

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

Attended

Angela Biselli, Chair of Physics
Geoff Church, Health Science Advisor (on behalf of Biology Chair)
Matt Coleman, Chair of Mathematics & Computer Science
David Crawford, Chair of Sociology & Anthropology
Nancy Dallavalle, Chair of Religious Studies
Jean Daniele, CAS Assistant to the Dean
Dawn DeBiase, CAS Assistant Dean
David Gudelunas, Chair of Communication & Director of Women Gender & Sexuality Studies
Manyul Im, CAS Associate Dean
Terry-Ann Jones, Director of International Studies
Mark LeClair, Chair of Economics
Laura Nash, Chair of Visual & Performing Arts
Marcie Patton, Chair of Politics
Sue Peterson, CAS Assistant Dean
Elizabeth Petrino, Chair of English & Co-Director of American Studies
Judy Primavera, Chair of Psychology
James Simon, CAS Associate Dean
Kraig Steffen, Chair of Chemistry & Biochemistry
Yohuru Williams, Chair of History & Director of Black Studies

Regrets

Steve Bayne, Chair of Philosophy
Mary Ann Carolan, Chair of Modern Languages and Literatures and Director of Italian Studies
Olivia Harriott, Chair of Biology

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the October 3, 2012 Dean's Council minutes; all department chairs were in favor of the minutes.

Announcements and Routine Issues

- The Dean informed Department Chairs that she is a representative on the Budget Committee, as well as part of the Administrative Team that meets with the Faculty Salary Committee for collegial conversation. The Dean and Sr. Vice President of Academic Affairs are representatives of the Academic Division with hopes to affectively advocate for faculty. If there are any concerns the Dean chairs should bring these to her attention, so she could share bring issues to these conversations.
- *FY'14 Budget Requests*
 - The Dean mentioned that request for new faculty should be accompanied by a short rationale on the spreadsheet under department chairs remarks and a more comprehensive explanation as an attachment.
 - Non-permanent positions, such as student labor, visiting faculty, Professor of the Practice, need to be requested on the budget

- Adjuncts—This worksheet should include any sections taught by adjuncts or overloads taught by full-time faculty. Overloads should be a result of sections that are needed to meet our obligations to the core, major, and minors.
- Summer sections will be recorded on the Dean’s Office budget. The Dean will work with Associate Dean Perkus to ensure these sections are calculated properly. Perkus will reach out to chairs with a call for the total summer sections needed within their discipline.
- Associate Dean Perkus commended chairs for doing a great job working out schedules to accommodate part-time students. There were no on-line sections scheduled through the department. Perkus added approximately 10 sections, but moving forward chairs will be encouraged to work with faculty within their departments. The goal is to at least maintain the number of on-line sections or expand these offerings.
- Graduate Programs should include independent studies.
- Budgets should include summer 2013 needs.
- Dr. Kraig Steffen asked if there was a reasonable chance to hire one-year visiting faculty to cover sabbatical/pre-tenure leaves. The Dean mentioned that it’s probably not reasonable to expect approvals for a one-year visiting faculty member, so she recommended that sections needed should be listed on the adjunct spreadsheet. Requests for visitors can still appear on budget sheets, but few are likely to be approved. The Dean mentioned that it is important to anticipate sabbaticals, pre-tenure leaves, shrinkage or growth within their programs. Also it is important to calculate the needs of seniors within disciplines.
- Dr. Mark LeClair mentioned that the Economics Department is currently searching. He was wondering if the faculty position for FY’14 hire should be listed on their budget submission. The Dean commented that departments engaging in faculty searches this year should place these positions on the personnel-faculty worksheet. All current searches should be listed with the appropriate salary and benefit amounts at the Assistant Professor level. Estimates for startup agreements should also be listed on the equipment worksheet for either capital or non-capital expenses.
- Student summer housing is covered through the Dean’s budget and information to apply will be sent out to departments by Ms. Jean Siconolfi sometime after spring semester begins. Requests do not need to be listed on department budgets.
- Graduate Assistants, whether the request is new or ongoing, should be listed on the personnel student worksheet.
- Departments recruiting Jesuits should include salary/benefits on the department budget. The Dean mentioned that the College is hopeful for a Jesuit in Physics; we are pursuing a Jesuit in Spanish and Economics. We declined two Jesuits in Religious Studies and one in History. Departments are able to look at these CVs when they are circulated and decide if there is a good match and if there is an interest to interview.
- Any technical budget questions should be addressed to Ms. Jean Daniele and the more specific questions should be sent to the Dean.
- Computers for non-routine faculty replacements should be indicated on the budget under non-capital worksheet. Requests such as computers for new hires and updated lab needs should be listed.
- Capital Requests—items over \$2000 should be included under capital requests. The Dean tends to prioritize requests that are linked to instructional and research application opposed to request that for solely research.

- Dr. Petrino asked if stipends for chairs and program director be listed on budgets. The Dean responded that these stipends are already part of the permanent budget. Ms. Jean Daniele commented that stipends pertaining to participation in workshops or any other initiative should be listed on the budgets. These requests should be recorded on the bottom portion of the personnel-faculty worksheet.
 - Dr. Steffen asked if additional staff for evening labs should be listed on the budget. The Dean suggested that current staff be asked to reconfigure their hours to accommodate evening lab sections, but if staffing for these sections are still needed, the request should be included. She mentioned that these requests could be listed on budgets but reminded folks that salary for non-faculty is from the same pool as faculty salary, so it limits our ability to grow the size of the faculty.
 - The Dean shared that she will put a request through her budget for a full-time program assistant to support interdisciplinary programs. Department program assistants currently fulfill these areas. The Dean is not sure if this request will be approved, but if positions are really needed, the request should be presented for consideration.
- *Rank & Tenure*—The Dean redistributed a subset of the Chair’s responsibility for Rank and Tenure, highlighting the section relative to *The Chair’s Letters for Rank and Tenure*. Chairs should reference these reminders as they engage in the letter writing process for R&T candidates within their department.
 - Chair’s letter must be received by November 15
 - External letters are confidential and only may be seen by the SVPAA and members of the R&T committee, the Dean and the Department Chair
 - Chair letter must give a recommendation about tenure and promotion
 - Chair letter must offer specific Evaluation of accomplishments in teaching, scholarship, and service in support of the recommendation. The recommendation has to be an *evaluation* of their accomplishments, taking up what is seen in the dossier. If this is not done, the chair’s letter may have little bearing on the case. The Dean and the chair’s letters of evaluation are confidential and are not shared with the candidate.
 - Chair and other faculty letters must be addressed to the Dean, the SVPAA, and the Committee on Rank and Tenure and be sent simultaneously to the Dean and SVPAA.
 - There is only one official R&T file, and that is kept by the SVPAA in CNS 300. Once the outcome of the case is determined, all letters related to successful cases should be sent to the Office of Human Resources to be shredded. Letters related to unsuccessful cases should be sent to the SVPAA’s office.
 - *December Dean’s Council Meeting*
 - Chairs and program directors, and graduate program directors will be part of this meeting.
 - Stephanie Frost, Vice President of Advancement, will discuss ways faculty could help themselves by helping Advancement.
 - Dr. Beth Boquet and Suzanne Solensky will share outcomes relative to a recent advising study. This presentation will be made to a broader audience during the next General Faculty meeting. The Dean encouraged chairs to be at next week’s GF meeting. Information shared at the GF meeting will help form a conversation at the College’s December Dean’s Council meeting, discussing action points for the College.

Discussion of Pending Academic Policy Issues

- *Final Exam Policy*—UCC is looking at new language on the final exam policy. Academic Council has not yet approved this language, but in general the idea is that we would have a language on final exams that reflects contemporary pedagogy, which is not that every discipline has a final exam that is worth at least 30% of the final grade. This is not across the curriculum. Part of the change is looking at making the policy more reflective of contemporary pedagogy and the use of the time period. Dr. Gudelunas asked if consideration were made to change the length of time for final exams, moving from a three-hour time block to perhaps an hour and a half. The Dean mentioned that these conversations are constant; she encouraged Gudelunas to send his comments to Dr. Robert Epstein, Chair of Academic Council, suggesting that this be taken up. This would resolve several issues—finals taking too long, underutilization of actual schedule time, and classroom issues.

- *On-Line Course Policy*
 - Dr. Angela Biselli asked if there was interest in creating new on-line or hybrid courses. The Dean commented that we do not have a strategic plan but research relative to this is on the UCC agenda. Associate Dean Perkus commented that based on the Babson University Study: *Going the Distance* Fairfield University is one of a few universities in the country that do not have on-line education in the Strategic Plan. The Dean commented that this might be seen as “a head in the sand mentality” or it might be an oversight. She thinks we should have strategic conversations about this.
 - Dr. Biselli shared that she was interested in learning how other faculty teach on-line courses in the sciences. The Dean encouraged chairs to seek out conference sessions relative to these topics, such as how to teach on-line/hybrid courses within your discipline. How is your subject matter taught effectively in an on-line learning environment?
 - The Dean would like Fairfield to require all students to take at least one on-line course, before they graduate, but with a cap on how many on-line courses are permitted. But we don’t have the online inventory of courses for this, or the revenue model.
 - Dr. Gudelunas mentioned that he offered on-line summer courses that did not run because of under-enrollment. Full-time undergraduate students are not permitted to take these courses; and if they were opened up to this population, there is a greater chance these courses would run. The Dean mentioned that the current policy states that on-line courses are offered to external and part-time Fairfield University students, as they are expected to generate additional revenues beyond full-time tuition. Full-time students seeking to engage in an on-line course require permission from their respective Dean’s Office; some are allowed to enroll under particularly circumstances.
 - The revenues for on-line courses are generated from external and part-time students. They are not sustainable on full-time faculty loads and not current budgeting models. As well, we have an educational model with an expectation where full-time faculty are on campus engaging with students in their classes and outside of class. The Dean thinks that hybrid elements and an on-line course management system, in support of courses, are great tools and probably need to use more of them. Dr. Nancy Dallavalle commented that if on-line courses are taken by part-time students and taught by adjuncts and not part of our undergraduate curriculum, we will not be any good at this style of teaching, so

we will never obtain developed courses in disciplines trying to run on-line courses.

- The Dean mentioned that Associate Deans Im and Perkus attended a conference relative to MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses). They are working on creating a white paper for the SVPAA.
- The Dean shared that the President is engaging in what he is calling a “Strategic Plan Refresh.” This is not like a full blown strategic planning process, but rather a process that looks at our current Strategic Plan, our NEASC, and looking at the Strategic Priority documents created by the schools and other divisions last year. The College talked about these distinguishing characteristics and strategic priorities documents at Dean’s Council meetings and CAS faculty meetings. The College Planning Committee worked on these priorities with the Dean last year. Ideas from these from the Academic Division and other divisions have filtered into a concise document that focuses a lot on outcomes for the University. Once the document is finalized, the Dean will share it with chairs for a further conversation. This may be as early as the Dean’s Council February meeting.
- **The Dean apologized for having to split her time with Budget Committee, and thanked the Associate Deans for leading the remainder of the conversation.**

Expanded Use of IDEA Data by Departments—Assessment Program Review & Mentoring Faculty—Associate Deans Im, Perkus, and Simon discussed ways in which aggregate data from IDEA could be utilized to understand programs, where we are doing well, and where we could make changes to reach common goals.

Associate Dean Simon discussed and shared the following information. A handout was distributed, as well as a questionnaire, asking chairs to indicate areas where they would like customize reports.

- There are upcoming workshops offered by CAE to demonstrate the possibilities of using IDEA in the aggregate and to understand ways to learn more about your department, your program and/or a sub-division of your program. These workshops will run on Thursday, November 8 and Wednesday, November 14.
 - Topics are “Getting Started with IDEA” and “Interpreting & Using Your IDEA Results.”
- Dr. Simon just came off of the Rank and Tenure Committee and noticed that the candidates for promotion who mastered the use of IDEA seemed to present their case more effectively and had a greater advantage.
- IDEA data could be used for assessment, program review, and mentoring of faculty. It is not necessary to create a new survey instrument. The data available through IDEA could be used.
- IDEA scores could be requested for the whole department or a subset of the courses run—300 level seminars, core courses, multiple sections of a single course, or any other breakdown, depending on the needs of the department.
- Analyzing the results will help determine if there is a good match between department goals and what students feel they are learning. These scores may validate the department’s current approach. High scores could help junior faculty, especially those seeking promotion. Areas where there are Low IDEA scores could help to determine ways to make changes. The department could discuss ways to change teaching processes, in order to obtain a better match so students could obtain a positive experience in the classroom.

- Ways to use IDEA results
 - Take a fresh look at the stated goals for the department's curriculum to see if they match the priorities set.
 - Determine if there should be uniform IDEA goals for all courses in the department, concentration, level or subfield.
 - Determine if there is a mismatch between the faculty's intention and what students perceive. Should goals or teaching approach be modified?
- Dr. Yohuru Williams shared that over the summer the History Department, specifically Dr. William Abbott, engaged in the process of analyzing IDEA data and the results were very inviting in terms of looking at the practices of the department and measuring them against the objectives set up for the department.
- Dr. Crawford mentioned that it would be easy to unfairly reveal scores for individual faculty, particularly in more specified areas where a specific faculty member teaches a course. Faculty may not be happy about ordering this type of data. He was concerned with the reaction of his colleagues, within his department, in terms of the privacy connected with obtaining this data. Simon recommended using common sense, where if the number of courses were large enough, there would not be room for concern about privacy. He recommended a conversation with his colleagues, before asking for a particular population of data
- Associate Dean Perkus mentioned that summary reports were already generated for categories in areas such as the social sciences and part humanities, combining multiple departments.

Associate Dean Perkus discussed ways in which IDEA could make assessment easier. A handout was distributed outlining information discussed.

- The University engaged and continues to engage in initiatives to help reflect on learning outcomes. We just completed our NEASC five-year review and we currently have a sub-committee of UCC reviewing core learning outcomes, as well as expectations for assessment of majors.
- Direct and Indirect measures were discussed.
 - Direct measures demonstrate student accomplishments. Some of these measures are as follows:
 - Scores and pass rates on standardized tests
 - Portfolio artifacts
 - Capstone projects
 - Papers
 - Service Learning projects or experiences
 - Internship, clinical, practica, and student teaching experiences
 - Indirect measures also help with the assessment of student learning. Some of these measures are as follows:
 - Course and assignment grades
 - Comparison between admission and graduation rates
 - Employment or placement rates of graduating students into appropriate career positions
 - Surveys and questionnaires
 - Quantitative data
- A group summary report through IDEA helps obtain students' perception of what they learned through the curriculum.
- IDEA is based on three general categories.

- Progress on relevant objectives—student self-reporting progress on the objectives that the faculty member highlighted as being important. Faculty select essential and important categories (usually between three and five). This is basically 50% of the overall evaluation score.
- Excellence of the Teacher—25% of overall evaluation score.
- Excellence of the Course—25% of overall evaluation score.
- There are 12 faculty objectives on the FIF form that map directly to a single question that is on the IDEA form wording exactly the same way. Students are being asked exactly the same question as the faculty. Faculty are asked what is essential and important and students are being asked how much progress they made on these objectives.
- There are 6 broad categories that the twelve objectives fall under. While chairs are focusing on the different levels of courses, it would be helpful to focus on which of these objectives map better towards pedagogical goals.
 - Basic Cognitive Background
 - Application of Learning
 - Expressiveness
 - Intellectual Development
 - Lifelong Learning
 - Team Skills
- Group summary reports could be University-wide, College-wide, department-wide, or any level or subset of level that departments seek to explore.
- Dr. Perkus demonstrated a University-wide report. The outcomes determined that overall among the faculty the highest rated objective was gaining factual knowledge. The lowest rated objective was developing a clearer understanding of and commitment to personal values. This report also highlights what students reported as making the most progress area. What was found was that student made the greatest gains on objective one—gaining factual knowledge. The lowest rating objective was learning how to find and use resources and developing a clearer understanding of personal values. This report demonstrated that faculty and students’ assessment on what was most and least important was a good match.
- If students indicate they are making gains in areas that faculty do not find essential, the evaluation scores tend to be lower. This data offers the opportunity for faculty to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the program and what changes can be made from this analysis.
- Departments should decide what level they want to use as IDEA data and once this is determined consensus could be made on what is considered to be essential objectives. In making this decision it was encouraged to look at focus department goals, core and major learning outcomes, core pathways and syllabi review. Chairs should work with department faculty to align FIF selections. Progress made could be reported in annual reports as departmental assessment work.

Associate Dean Im shared a sample report relative to the Politics Department. This report determined that there was a good match for objectives 1, 2, and 3. Faculty indicated these as important or essential and received high scores from students’ self-reports on their progress. There was discussion among chairs to determine whether this report offered useful data.

Another interesting finding was that only one faculty member out of 8-selected objective 5 and 6 as essential and important. Dr. Crawford reiterated his concern with being able to identify the one faculty member. His concern is that this creates a governance issue and feels this will end up

going to Academic Council, because we are revealing information that faculty specifically would not want to be identified.

Dr. Biselli mentioned that in the past aggregate data available to departments through EIDOS was not accepted by a lot of faculty. Dr. Perkus commented that IDEA data was passed by the General Faculty and aggregate data would be available to chairs and the Dean's Office.

We are generating useful data each semester and departments are not engaging in analyzing this data to help assess department needs. The IDEA discussion was meant to offer the opportunity to departments and highlight the ways in which this data could help at many levels—University, College, department and individual faculty levels. This is important data, especially for departments engaging in program review.

Dr. Dallavalle mentioned that based on the conversation at the most recent Academic Council, it was clear that most departments will have unreliable IDEA data, because the FIF is not being filled out in an organized fashion. Another thought is that adjunct faculty are not filling this information out. It would be useful to sit down and have these conversations. When departments look at IDEA data it may be totally useless because the inputs are not well thought out. Im added that there should be some kind of uniformity in terms of inputs for a particular course section. If there are a lot of the same sections taught by different faculty members, there has to be some sense of normalcy. If objectives are not common across same sections of a course, then it is not clear why it has the same number and name.

Dr. Gudelunas mentioned that the data collected in the Politics report shared did not seem to be rich data. Politics was ranked high in all categories and is doing a solid job. He questioned where the richness of the report. Dr. Perkus commented that the group report could allow you to look at the report from each of the levels to see how the objectives shifted from the intro levels to the major levels, asking if this is an intentional shift and a desired outcome. There is a lot of ways to look at these reports analyzing different trends. Dr. Simon also mentioned that validation depends on the discipline, where certain objectives should weigh heavier than others.

Dr. Judy Primavera shared her concern with the on-line submission process of IDEA and student response rate. Because these forms are completed on-line, it is up to the student as to whether they will complete these forms. There is no penalty. Is this becoming the same concept as Rate My Professor.com, where students filling out these forms either really are in favor of the professor or had a problem with the professor and are compelled to share their negative feedback? What is the return rate in terms of the percentage of students filling out these forms? The data collected may not capture the majority of the student population. Dr. Im mentioned that he would get this percentage.

The Associate Deans would welcome the opportunity to join a department meeting to discuss IDEA data and the many useful components it has to offer.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.