

**College of Arts and Sciences  
Dean's Council of Department Chairs  
Wednesday, March 7, 2012**

**Attended:**

Steve Bayne, Chair of Philosophy  
Cecelia Bucki, Chair of History  
Mary Ann Carolan, Chair of Modern Languages and Literatures  
Matt Coleman, Chair of Mathematics & Computer Science  
David Crawford, Chair of Sociology & Anthropology  
Nancy Dallavalle, Chair of Religious Studies  
Manyul Im, Associate Dean of 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 and Co-Director of LACS  
Maggie Wills, Chair of Communication  
Joan Weiss, Associate Dean of College of Arts and Sciences  
David Winn, Chair of Physics

**Regrets:**

Mark LeClair, Chair of Economics  
Lynne Porter, Chair of Visual & Performing Arts

**I. Approval of the February 1, 2012 Minutes**

Dean Robbin Crabtree convened the meeting at 3:35. Dr. Mary Ann Carolan moved to approve the minutes from the February 1, 2012 Dean's Council meeting. Dr. Kraig Steffen seconded the motion; minutes were approved unanimously by all those present.

**II. Enrollment Management and the Budget Situation**

- The Dean urged chairs to respond quickly to Assistant Dean Sue Peterson's queries about enrollment. In this current budget climate, there is a need to demonstrate that we are using our resources to the maximum. In terms of maximum and minimum enrollment for courses, certain classes are capped according to disciplinary standards. We are more likely to allow an additional student or two to those caps than to allow multiple sections in that category. The target is to hit your maximum enrollment cap and fill the classes. The minimum number of the students that should be enrolled in the course is the same or similar to the cap of the course. If there are courses in your department that may be affected by freshman enrollments, then be prepared for any and every eventuality. The target enrollment for class of 2016 is 925 students. We'll hope for a few more.
- Dr. Mary Ann Carolan asked about timing of orientation and freshman numbers. The Dean responded that Sue Peterson will not contact the departments about the freshman course enrollments at this point. If your department fell short of meeting freshman needs this year, anticipate that for next year. Your program assistant can run Banner reports that show the number of majors that need to take required courses. These reports enable you to keep up-to-date records. The first session of freshman orientation takes place on June 21 and 22; the second session on June 27 and 28.
- Chairs should examine the curriculum in the major to see if the major is overly structured or leads to systematic enrollment problems. There may be hierarchal problems inherent in the

major or that overlap with other areas. In terms of ideal class sizes, not all enrollment goals may be able to be implemented this year or in this budget climate.. Some programs may be assessed for viability if there are chronic low enrollments. Inform the Dean if you have any concerns. As senior colleagues make requests to teach classes, be sure it is within your department's planned enrollment and that junior faculty will have opportunities available to them

- Consider compromises within your departments; e.g., Physics is working with Engineering in redesigning and consolidating content to avoid overlapping. If departments have faculty who are only teaching upper division courses and who have unusually small loads year by year, then that needs to be adjusted or justified. The reason may be because the faculty member possesses a unique expertise in that area but if no legitimate reason exists for not carrying a full load (e.g., 60 students on average each semester) or teaching at all levels of the curriculum, then that needs to be addressed. Two and four year curricular maps help to manage the curriculum and the faculty load. This will make advising easier, as well, and students will feel more secure in their academic planning process, which is beneficial for retention. Dr. Jim Simon is willing to help departments in curricular mapping; Associate Deans Manyul Im and Joan Weiss are also willing to assist.
- Conversations about program viability should be proactive and occur within departments if you have programs or related issues that are not cost effective or sustainable. Revenue generation alone will not solve all our budget problems; we need to use resources to the fullest and try to cut costs. We'll be better off if we do this on our own.
- Dr. Mary Ann Carolan asked how viability is defined. In her department, the number of language sections should be examined. Arabic and Chinese have grown to the point where they are now almost full in the core levels, for example, while some language programs have funding through donors or grants that allow them to run. All departments should consider the structure of their program and subsets of programs to assess what is viable and what they are doing to ensure cost trimming or maximum use of resources.
- Dr. Marcie Patton noted that her department seems to start the fiscal year with a debit in the 7300 account due to the number of the co-shared expenses on DMH 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. Chairs and their program assistants should be vigilant in prioritizing department resources, and allocating them proportionately and according to actual use. Ms. Jean Daniele monitors the budgets in the College; if you or your program assistant have any questions, please contact her; she is more than willing to help.

### **III. Academic Advising**

- The topic of advising was placed on the agenda because, in addition to the needs to improve advising across the board, students often found out that they were in academic distress from the Dean's office (through the "early alert") and not directly from their faculty members. The Dean recommended that faculty reach out to students not only when their performance is in jeopardy (but especially in these cases), but also with positive and routine feedback. There should be more support, affirmation, and communication throughout the semester. The Dean emphasized that advising is a form of teaching not service. In a sense everyone is an advisor, i.e., every staff person and every faculty member who has contact with students, as every encounter with a student relates to advising overall. It is shared work across the university and it is important to the university mission and identity (*cura personalis*) and also very important for retention. A lengthy discussion ensued pertaining to how departments handle advising:
- Dr. Cecelia Bucki said that her department plans to invite someone to speak about advising at one of their meetings. Jessica York (Director of Exploratory Advising) and Suzanne

Solensky (Director of Undergraduate Academic Planning) should be contacted for that purpose.

- Dr. Marcie Patton commented that it is especially useful for junior faculty to engage in advising workshops to learn about advising, learn our curriculum, etc. But often long-time faculty are out of touch with curricular requirements and advising philosophies, so all faculty should be encouraged to attend. CAE sponsors occasional programming around advising, and is likely to do more of it in the future.
- Dr. Ronald Salafia commented that his department has success in making it clear to all students that the advisor assigned initially to them is not cast in stone. Students can have multiple advisors and can try to find someone whose interests dovetail with their own. An effort is made to evenly distribute advisors within the department.
- Dr. David Crawford said that advisors can vary from perfunctory to smothering. The department also tries to find a faculty member whose interests align with the student; if not mathematically egregious, the faculty member is assigned to the student. Undeclared freshmen are assigned to faculty in the department with the lowest number of advisees.
- Retention is an issue and the quality of initial advising is most important. All undeclared majors go to Jessica York and they do have a faculty advisor as well. The Dean will check on the distribution of first-year advisees of undeclared students.
- Dr. Mary Ann Carolan inquired about students with double majors. Lists and information relating to any of the majors are readily available in Banner. Dr. Im noted that any student who signs up for a program needs to have an advisor. Retention is a real issue here because according to the numbers of students who meet with the assistant deans in terms of academic problems, sophomores are double the number of any other year so first year advising is of utmost importance.
- The Dean asked what chairs do to mentor faculty into good advising, if they identify good advisors or have someone shadow advisors. Dr. Winn said that Physics Department utilizes peer advising. Beth Boquet, Office of Social Engagement, and the Jessica York, Office of Academic Exploratory Advising are both experts on peer advising; it is recommended that chairs contact them for advice about using peer advising in the departments. Dr. Jim Simon reported that the English department is developing a peer advising program.
- Dr. Nancy Dallavalle enlisted a student with software expertise to set up a Facebook for Religious Studies. It affords a way for majors and minors to contact each other and it also serves as a way for the chair to contact them. Both Communication and Women's Studies have departmental blogs. For assistance with setting up a Facebook site, chairs should contact Scott Barnett, Director of Web Communications. Initiatives of this sort do not solely belong to the chair but can be distributed among department members based on aptitude. Newer faculty might consider it a good way to serve the department.
- Dr. Kraig Steffen expressed an interest in reports on advising and attrition. In particular, he would like to see statistics concerning the path students in the sciences follow, how they are shepherded and their pattern of movement from year to year. Dr. Geoff Church, who is the Health Sciences Advisor, maintains some records on pre-med students. The Dean agreed that would be a good group to track. Attrition data can be obtained from Cory Wrinn, Institutional Research. Dr. Brian Walker said that would be a good topic to address at summer Freshman Orientation.
- Dr. Im said that the Orientation Committee would welcome participation by the faculty. The Admissions and Advancement departments met with the Deans recently and the thrust of the conversation dealt with building relationships, trust, and parental trust in the institution. Assessing, analyzing data and redesigning plans for next year's orientation are underway. Requests for faculty participation in Orientation will be solicited shortly. Dr.

Weiss commented that she had conversations with a few freshmen who actually claim that they didn't have enough advisors during orientation. It is problematic because of the large numbers of students and only a two-person staff in the office of Academic Engagement. Students sitting in front of computers and literally registering as they were being advised led to problems afterward when students were told that they could not actually get into a class and needed to change their schedule. Improvement is needed in this process and they are working on it. Dr. Im will summarize this conversation for Jessica York and Suzanne Solensky and communicate to them the willingness by chairs to do more advising during orientation.

- It is important to have conversations about how we assess good advising, how we comment on advising in annual reviews; what kind of community building there is for students who have a common identity and if there are common activities for them. The "Curriculum to Careers" material distributed at the last Dean's Council meeting contains good tools for advising conversations over the four years.
- Dr. Im stressed the importance of maintaining advising logs. This form of documentation is not only a good practice for junior faculty but having a paper trail can be useful in a variety of ways, e.g. for letters of recommendation. The more important issue is the *quality* of advising. The Dean suggested identifying quality advisors and possibly having them run a workshop and exploring resources within the department. Is the potential of directing students toward core courses a problem for some departments? That is one of the ideas discussed at a previous DC meeting; i.e., Pathways, which is having a web-based tool to direct students who like one type of course and making them aware of another course that you sense they may be interested in.
- The Dean will follow up with takeaways containing useful resources. There is article on Motivational Interviewing, which has proved helpful to Assistant Dean Dawn DeBiase in dealing with students who at risk. Another article relates to legal issues in faculty evaluation, which may resonate with those who are facing those issues. To wit:

#### IV. Rank & Tenure and Pre-Tenure Faculty Reviews

- The Dean, Associate Deans Im and Weiss met with Paul Lakeland, Chair of the Rank and Tenure Committee. R&T expressed some concerns about the quality of cases brought forth and issues related to the internal and external letters.
- R&T found that faculty letters have been more like letters of recommendation instead of letters of evaluation. At the meeting the Dean raised the question of whether or not departments should vote or have a consensus. R&T believes that departments neither must vote nor have a consensus. If a vote has occurred, the chair's letter should reflect that. Rather, all internal letters are independent evaluations of the case.
- R&T believes that individual faculty letters should be written before any vote (in departments where there is a vote) and should be an independent (not collective or consensus based) assessment. Those letters are not usually seen by the chair and go directly to the Dean (who distributes copies to the SVPAA and R&T).
- The chair's letter does not have to reflect a collective will if no collective will exists; the chair may also write a separate individual letter, as many chairs do. On occasion a chair will wait to hear from a colleague who has expertise in a certain area. Departments should make decisions together but everyone has a right to an independence voice.
- The Dean reiterated that all letters should be **evaluative** and not letters of recommendation. The Dean's letter is evaluative and contains a thorough engagement with and analysis of the case.
- The Dean will resend revised guidelines outlining expectations for chairs in the pre-tenure review process. Only the SVPAA, the Dean, the dept chair, and the R&T committee are

empowered to read the outside letters because of confidentiality. The Dean's tip sheet will state that chairs may summarize the content of those letters for their colleagues without identifying the letter writer and without sharing the letter, so that is an alternative strategy. We must maintain the confidentiality of the letters themselves as we promise external reviewers.

- Should you have difficulties with phrasing or formulating the pre-tenure review letter, the Dean is willing to assist you.

## **V. UC Update and the BPS**

- The Dean announced that the General Faculty voted to close University College at their meeting on March 2, 2012. We hope to inform part-time students through our marketing materials what degree programs will be available to them in the evening and how they will be able to complete their degrees. Communication and English are the only departments with a large number of part-time students. Course planning for the evenings, summers, and various interim sessions should be folded into departmental curricular mapping and scheduling practices. Aaron Perkus will continue to assist. Dr. Steven Bayne asked if faculty could teach part-of-load in the summer now that teaching will be through the departments. The Dean said that is not the current policy because of different budget lines, revenue models, and contract issues. As well, the Dean hopes the UCC will take up a fuller exploration of online teaching, as is on their "future business" agenda.
- The Dean is working with CAS Planning Committee to develop a set of priorities that might create the basis for a strategic plan for the College. It will highlight strategic priorities around new program development and conversations around humanities and health sciences. The Dean will share those documents with the chairs at the next meeting.
- The SVPAA is one of the drafters of a document he developed with other Jesuit schools all *Essential Features of Academic Programs at Jesuit Colleges and Universities*.
- There will be a discussion and lunch with the SVPAA and Dr. Dallavalle will send relevant information to the Dean and she in turn will forward it to the chairs along with the takeaways.
- The CAS faculty meeting will be held on Friday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>. The CAS will entertain the BPS for adoption at that meeting. Based on that vote and the vote to close UC, transition related issues, course scheduling, and advising will be taken up at the next DC meeting, and, as appropriate, at the Chairs Retreat on August 29 and 30.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00