

**College of Arts and Sciences
Dean's Council of Department Chairs**

Wednesday, November 9, 2011

Attended:

Steve Bayne, Chair of Philosophy
Cecelia Bucki, Chair of History
Mary Ann Carolan, Chair of Modern Languages and Literatures and Director of Italian Studies
Matt Coleman, Chair of Mathematics & Computer Science
David Crawford, Chair of Sociology & Anthropology
Nancy Dallavalle, Chair of Religious Studies
Jean Daniele, Assistant to the Dean of College of Arts & Sciences
Dawn DeBiase, Assistant Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences
Karen Donoghue, Dean of Students
Beth Garvey, Director of the Office of Disability Support Services
Manyul Im, Associate Dean of College of Arts and Sciences
Will Johnson, Associate Dean of Students & Director of Student Diversity Programs, and Co-Chair of the President's Institutional Diversity Council
Kamala Kiem, Director of New Student Programs
Mark LeClair, Chair of Economics
Danke Li, Associate Professor of History & Co-Chair of the President's Institutional Diversity Council
Laura Nash, on behalf of the Chair of Visual & Performing Arts
Tom Pellegrino, Vice President of Student Affairs
Susan Peterson, Assistant Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences
Ronald Salafia, Chair of Psychology
James Simon, Chair of English
Kraig Steffen, Chair of Chemistry & Biochemistry
Brian Walker, Chair of Biology
Maggie Wills, Chair of Communication
Joan Weiss, Associate Dean of College of Arts and Sciences
David Winn, Chair of Physics

Regrets:

Janie Leatherman, Director of International Studies

Approval of the October 5, 2011 Minutes

Dr. Marcie Patton moved to approve the October 5, 2011 Dean's Council minutes and
Dr. Kraig Steffen seconded the motion. All were in favor of the minutes with two abstentions.

Student Disability Support Services and FERPA issues

Ms. Beth Garvey, Director of the Office of Disability Support Services shared an overview of key issues associated with FERPA

- Definition of Disability
- Current statistics in the United States—Developmental disabilities throughout the United States is 13.87% of the population. The prevalence of learning disabilities is 7.6%; ADHD is around 6.69%. In last 10 years, there was a 17 % increase in learning disabilities. The increase in the last decade for ADHD was 33 %. This was largely due to an increase in diagnoses (rather than incidences) due to the heightened awareness of these disabilities.
- Disabilities at Fairfield—Overall there are approximately 9.97 % of Fairfield University’s 3,222 students who have some type of disability. Of the Fairfield students with some documented disability, the breakdown of which type of disability is as follows:
 - 46% of have some type of learning disability
 - 18% attention deficit
 - 14% LD
 - 10% Health Impaired
 - 5% Counseling
 - 2% Hearing Impaired
 - 1.6% Hearing Impaired
 - 1.5%Visually Impaired
 - 1.2% Aspergers (high function of autism). In numbers, this maps to approximately 2 to 3 of our students. Over the past 10 years, Aspergers is the highest increase in disabilities.
- Ms. Garvey offered to breakdown these statistics in terms of the number of students at Fairfield University faced with these disabilities. She will share statistics with department chairs via e-mail.
- Reasonable accommodations for students would be to make adjustments to a course in order to enable qualified students to have an equal opportunity to the material. Institutions are obligated to make reasonable accommodations only to known limitations of the students. The requirement is to accommodate students from the point of disclosure, once the institution receives the appropriate documentation. It is not necessary to go back in time in terms of making up work prior to their disclosure. It is the student’s responsibility to require the accommodation and communicate their needs to their faculty prior to the date of an exam. Students cannot be accommodated, unless they produce a letter from the Student Disability office.
- Mandated Services Required by Law
 - Tape lectures (students provide the tape)
 - Testing accommodations (additional time in a distraction free environment). Faculty should not ask if students need extra time; they should just accommodate.
 - Note takers, transcribers, sign language interpreters.
- Dr. Carolan asked if there was any way for faculty to work directly with the Student Disability Services. At times students wait till the last minute to request accommodations. Ms. Garvey mentioned that the policy is that students let the Disability office know 48 hours prior to the exam. At this point faculty are contacted to make the necessary arrangements to get the exam and work out the logistics for the student’s accommodations. There was generally a feeling among chairs and the Dean that 48 hours is a bit tight.
- Dr. David Winn asked if students could sign a release, giving the office of Student Disability Services permission to contact professor directly. Legally the Disability office is not allowed to directly contact faculty, unless the student discloses to their office. There is the same level of protection as medical records. Dr. Pellegrino commented that students could sign a release, but his sense is that students should not disclose directly to faculty as a matter of practice.

- Dean Crabtree commented that the institution has legal obligations that sometimes faculty members are responsible for enacting. These accommodations are within certain limits—documented and requested. Accommodations should follow the law, making sure students have every opportunity they are entitled to; but part is also avoiding a situation where bias could be exercised against a student. The University at large should provide a safe and supportive environment for students who disclose, adhering to the particularities of the accommodation.
- Non-mandated services that we are not legally bound to cover are as follows: tutoring, counseling, learning strategies, career counseling, modification of test taking, performance evaluations, or access to professionals with LD expertise. Although these are not mandated, the University does offer these accommodations.
- Appropriate Academic Accommodations are as follows: course substitutions, particularly for language or mathematics, modification of the way the courses are conducted (e.g. visual auditory), modifications to course examination (additional time in distract free environment), adapting classroom and lab equipment for our visual and hearing impaired.
- Fairfield University offers distraction free testing room, course substitutions for non-essential courses, priority registration for students visually or mobile impaired, note taking, one-to-one academic coaching, time management, goal setting and prioritizing, study skills and a stress reduction group.

The floor was opened for questions and the following was discussed.

- Dr. Bucki commented there was a strong outreach to faculty about fifteen years ago relative to disabilities; but unfortunately, there has not been one since. With a large turnover of faculty, it would be beneficial to have a workshop highlighting these requirements. Ms. Garvey was agreeable to this suggestion.
- Dr. Carolan inquired about the kinds of resources available to individual faculty who are teaching students with learning disabilities. Faculty are not trained to handle these situations. How can we train faculty? Ms. Garvey commented that having a workshop would offer the opportunity to present ideas of universal styles. She suggested that faculty call the Disability office for assistance; she is available to explain and talk to them about constructive strategies to use.
- Dr. Boquet commented that resources are scarce and it is important to think about the need to increase resources to accommodate the increasing numbers of students with disabilities. This is an area at the University that is in need of an increase in staff. The current staff in Student Disability Support Service is Ms. Garvey and two graduate assistants. There has been an 83% increase from last September in terms of students' needs. She shared that if faculty perceive greater need than what their office could accommodate, communicating the need for additional resources would be helpful. So much of the current staff time needs to be spent with small groups or on a one-on-one basis. With this in mind, even though there is interest in engaging in faculty development, it is challenging to do so with the current staffing situation.
- Dr. Dallavalle commented that it is important for chairs to set a positive tone on issues that are challenging.

Tom Pellegrino, JD, Vice President of Student Affairs and Karen Donoghue, Dean of Students—FERPA issues/What we can or cannot talk about?

Dr. Pellegrino distributed a handout that his office shares with parents, highlighting the most frequently asked questions. This is a useful statement that is helpful to parents and that might be useful to faculty in terms of learning about the University's expectations and how we handle FERPA. The following points were shared.

- FERPA is a federal law that governs not only Colleges and Universities but also K-12. FERPA governs educational records and grants rights of control, access, and how the records are going to be used. The rights of control and access are vested first to the parents from K-12. Once students enter college, the right is shifted to the students. This is a difficult shift for parents to grasp.
- The basic rule as a school is that we cannot disclose personally identifiable information from education records of the students without consent. Pellegrino encouraged everyone to use this statement as a guideline.
- Dr. Winn asked, if a parent inquires about whether their child attends the University, could we confirm or deny their attendance. Pellegrino shared that directory information is not covered under FERPA. Directory information is inclusive of e-mail address and attendance at a school. He recommended that if parents are asking a faculty member for this type of information, the best practice is to send them to the Registrar's Office where these inquiries are handled. When in doubt, folks should refer these types of inquiries to the Dean of Students Office. They are in the best position to either answer the question or farm it out to the appropriate office.
- What are education records? Faculty are concerned about what student information could be shared. Observations are not considered educational records. Educational records are maintained on a regular basis and are housed in a student's file. Any information that is a normal habit of recording is considered educational records, such as graded papers and student attendance. Graded papers are part of a student's educational record, with the exception of peer-graded records.
- Dr. Simon asked if student information contained on a faculty's personal computer would be considered part of a student's educational record. Dr. Pellegrino commented that this would not be considered an educational record, unless faculty exchange this information with someone else.
- Student information posted on Xythos, Blackboard, etc. would be considered an educational record.
- Dr. Carolan commented that e-portfolios are educational records that are being shared in departmental assessment committees. Are these considered educational records? Dr. Pellegrino commented that individuals on the committee are in a "need to know" position. Sharing these records internally would not fall under educational records. Internal information could be shared with individuals who have the need to know. Need to know is any information that is needed to perform an individual's job responsibilities.
- Dr. Steffen commented that in line with FERPA, where students at the age of eighteen have the control over their educational records, shouldn't Student Support Services distribute the documentation they shared with the parents to students instead, allowing them the right to share with their parents as they see fit. By handing this information to the parents, we are creating the opportunity for parents to place pressure on the students. Dr. Pellegrino responded that they both should have this information. Some of the information is self-serving to Student Affairs, such as information relative to hospitalization and emergency procedures. Dean Crabtree added that part of the issue is recognizing the real situations. We want parents to have more information systematically, so we do not have to give it out on a case-by-case basis. This document includes what we can or cannot share, in hopes that parents will not ask for information they are no longer privy to without the consent of the student. The Dean shared that Assistant Dean Dawn DeBiase developed a script for faculty to use when confronted by parents seeking educational information about their son or daughter, when the FERPA form was not signed by the student.
- Dr. Boquet mentioned that the goal is to help parents understand what their role is and what the students' role is. Since these parent educational initiatives were implemented, she

noticed that there was approximately a 98% drop off, in the academic division, of students waiving their rights. The University previously mailed disclaimers to every student and most of the students waived their rights before stepping on campus.

- Dr. Im asked if faculty should be careful about sharing information most students would not mind sharing, such as a high GPA and award. Dr. Pellegrino commented that sharing this information is acceptable, unless a student has a concern and requests to opt out of recognition. There is no need to request a waiver under these circumstances.
- Dean Crabtree asked about the process for dismissals and probations. Dr. Pellegrino shared that these could be internally shared on a *need to know basis*.
- If you give a test you could mention a range of grades, but grades cannot be linked in any way directly to the students.
- Dr. Bucki asked about the current procedure for addressing students with troublesome behavior. Dr. Pellegrino expressed the importance in directing these students to Counseling Services. The faculty's role is to teach and academically advise students. This type of information should be passed to the appropriate office as quickly as possible, so they could address the student in need.
- Ms. Karen Donoghue shared that all release forms and academic forms are located on the University website under the forms link. The Dean reminded everyone that it is important to connect themselves with the resources and familiarize themselves with policies. The Assistant Deans in the College are extremely knowledgeable about these types of situations and can be a first reach out. If it is not straight forward, they could direct folks appropriately.

Diversity & Inclusion for Students & Faculty

Dr. Manyul Im, CAS Associate Dean, shared his interest in starting conversations around diversity, so people start to become more comfortable talking about diversity. Since being a member of the Fairfield Community, Im shared that there has not been a significant ground level conversation around diversity.

Im addressed the topic of diversity breaking it down into three topics. He recruited Will Johnson, Associate Dean of Students & Director of Student Diversity Programs, and Co-Chair of the President's Institutional Diversity Council and Kamala Kiem, Director of New Student Programs to share information relative to the experiences of students of color in an academic setting, as well as student life.

- **Topic 1: Experiences of Faculty of Color**—Dr. Im had conversations with faculty of color to gain a snapshot of their experiences at Fairfield. From these conversations he took away the following impressions.
 - A lot of issues coincide with gender issues. They each had a problem with authority in the classroom particularly in the sciences where academic authority was always in question.
 - It was shared that there were accusations that faculty of color showed favoritism to students of color. Students then perpetuate this, even if the claim is baseless. It reveals various internalized biases among majority students that need to be analyzed carefully.
 - Some faculty commented that this was the first time anyone approached them seeking information relative to their experiences at Fairfield. Im commented that it would be nice if chairs would approach faculty and provide opportunities for them to talk about issues that might affect their teaching evaluations, morale, etc.
- **Topic 2: Experiences of Students of Color in the Academic Settings**—Mr. Will Johnson shared that the Student Diversity Program engaged in a lot of work relative to students' of color

overall success at Fairfield. Like all other students at the institution, they go through a wave of challenges, at times feeling that they are trapped in a corner because they do not know where to go for an outlet.

- Mr. Johnson shared that commonly there is a misconception that students of color lack preparation prior to their College careers and lack the ability to engage in coursework efficiently. He noted that, on the contrary, these students' experiences are similar to students across the board, where they are not engaged or ready to engage in what is required of them on an institutional level. The Diversity Office spends a lot of time advising students and gearing them towards reaching their goals throughout their educational process.
- The Dean commented that it was interesting to learn that students of color are experiencing the same struggles, but she asked if they attribute their struggles to race or other kinds of bias. Mr. Johnson mentioned that this situation occurs time to time. This often is based on the assumption that most students of color are low-income students, or that they are coming from the lower end of the admissions pool. This is not always true; as is true of all of our students, some minority students are not putting in the effort they need to commit in order to be a success. They often do not recognize the amount of time it takes to be a successful College student. The importance behind all of this is to determine what could be done to support these students.
- The Office of Student Diversity works very closely with Project Excel, the Student Support Service, Disability Support Services, Dean of Exploratory Academic Advising, the CAS Dean's Office, etc. Mr. Johnson feels that there is a strong network of individuals talking with each other, keeping respective parties informed when a particular student is struggling. Team collaboration is a very important component towards student success. There is an adjustment that a lot of students are going through when it comes to the classroom experience. He found that young men tended to require more academic push than young women but felt this was generally the same across the board (that is, not just in terms of race or ethnicity). It takes a great deal of effort to be a successful student and it is the job of the educators to help students understand this.
- Dr. Winn asked if there was anything different observed in the classroom that should be shared. Mr. Johnson reiterated that students of color experience the same struggles other students experience—not showing up to class, not paying attention, not submitting work, poor academic performance, not absorbing information. It is just a matter of how we are going to support all of our students at the University.
- The Dean shared that there were on-campus incidents relative to diversity that occurred, causing negative impacts on our students. These incidents should be reported, so we could handle them as a culture.
 - A female student being harassed by male students in the hallway right before a class, with gender biased comments being made. This can create a hostile learning environment.
 - A case where a student wearing hijab, a head scarf, complained that her professor did not make eye contact with her, and other students making comments hostile to Muslims. The learning environment was not very welcoming.
 - A black male student walking alone on-campus was approached by security and asked for Fairfield University ID, while white students may not routinely be asked for student verification. Another African American male wrote in *The Mirror* that students made disparaging remarks about him.
 - Will Johnson mentioned that there was a student who, from her prospective, was being counseled out of an academic program by the professor prior to the start of the coursework. She was told that she should change her direction, because she would not do well in the program. Many students are intimidated by faculty;

therefore, they are going to internalize these types of suggestions, which then has ramifications on the student's entire academic experience. It took a while for the student to open up and address this issue.

- A first-year student was presumed gay and homophobic comments were written on his dorm door. This student, who is not gay, was being harassed in a very particular way that created a culture of homophobia throughout the dorms. A gay student on the same dorm floor asked to be moved.

▪ **Topic 3: Experiences of Students in Student Life—(Ms. Kamala Kiem)**

- Ms. Kiem mentioned that the biggest conflict experienced on-campus is that there really are no strategies to help integrate and develop awareness of privilege, particularly around issues of race. She shared that in FYE there was a discussion around an article on privilege and Ms. Kiem learned that many students were not aware of the meaning of this term. She was taken aback by how students were misinformed or the lack of knowledge around this topic.
- Ms. Kiem commented that in the classroom there are moments that perpetuate division. It would be interesting if faculty could have a dialog in the classroom, specifically with students of color, seeking their feelings of connectivity with others.
- Dr. Carolan commented that this is a sensitive issue; faculty and students should be treated equally; therefore, inquiring whether they feel connected or “are OK” would signal them out. Carolan asked for help in terms of how to reach out to these students. Mr. Johnson recommended that the Fairfield community should attempt to engage in greater effort to develop natural practices in terms of being open, welcoming, inclusive and engaging with all of the people of our community. The idea is to engage all Fairfield University students in the activities and programs that we sponsor. He felt that the University is failing in this area, so we have to figure out ways to capture students, making them feel comfortable.
- The Dean mentioned that Dr Danke Li and Mr. Johnson are co-chairs of the President's Institution of Diversity Council. They recently sponsored a campus climate survey. They are very interested in hearing from faculty relative to their experiences, so they could understand the University's culture and community at a greater level.
- Dr. Li shared that they received 350 out of 1000 employee responses back from the survey. Some Fairfield University specific questions were added to this National survey. Survey responses will be shared. Li and Johnson are planning on engaging in an open forum relative to diversity on campus. The more conversation; the less fear the community will experience.
- Dr. Li mentioned that on November 29 there will be a University-wide strategic conversation on diversity. There will be a panel of faculty, students, and staff members to discuss what diversity means at Fairfield.
- Dr. Bucki commented that there is much needed in terms of race and ethnicity, but that class is such an important concern at Fairfield. She noted the number of first generation, low income, college goers, who are white students. This population seems to be falling through the cracks. They may not be as easy to target. She is interested in what could be done to support these students. Mr. Johnson commented that in his office, they reach out to all low income, first generation, and students of color.
- The Dean noted the decline in our diversity statistics this past two years. A lot of these issues come down to cost, whether financial aid packages are enough to shift Fairfield's overall structural diversity, particular with regards to race and ethnicity,

leading to a greater presence of black, Hispanic and Asian students. We had gone from 8% to over 16% in recent years, with 20% or more of some classes for each of Pell Grant eligible, first-generation, and students of color (and these do not necessarily overlap). This year it was down to 12% or so.

- Dr. Winn asked how many orphans are students at Fairfield. Mr. Johnson mentioned that according to the FASFA forms, the University has approximately six to eight students classified under this category.
- The Dean mentioned that in terms of faculty searches, she asked chairs to think about what it means to recruit faculty of color or other underrepresented groups. What do we do to create searches that seek to overcome these historical under-representations in a proactive way? How are we being allies in creating a supportive environment when the new hire is the only person of a particular group (e.g., the only woman, the only person of color...)? Not everyone is trained in this area, so the Dean encouraged chairs to reach out to the appropriate resources.

Announcements

- **FY '13 budget requests**
 - The Dean's Office received budget instructions from the SVPAA's office. Guidelines will be forwarded electronically with a deadline of a two-week turn around for chairs and program directors.
 - The main area of concentration is to capture a best estimate in terms of the number of adjunct sections needed for the *entire* fiscal year, POPs, overloads, summer stipends, supervised internships, and non-work study student needs. Any personnel requests that are not tenure-track faculty position or permanent staff positions should be requested annually. The goal is to capture our real expenses primarily in personnel. This exercise helps chairs map out their curriculum.
 - Enrollment analysis should determine needs: The question is how many seats are needed for majors, minors, and core and how many of these sections are taught by full-time faculty, visiting faculty, POPs, or adjuncts.
 - Capital equipment should be listed.
 - Dr. Bucki asked if UC courses will be submitted through University College's budget and the Dean commented that Aaron Perkus would put in a regular UC budget request for FY '13. This will most likely be the last summer for UC budget submissions.
 - Ms. Daniele requested banner screens for all chairs, program directors, and program assistants, which was approved at all levels of the chain. She will forward the list of screens to everyone, with a description of each screen. She organized a meeting with all CAS program assistants for November 22 to discuss banner screens, finance issues and/or changes, appropriate finance forms and identification of required fields, program assistant's role in processing adjunct faculty forms, and an open discussion on best practices, such as tips on monitoring budgets, etc.
- **R&T Procedures**—The Dean discussed the interesting e-conversation that took place relative to external review letters. The question was who should see the external letters once the chair receives their copy. This generated the acknowledgement that there are multiple practices. The Dean will ask the Rank and Tenure committee to clarify the guidelines in the Journal of Records. There should be common practice across the schools. These letters are highly confidential, as well as the names of the letter writers. Once the chairs review these letters, they should be shredded.
- **Planning for Chair succession**—Elections will take place by mid-January
- **NEASC**—There is a January deadline to fill out NEASC forms, inclusive of a snapshot for five-year review. The Dean will send the link with the January deadline.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.