. There was also talk about a possible merger between CIUE and CUAE.

Lin indicated that the new business item was a presentation by Michael Kolb regarding the General Education curricular reform. He quoted Kolb when he indicated that as a result of
the student surveys done by the Task Force only 8% of student had positive things to say about general education.

Lin said that Kolb talked about high impact practices, which lead to a discussion of UNIV 101/201 and why the funding for that course had been cut. In addition, whether that course should be mandatory. UNIV 101 was a focused topic of the Bold Futures Workshops. The meager pay for the UNIV instructors was a concern, in addition to how to get more faculty involved in teaching the course.

W. Baker made a motion to receive the minutes from the November 12, 2013 CUAE meeting, seconded by W. Baker. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**F. University Honors Committee**

M. Shokrani reported all Capstone projects will be submitted digitally.

The number of Honors students has increased. There are 978 honors students; 502 enrolled in lower division honors and 476 enrolled in upper division honors.

He said they discussed awards that would be given. One of them being the Great Professor award.

He said four students would be designated as Summer scholars.

He said that information pertaining to Honors faculty status would be going out soon. These include provisional or full faculty status.

A motion was made by L. Matuszewski, seconded by T. Bouril to receive the December 6, 2013 Honors Committee minutes. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**A. Admissions Policies and Academic Standards Committee**

No report.

**B. Committee on the Improvement of Undergraduate Education**

No report.
IV. **Other Reports**

A. **University Assessment Panel**

M. Ayers reported that after the announcements, the status report for Career Services and Student Involvement and Leadership development was discussed. The Higher Learning Commission visit was discussed and members were encouraged to attend those meetings.

V. **Old Business**

Birberick indicated that there is still a need for a UCC representative to sit on APASC for the spring. After reviewing APASC meeting schedule (April 9th and May 7th, Wednesdays, 3:00-5:00 p.m.), W. Hung volunteered to attend the May 7th meeting and J. Kot will attend the April 9th meeting.

VI. **Adjournment**

C. Lin made a motion, seconded by J. Kot to adjourn @ 2:35 p.m. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Ratfield  
Administrative Assistant  
Office of the Provost