

## COUNCIL ON ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

200 Bricker Hall  
November 7, 2012  
3:00 - 5:00 PM

### MINUTES

#### Attendance

#### Faculty:

- ✓ Dr. Allen Heather (Chemistry)
- ✓ Dr. Mollie Blackburn (School of Teaching and Learning)
- ✓ Dr. Ken Goings (African American and African Studies)
- ✓ Dr. Ashok Krishnamurthy (Engineering)
- ✓ Dr. Eric MacGilvray (Political Science)
- ✓ Dr. James Rathman (Engineering)
- ✓ Dr. Fernando Unzueta (Spanish and Portuguese)
- ✓ Dr. Kay Wolf (Health and Rehabilitation Sciences)

#### Students:

- Niraj Antani (USG, Political Science)
- Emily Chory (Inter-Professional Council, Veterinary Medicine)
- ✓ Courtney Kasunoski (USG, Industrial and Systems Engineering)
- ✓ Sarah Lang (CGS, Education and Human Ecology)
- Ann Morrison (Optometry)
- ✓ Akshay Paropkari (Engineering)

#### Administrator:

- ✓ W. Randy Smith (Academic Affairs), Vice Chair

#### Guests:

- Dr. Denise Bronson (Social Work)
- Dr. Steve Fink (Arts and Sciences)
- Dr. Kathleen Hallihan (John Glenn School of Public Affairs)
- Dr. Scott Herness (Graduate School)
- Mr. Bradley Myers (Office of University Registrar)
- Dr. Gerald Nelms (University Center for the Advancement of Teaching)
- Ms. Sarah Odum (College of Education and Human Ecology)
- Ms. Melissa Soave (Office of Academic Affairs)
- Dr. John Wanzer (Assistant Provost, Undergraduate Dean's Office)

**The meeting came to order at 3:00 PM.**

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 19 and OCTOBER 17, 2012 MEETINGS**

Zerby moved approval of the Minutes of the meetings of September 19 and October 17, 2012. The motion was seconded by Allen and carried with all in favor.

## **REPORT FROM THE CO-CHAIR – PROFESSOR KAY N. WOLF**

Immediately following the Council meeting on November 28, 2012, Council members are invited to have dinner with the Provost Alutto at the Faculty Club.

Rathman provided an update on the activities of the Faculty Cabinet:

- the importance and uses of Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI) survey.
- online education and how the University is positioning itself in response to new ways of academic instruction.

Wolf will attend the next Senate Steering Committee to discuss three degree programs approved last year by this Council. They should then be on the agenda for the Senate meeting on November 15, 2012.

## **REPORT FROM THE VICE-CHAIR – W. RANDY SMITH**

The Senate leadership soon will appoint a faculty member to the Council - likely to join the meetings starting in January 2013.

The proposal for restructuring the College of Education and Human Ecology is on the agenda for action at the November 9, 2012 Board of Trustees' meeting,

The Semester Coordinating Committee will continue to meet and advise on semester implementation issues. This Committee met this week for the first time on October 2, 2012 and Office of the University Registrar presented a status report on semester enrollment; statistics related to number of students, classes, size of classes, and patterns of academic instruction. A subcommittee will be formed to evaluate whether the number of commencements should be equivalent to the number of semesters. Many institutions using a semester calendar have only two commencements ceremonies in one academic year.

Discussions are being conducted with Undergraduate Student Government (USG) to evaluate how the semester system affects students and their plans of graduation. Individual assessment is being performed for those students who expressed concerns regarding their graduation plans. Smith will attend the next meeting of the USG in the first Tuesday, of December 2012.

Moreover, Quarter to Semester Update (QSU) will continue to be distributed periodically this academic year.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE D – Professors Kay Wolf and W. Randy Smith**

- **Revision to the Master of Social Work** (Guest: Denise Bronson, Associate Dean)

Professor Scott Herness, Associate Dean, Graduate School, presented the proposal to convert the Master in Social Work to a course-based only program. The Graduate School Curriculum Committee reviewed and approved this proposal on September 27, 2012 and then the Graduate Council reviewed it.

Currently this program has a thesis and a non-thesis option. The thesis option will continue to exist for those students who want to continue their studies with a Ph.D. option. This is a program with more than 300 students, most of them pursuing the non-thesis option. In the conversion to a course-based only option the curriculum will contain a capstone project that spans two semesters and includes field practicum. The Master of Social Work is an accredited program and the changes will comply with the requirements of its accrediting body. With these changes the rigor of the curriculum will be maintained. These changes will align the program with those at comparable institutions.

During the transition from quarters to semesters the oral comprehensive exam was replaced with the capstone program. The capstone program is required of all students whether they choose a thesis or non-thesis option. The students are individually evaluated in the capstone program. The number of students who pursue a thesis option program is small compared to the ones who pursue a non-thesis option; about five or six students per year.

The practicum is 1008 hours. The first year in the program, the students are in the field two days a week and in the second year in their advanced practicum they are in the field three days a week. The College of Social Work has more than eight hundred agencies where students are being placed in field experiences; including undergraduate students.

Wolf moved approval of the revision to this program; the motion was seconded by Lang and carried with all in favor.

## **UPDATE ON STUDENT EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTION (SEI) (Guest: Wayne Carlson, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies and Dean of Undergraduate Education)**

Carlson presented an overview of the history of the SEI and identified areas for future discussion. There is an Ad Hoc Subcommittee of this Council, established in 2001, oversees the SEI and that reports directly to this Council annually. Typically it has been reporting statistical data making recommendations on how the SEI should be changed and administered to improve usage.

- Historically, faculty used the Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) that had 22 questions: ranging from faculty organization of the class, to student interest in the content. In the mid-1980s, the current Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI) was developed in part to be used for evaluation of faculty for personnel decisions (part of annual merit considerations and promotion and tenure decisions). The SEI survey is only 10 questions. Students can provide their impression of how the faculty member performed in a particular class on a separate written attachment. The SET included two categories: classes above and below the 600 level. SEI categories include class size and selectivity or electivity of the courses.

- The SEI is not required by any Faculty Rule. Some departments use the SEI, others use a combination of SEI with an attached supporting document, and some departments use their own survey of instruction. The health sciences units do not use SEI at all, given the nature of their classes and use of clinical faculty to perform academic instruction.

- The value of the SEI is that there is some standardization of the questions that are asked. There are ways in which the results can be compared across departments within the colleges, and in few cases across the University.

- Administration of the SEI is easier having only one uniform survey instrument. The manual scanning recording process has been embedded into the work of the Office of the University Registrar.

- Soon, the Ad-Hoc subcommittee realized that this was not the best instrument to compare a wide range of instructional offering: lecture classes, studios, and clinical classes.

- Over the years, the results of this survey were used by various departments in the tenure and promotion (T&P) process, appointments, re-appointments, and annual compensation considerations.

- In 2006 it was recommended that this survey to be administered completely online and adding to it an open box for students to provide narrative feedback. The response rates were higher only for the testing period. From 2010 there were no more paper surveys administered.

- The response rates have not increased over time; they are still around 40%. Ongoing conversations are being conducted involving students, faculty, administrators, and department chairs on how the response rates can be increased. The recommendations range from tailoring the questions to the course, to reminders sent to students, publishing the results, changing the format of the online survey. Some proposed to do two SEI surveys for each course, one a week after the courses start and one at the end of the course.

- Several options were considered: a) development of a mobile application; b) providing incentives for the completion of the SEI; c) sequestering students' grades until they fill out the SEI; d) administration of the SEI a week after the course starts and at the end of semester.

- Today the University Senate leadership is recommending restructuring the Ad-Hoc committee, and having a small group research how the SEI is being administered, how it is used

in personnel (promotion and tenure ) processes, and how the questions can be tailored for special courses. The goal is to have a report by the end of the current academic year.

During the Council discussion, the following issues were raised:

- Analyses of the SEI data should take into consideration diversity issues when they are used for personnel decisions. Council members re-enforced that this instrument should not be used alone in the such decisions.
- Developing and app for SEI was seen to be a good idea and there is hope that this will increase the response rates.
- The Ad-Hoc Committee should evaluate the SEI survey and consider whether it is the best instrument to collect students' feedback regarding instruction. Increasing the response rates to the SEI survey should not be the only issue being analyzed.
- The response rates should be normalized at department level.
- Are the 10 questions in this survey sufficient enough to analyze instruction? Is it the best way of collecting feedback? What kind of a tool do faculty need?
- There is no evidence for students that their responses to the SEI are taken into consideration. It could be beneficial for students to have a mid-term SEI so they can request changes in the methods of instruction. Students can see how their responses influenced changes and learn why certain methods are not applicable for certain classes. The faculty will also have the opportunity to self-evaluate and re-adjust or defend their instructional methods.
- Students in large classes feel discouraged to complete the SEI, thinking that this is the only way of communicating with the instructor. But this communication is at the end of semester and here will be no results that they can see later. Some students consider the window in which SEI is open as being too short.
- The current Ad-Hoc Committee could be reorganized with additional faculty members including experts in student evaluation from the College of Education and Human Ecology. This committee should also work closely with assessment committees across the University.

**The Meeting Adjourned at 4:45 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

W. Randy Smith

Liana Crisan-Vandeborne