

Northern Illinois University  
**COMMITTEE FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE**  
6<sup>th</sup> Meeting  
Monday, April 3, 2017

**MINUTES**

**APPROVED**

Present: Pat Anderson (Alumni Association-Ex-officio); Anne Birberick (Vice Provost for Klonoski); Dhiman Chakraborty (CLAS); Daryl Dugas (EDU); Kerry Freedman (CVPA); Elisa Fredericks (COB); Todd Gilson (Honors Director, Ex-officio); Beth McGowan (ULIB); Rave Meyer (LAS student)

Absent: Sheila Barrett (HHS); Steve Daskal (CLAS); Debbie Gettemy (HOUS-Ex-officio); Mike Konen (CLAS); Venu Korampally (CEET)

**I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A motion was made by D. Dugas to approve the agenda, seconded by R. Meyer. B. McGowan asked for an additional item under New Business of committee working rules. An additional item under Old Business, Selection Process EUIA/EUTA was inadvertently left off the agenda and A. Birberick asked to make a couple of announcements as well. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**II. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

J. Ratfield announced that the presentation by this year's David Raymond Technology in Teaching award winner, Walker Ashley, will be on April 19, 2017 in Altgeld 125 from Noon – 1:00 p.m. The Faculty Awards ceremony that will recognize the EUIA/EUTA recipients will be on April 20, 2017 beginning @ 3pm.

A Birberick had two announcements. The first was she sent Trustee Barsema a letter indicating he was not eligible to receive the EUIA award due to his Trustee status. He wrote back indicating he was honored to have been nominated by the students. Second, she spoke about the new Trustees and the on-boarding process they go through where they get introduced to all the aspects of the university as well as their responsibilities as trustees. Last week the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost did their portion of the on-boarding with Trustee Barsema. Birberick said she presented on NIU PLUS, which includes Academics PLUS the general education component, Engage PLUS which is co-curricular transcribing and Jobs PLUS which is the ability to start professional development as well as acquire other skills needed in whatever the students do after graduation. Barsema is a very enthusiastic supporter for NIU. He feels very strongly about providing our students with a quality education. Birberick said he called PLUS NIU's unfair competitive advantage. She encouraged the committee to promote it to their students. She went on to say that NIU is the only university in the nation to have such a comprehensive, integrated program.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the March 6, 2017 meeting were approved electronically.

#### **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

a. Student Organization Survey results

D. Dugas presented the committee with a summary of the results of the student organization survey. He indicated the return rate was low. There were issues particular to student organizations and activities. Some issues pertaining to the Student Center, resource centers, Health Services as well as the Library. Other issues related to limited printing, handling conflict, etc. There wasn't really enough feedback to show a concrete pattern.

B. McGowan reminded the committee the issues brought up by the SA President and SA Senate Speaker when they visited earlier in the semester. Three issues they brought up were the cost of textbooks, advising and course scheduling and the variance in teaching styles. She indicated between those items and the results of the survey, there is a long list of items to deal with. She asked committee members how they wanted to proceed.

Several committee members were concerned about the cost of textbooks. Some students chose their courses based on textbook cost. There was discussion about the ability to purchase books outside the US as well as using online book options. R. Meyer commented that sometimes textbook information doesn't allow time for purchasing of cheaper versions. She suggested if that information could be known earlier then students could have the opportunity to obtain the least expensive versions prior to classes starting. Birberick suggested that since faculty select textbooks for courses working with them may be a way to move in the future. R. Meyer also said that due to the limited amount that is received in buyback, students don't always sell their books back. Sometimes they sell their books among themselves.

Birberick suggested the committee pick a couple of the items to focus on and work to catalyze action. The committee can add their voice to the student voice on some of their concerns to make recommendations, etc. Committee members agreed that the textbook issue is definitely something that is wide reaching and impacts all students.

Discussion on whether working rules should be prepared for next year's committee since this meeting is the last scheduled for this year. McGowan suggested outlining the tasks that should be covered during the year. Birberick added that once a task is selected and a recommendation is made by the committee there should be follow-up as well. The committee needs to learn what resulted from their recommendation, such as with textbooks, whether that be contacting the bookstore or providing information to faculty and what was done with the information the committee provided. K. Freedman brought up the issue of resources, which seemed to be a scattered topic in the survey. She feels that some resources are not well supported or well used. Birberick said she hears comments about the utilization of resources as well, whether it be tutoring or the Writing Center. Birberick suggested working with the Student Association to select one and work together to get the message out. She mentioned that there is an over abundant use of flyers and when that is the primary method of information dissemination – people tend to not notice the information

There was further discussion about both information gathering and the process of handling the gathered information. R. Meyer suggested that committee members could obtain information by attending other meetings such as student advisory committees. Through the various methods of gathering information, the committee now has more than 20 topics- the focus now needs to be on choosing what to focus on and making an action plan. B. McGowan said it would be helpful to outline the monthly meetings and what will happen at each.

A. Birberick also suggested that the committee could partner with the BC as it relates to changing policy, i.e. the add/drop period discussed during the conversation about textbooks. There may be other committees or groups to partner with to enact change.

Additional meetings will be added to the schedule starting next year to allow additional time for the committee to accomplish their tasks and gather additional information.

K. Freedman asked for creation of list of where the request for actions made by the committee should be directed. A. Birberick and E. Klonoski will be consulted.

The committee agreed to have an additional meeting on May 1 from 1-3pm to work on the to-do list. A phone-in number will also be arranged. For that meeting committee members should think about what the to-do list should look like and review the duties of the committee.

## V. NEW BUSINESS

N/A

## VI. ADJOURNMENT

D. Dugas made a motion to adjourn at 2:20 p.m., seconded by E. Fredericks. **Motion passed unanimously.**

*Respectfully submitted,  
Jeanne Ratfield  
Administrative Assistant to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs  
Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost*