

**NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY**  
**COMMITTEE FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE UNDERGRADUATE**  
**ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE (CIUAE)**

Monday, October 2, 2023  
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
Microsoft Teams Meeting

**Approved Minutes**

**Present:** Farah Ishaq (Chair), Alicia Schatteman (Vice Provost, Academic Affairs), Richard Mazzolini, Jifu Tan, Dr. Mark Pienkos, Naina Richards, Alissa Droog, Andrea Radasanu, Wenlian Gao, Yasuo Ito, Schicheng Chen, Tylo Blackburn, Amelia Gericke, Julian Garcia, Mikayla Dirksen, Brian Podkulski

**Absent:** Jason Rhode, Karla Padron, Jui-Ching Wang, Chamayze Hall

**Adoption of Agenda:** The meeting started at 1:04 p.m. Y. Ito made a motion to approve the agenda, A. Droog seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Introductions:** Committee members present introduced themselves to each other.

**Student Introductions & Icebreaker**

- F. Ishaq briefly reviewed the committee website, duties, and voting and non-voting membership, along with past meeting minutes: <https://www.niu.edu/university-council/committees/ciuae.shtml>
- The icebreaker activity was committee introductions emphasizing new members: Schicheng Chen, Tylo Blackburn, Amelia Gericke, Julian Garcia, Mikayla Dirksen, Brian Podkulski
- The Microsoft Teams group is updated with the goal of increasing its utilization for agendas, minutes, and other committee business and communication.

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion to approve the September 11, 2023, minutes by B. Podkulski, seconded by A. Gericke. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

**Committee Focus Theme**

- **Recap of Sept.11 meeting topics**
  - Improving textbook adoptions, things like artificial intelligence, things like transfer, student experience.
  - Follow up with the Huskie First Survey, which looks at new student experiences.
- Breakout Rooms (3) to continue brainstorming topics.
  - **Group 1** Discussed providing services for people new to campus such as detailed maps and directions, along with ensuring that building staff can communicate these effectively. Improving building accessibility and increasing the sense of belonging for commuter students were also discussed.

- **Group 2** Talked about textbook and electronic accessibility, and the continuing mental health issues and the need for a list of resources. In addition to protection the group discussed the need to be more resilient to better handle future difficulties. Computer availability for students, and general classroom physical appearance or aesthetic were also brought up.
- **Group 3** Discussed two main topics. The first was mental health, specifically more funding or more staffing, counseling, psychological services, and the Family Therapy Office. The second topic was belonging, especially for students from marginalized backgrounds, using cultural and diversity resource centers which help them transition into college and feel like a place to belong. Accessibility of resources and information university wide, specifically at the department level, was also brought up for both topics.
- T. Blackburn spoke to the Center for Student Assistance and some of the services it offers, such as providing generic campus help answering questions, pointing people to the correct resource. The Huskie Food Pantry, and free limited legal services are also provided through the center.
- F. Ishaq has been in touch with Jeff Salmon and Jenna Pracht, of Center for Student Assistance as well as the director of Orientation and 1st year programs to get an idea of if it would be helpful to talk about the resources as well and see if there's an area of focus that this committee can be helpful.

### **Old Business**

- Student representation is needed from the College of Business and College of Health and Human Sciences.
- A. Radasanu updated the Student Engagement Fund by saying that it's currently open and closes at the end of October. The CIUAE will be looking at applications and the review process for it. She also said opportunities are available for faculty to work with undergraduate research students.
- A. Schatteman said she was asked by a student if undecided, students that have yet to declare a major could serve on committees. F. Ishaq supports that and perhaps the by-laws could be amended to allow for that. R. Mazzolini brought up that in the meantime they could serve in a non-voting capacity to at least get their input.
- Awards Schedule and Application Process:
  - The Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching (EUTA) and Excellence in Undergraduate Instruction (EUIA) applications for this year will open on October 10, with all website updates completed.
  - David Raymond Award for Use of Technology in Teaching application is also active. The recipient from last year, Victor Gensini from the Department of Earth, Atmosphere and Environment, presented last week, and was very well-received.
  - The committee will work to promote all three awards more so this year in collaboration with the new Communications Director in the Provost's Office, Brian Williamson.

**New Business:** F. Ishaq said he's been in contact with N. Knutson about the Huskie First Survey,

J. Salmon, Director of the Center for Student Assistance, and J. Pracht, Program Director for Orientation and Family Connections, about sharing programs and services they provide for students.

**Baccalaureate Council Updates:** A. Schatteman shared the BC had its first meeting, which was basically a review and getting everyone up to speed. Curricular submissions will move forward starting October with the Ian Gawron, Curriculum Coordinator and Catalog Editor, on board. She then explained the BC has authority from the faculty Senate to oversee the curricular process for undergraduate education in terms of course changes, additions, deletions, and program changes. Such changes come from the departments to the colleges, then to the BC and General Education Council, a committee of the BC. Items are discussed, recommended, and voted on, then sent to the Faculty Senate.

**Announcements:** F. Ishaq will work to bring together people and ideas for the committee to focus on

**Adjournment:** A. Droog moved to adjourn, seconded by Y. Ito. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 2:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Richard Mazzolini.