

**College of Arts and Sciences**  
**Dean's Council of Department Chairs and Interdisciplinary Program Directors**  
**Wednesday, February 20, 2013**  
**Kelley Center Presentation Room**

**Attended**

Peter Bayers, American Studies  
Angela Biselli, Chair of Physics  
Jocelyn Boryczka, Chair of Politics  
Matt Coleman, Chair of Mathematics & Computer Science  
Sara Diaz, Director of Italian Studies  
Nancy Dallavalle, Chair of Religious Studies  
Jean Daniele, CAS Assistant to the Dean  
Dina Franceschi, Co-Director of Latin American & Caribbean Studies  
Joy Gordon, Chair of Philosophy  
David Gudelunas, Chair of Communication & Director of Women Gender & Sexuality Studies  
Olivia Harriott, Chair of Biology  
Terry-Ann Jones, Director of International Studies  
Mark LeClair, Chair of Economics  
Laura Nash, Chair of Visual & Performing Arts  
Nels Pearson, Director of Irish Studies  
Aaron Perkus, CAS Associate Dean  
Elizabeth Petrino, Chair of English & Co-Director of American Studies  
Judy Primavera, Chair of Psychology  
Kurt Schlichting, Interim Chair of Sociology & Anthropology  
James Simon, CAS Associate Dean  
Marie Agnes Sourieau, Acting Chair of Modern Languages and Literatures  
Kraig Steffen, Chair of Chemistry & Biochemistry  
Maggie Wills, Director of Bachelor of Professional Studies  
Yohuru Williams, Chair of History & Director of Black Studies

**Regrets**

David Downie, Director of Program on the Environment  
Johanna Garvey, Director of Russian E. European Studies  
Gavriel Rosenfeld, Director of Judaic Studies  
Vin Rosivach, Director of Classical Studies  
Kris Sealey, Director of Peace & Justice (represented by Jocelyn Boryczka)  
Jiwei Xiao, Director of Asian Studies

**Approval of the Minutes from**

Dr. David Gudelunas moved to approve the January 30, 2013 minutes and Dr. Elizabeth Petrino seconded the motion. Twelve department chairs were in favor with one abstention.

## **NEASC five-year follow-up and planning for 10-year re-accreditation**

CAS Associate Dean Aaron Perkus discussed the NEASC Assessment and Projections.

Dr. Perkus' presentation highlighted the following areas. (Handouts were distributed). Over the summer 2012, the University submitted their interim fifth year report to NEASC. As required by NEASC, every ten years there is a site visit full accreditation, and every five years there is an interim report, where we report on all other standards, as well as any areas emphasized as concerns based on their previous visit.

- The Interim Report required reporting on six areas of special emphasis based on the University's 10-year report.
  - Governance and Strategic Plan
  - Financial and Long Range Planning
  - Diversity at Fairfield
  - Faculty Rules
  - Improving the Quality of Academic Advising
  - Effectiveness and Efficiency of Administrative Functions
- The report also focused on the entire eleven standards of accreditation assessment. Many faculty have served on these standard committees for a major task force.
- NEASC added a new section called Assessment, Retention and Student Success. Fairfield was the first cohort of schools to go through this new requirement, with no model to work with.
- The fifth-year report submitted by Fairfield was favorably received by NEASC and unanimously endorsed with no areas to follow up on. The report demonstrated evidence of Fairfield University's continued fulfillment of the *Standards of Accreditation* and success in addressing the areas of emphasis listed above and were highlighted by the Commission. Dr. Perkus noted that area three was picked as a model to send to Washington. This particular section was written by Drs. Perkus and Christine Siegel, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- The NEASC Report offered positive feedback to the University and was shared with CAS chairs and directors.
- The Dean mentioned that specifically reported was the comprehensive revision of the CAS Governance Document. The CAS Dean previously had no appointment power for chair selection and this was deemed an area of concern. A group of faculty, along with former Associate Dean Joan Weiss and the Dean worked together to revise this document, making everything more transparent and giving the Dean a role to approve chair appointments. Both the comprehensive revision of the gov doc and the Decanal appointment of chairs were significant new outcomes that the College reported and very important to the larger governance questions raised in the NEASC reviewers' report.
- CIRP Survey Results—Students progressed through their four years of their education at Fairfield, demonstrating meaningful gains across most items that align with University's learning outcomes.
- Last year chairs were asked to report on their program goals, how they are measured, and the progress they are making based on the evidence from their goals. This was an appendix to department annual reports. The same will be requested this year.
- When focusing on the CIRP, Drs. Perkus and Siegel recognized that there was no direct data on what students were learning over their years at Fairfield. We did not collect artifacts from each year and measurements of their learning results. All the schools in the

northeast have not been asked to record these measures, so Fairfield University is not behind with competitive schools.

- Looking through the files from Institutional Research, Drs. Perkus and Siegel came across CIRP—Cooperative Institutional Research Program. This program combined freshmen and senior surveys on an annual basis. The paired surveys contained 35 items that allowed the University to see student gains over time. This is a form of indirect assessment used to demonstrate changes over time in comparison with other institutions.
- Dr. Perkus shared a handout to demonstrate how we used CIRP to report on institutional learning goals (integrative thinker, academic achievement, and civic/social responsibility) and Core Pathways. The handout demonstrated areas of significance where Fairfield was above other schools.
  - Self-understanding
  - Spirituality
  - Academic ability
  - Intellectual self-confidence
  - Importance of influencing social values
  - Importance of helping others in difficulty
  - Importance of being involved in environmental clean-up programs
  - Importance of participating in community action programs.
- The Dean asked if there were areas where Fairfield was below other schools and got worse overtime. This is something to look at, since we had core integration as the centerpiece of our Strategic Plan. Whether these sub-categories mapped to how we previously defined and operationalized integration is a question. Giving our integrative project, with the 10-year assessment, we may want to delve into this a little deeper.
- When we try to get students to experience something great and their experience is not positive or does not match our hopes for them, we need to investigate.
- Direct assessment—E-Forms were completed by chairs and directors, for all degree granting programs across all schools. Associate Deans collected the e-forms from each program and the culture of assessment in these programs were rated and categorized by missing, developing, emerging or establishing, in terms of their progress.
- The culture of assessment showed that all professional schools had a 100% established culture of assessment, because they were required by accreditation and had been required for years. The College participation showed there were two departments missing assessment altogether, eight departments “emerging,” five “developing,” and four “established.”
- The Dean commented that in our last 10-year review there were assessment plans in approximately half of our programs; half were emerging and the remainder missing. Her goal is that at the next 10-year review there will be 100% at either “developing” or “established.” Dr. Perkus shared that we are one department away from full participation, but have a way to go to get everyone to the top two categories of participation.
- Our Projection to NEASC—Over the next two years, faculty and administrators within the appropriate committees will create vehicles for conversations across all five schools at Fairfield to further integrate the core pathways with the specific goals and missions of each school.

- Connection between Core and Programmatic Assessment
  - UCC created a subcommittee on learning assessment as defined by core learning outcomes. There are seven people on this sub-committee.
  - ACCU Summer Workshop—Dr. Perkus put in an application to attend a summer workshop to work on a plan for institutional assessment of the core.
  - There are open questions relative to whether we are going to look at pathways or departmental outcomes. Are we going to look at e-Portfolio? The hope is that departments will think about what they want our graduates to demonstrate as a result of coming to Fairfield? In what dimensions have students grown overtime, because of their course studies and experiences at Fairfield?
- It is up to the department as to how they would like to engage in assessment. The only criteria are that the outcome is measurable and that a commitment is made to analyze data and use the findings to improve the curriculum and pedagogy in order to produce the sought-after outcomes for students.
- Assessment of Programmatic Student Learning Outcomes
  - Departments could establish programmatic goals and outcomes by building on work that was already accomplished for core learning outcomes.
  - Departments could collect evidence to capture learning over time by looking at curriculum mapping, cornerstone to capstone, or core and major requirements. If a department has a capstone that articulates the goals for the major, then the department is already collecting the artifacts.
  - The results from assessment projects should be used to inform curricular revision, showcase student achievements, and align with the institutional strategic goals.
- The Dean mentioned that the NEASC 5-year letter is an extraordinary letter for an institution to receive, particularly because there had been concerns in the 10-year report about our tenured process. Everything she reads about assessment is about engaging in assessment to answer questions that we want to know about the effectiveness of our program and the outcomes for our students—not because assessment is required. Questions for assessment should be fundamentally related to faculty values, educational aims, and work managing their programs. Faculty should be motivated to know whether they are making a difference in student lives by engaging deeply with individual students and their learning. It is important to find the stories we want to tell about our students.
- Moving forward the plan is that one of the CAS Associate Deans visits departments and programs as a facilitator to discuss their plans. Dr. Perkus commented that he thought it was a good idea for departments to have a point person for assessment that may or may not be the appointed chair.
- Dr. Laura Nash asked about the assessment piece of the annual report. The Dean commented that the main goal for this year is to engage in actual assessment of student artifacts, by gathering, interpreting data in relationship to department goals, and analyzing what was learned. It may be helpful to choose one goal per year. Have conversations to analyze findings and come up with an action plan—what curricular or pedagogical changes need improvement; what about assessment procedures need revision to get at the objective?
- Dr. Perkus mentioned that departments are at different stages of assessment—developing, establishing and analyzing. If you do not have a good vision for programmatic assessment, it is recommended to spend time to develop a vision and a plan, rather than

assessing student work. He is available to help chairs and assessment committees to move departments along their own path.

- Dr. Simon commented that one-third of the departments are in the middle of department reviews—Economics, History, Politics, Psychology and Religious Studies. This is perfect for the self-study process.
- The Dean noted that one of the things we find in the self-study process is that the external reviewers are asking how we are assessing student learning. Math had a comprehensive exam, but still developed a more interesting way of a capstone experience that was a little more diverse than just the comprehensive exam. Philosophy did not engage in assessment but began to develop a plan during their program review process.
- Departments can engage in workshops and conferences around assessment. Interdisciplinary programs are not connected to a degree program, but we can look at some common learning goals, such as integrative learning. The interdisciplinary programs are the front line of integration. Approximately 2/3 of the departments have a point person around assessment.
- The Dean asked departments to share assessment structures that are working effectively.
  - Dr. LeClair (Economics)—created a subcommittee so the responsibility would not completely fall on department chair. They had several meetings and put together tools of assessment; last semester they collected artifacts.
  - Dr. Williams (History)—The department collects artifacts for HI10—how well do students do on a document analysis. They have another mechanism for their 300-level classes. The HI subcommittee meets to go over and tweak goals. Dr. Perkus noted that History is in the established culture of the process.
  - Dr. Nash mentioned that VPA engages in analysis through peer-review teaching programs. They assess within each program, because each program is a separate degree. The Dean recommended being careful of peer review linked to assessment, because PRoT is primarily formative for the individual instructor, whereas assessment is for evaluation of the program. It is important to keep critical distance between the two, so faculty do not experience assessment of student learning as an indictment on their individual teaching evaluation.
  - The Dean commented that the capstone is one of the major points of assessment outcomes, but sometimes capstones are taught by only a few teachers. This makes it hard to keep critical distance. If we find that a key component, such as the capstone, does not reach the level of achievement or a number of students are not reaching that level, then the department should revisit restructuring the capstone.
  - Dr. Gudelunas shared that the Communication Department has two separate subcommittees looking at their gateway courses, yet both gateway courses are being taught primarily by part-time instructors. The department would like them to be involved in the assessment process but did not want them to feel pressured into engaging in this type of work without being compensated. The Dean commented that we want part-time faculty to participate, and they should be compensated for their role in assessment. If departments have adjunct faculty that are critical to the assessment process, the Dean's budget will cover the compensation for their involvement.

- Dr. Gudelunas mentioned that the department requested IDEA data and was wondering when they would receive this information. Dr. Simon received this data and will share it with departments. He did mention that this information is a bit contaminated, because some faculty are not choosing FIF categories or prioritize what they are instructing in class. We need to get better at uniformly using the form properly. We are still trying to figure out, working with departments, which aggregate IDEA reports we want to request, as they are expensive, and we want to be sure they are useful.

**Advising and Classroom to Careers** – Dr. Simon offered an update on the launch of Classroom to Career Program.

- The data collected by the focus group discussions around advising indicated that Fairfield University was behind other schools on positive advising experiences. After evaluating the data, it was determined that students often link difficulties they experience during registration (particularly the online system and getting the exact classes they want) with advising.
- There are so many resources on campus that students do not connect with; it is essential that they are aware of these and they use them as a guide to their future. Students should talk to faculty and administrative staff who can guide them through a positive experience.
- The Classroom to Career link will raise awareness for faculty and students, in terms of on-campus resources available.
- Last fall there was a pilot version launched. The English Department was the one department on-line; hardcopies were distributed for all other departments to view.
- Over the next three weeks, all 15 departments will have their materials up on-line in time for advising, which begins April 8.
- Dr. Simon demonstrated the Classroom to Career link. This initiative targets resources to all majors, as well as University-wide.
- The Dean mentioned that freshmen year will be changed to first-year, but given the animation and graphics and expense of revisions, we will revise every two years. We really need to launch this initiative now.
- Marketing Plan—Working with Rama Sudhakar, FUSA Student Government, and the FYE Program to roll this initiative out. The Dean’s office will distribute a link to students, asking them to look at it before meeting with advisors.
- Dr. Simon encouraged chairs to talk to faculty, making them aware of this new tool.
- Career to Classroom was pre-viewed to Admissions, Stud Affairs, the webmaster, and to some chairs. The uniform reaction was that this is the YouTube generation, so we need a lot more videos/visuals and less text.
- Dr. Simon demonstrated the newest version of Career to Classrooms. There was a positive reception from CAS chairs and directors.
- Dr. Petrino mentioned that the English Department will be engaging in a career night with a panel of six alumni. This event will be filmed and she is planning on uploading this onto the website.
- Dr. Pearson asked if there would be a scaled down version for the interdisciplinary minor programs. Dr. Simon is working with American Studies first and then will reach out to other programs. He would like to get through the next advising phase, and late in the

semester will reach out to other areas. He encouraged Pearson to collect materials for uploading.

- Simon mentioned that one template will be used; but, in terms of aesthetics, photos and images could be added, making it unique to the program.
- The Dean mentioned that in terms of department-based career events, Career Planning is very helpful with a lot of the work and is willing to fund refreshments. The annual Communication Career Night (in its 15<sup>th</sup>+ year) is opened to all majors. The Dean encouraged English to open their event to all majors too. We should live the idea that the value of the liberal arts prepares students for anything. For example, a huge subset of graduates engage in something that could loosely be called corporate communications regardless of what their major was. This is not surprising, since as many as 15-20% of all graduates at Fairfield are in the marketing, communication, film, journalism, and professional writing majors. Regardless of a student's major, they are prepared for any career. Students from any major may be interested in other disciplines, so she encourages extended invitations to the larger student body.
- If students look at the list of employers at recruitment events, they may not see an organization that connects to their major. Students do not understand that all types of employers in the liberal arts majors compete for these jobs. We have to help students own the story that we tell about the liberal arts, so that they in turn could tell the story to employers.
- The Dean mentioned that there is a challenge in terms of internships. Internships do not always match with disciplines. We need to find ways to sponsor our students, who want to engage in an internship outside of their major, especially when we talk about the value of how liberal arts prepare them for anything.
- The Dean asked if any departments had experience in managing this well?
- Dr. Pearson had a student with an opportunity to engage in an Irish Studies internship but it was hard to see where it fit. It seemed to fall best under English or Communication. Pearson agreed to engage in an independent study with the student. The Dean commented that some departments have so few majors that the internship is an independent study supervised by a faculty member, while some have a number of students making it a formal course. We could look at how departments could meld the best of both worlds. What are the advantages of having a course, and how could you take some of those advantages into the individually supervised internship? The Dean would like to come to understand what type of faculty development is needed to help students connect the dots.
- Dr. Primavera mentioned that they have internships share their experiences around a set of focused questions. The whole understanding of the organization of the work and use of knowledge helps students figure out how progress is made in the workplace, how problems are solved, how decisions are made, how people work together, and what leadership looks like.
- The Dean mentioned that chairs could discuss ways to develop curricular modules with basic information. The Dolan School of Business has a centralized coordinator who supervises all of their internships, moving students away from faculty. The College does not want to do that; we want students to have deep relationships and facilitated learning experiences with faculty. We need to provide some common resources. There are different models we could look at, such as creating a general studies internship course

that any student could engage in from any discipline. If we use a model from a discipline that has the most developed system, such as Communication, Psychology, or English, we would have to have an instructor.

- Dr. Simon recommended that departments get ready for more summer internships. The Dean's Office could help navigate this. It seems that more students want to engage in two credit internships. They should talk about the availability of one-credit internships too. Simon mentioned that almost all disciplines, at their national meetings, offer internship workshops. He encouraged chairs/directors to engage in these sessions to raise awareness on how to better facilitate internships.
- Dr. Primavera shared that there are internships that will not accept students unless they are registered students earning credits. This is why the one-credit option is so important. The Dean added that one-credit courses are a low cost to the student, meet the requirement, and generates a small amount of revenue. Primavera asked if approval is needed for a one-credit internship. The Dean suggested that requests be sent to ASCC as a change on the department's internship number, saying 1-3 credits (instead of just 3 credits). This is such a small adjustment that will be taken as a notification to ASCC and placed into the catalog. The Dean encouraged departments to make sure they have an internship course number; if not, one should be developed.
- It is important to help students see why a structured supervised internship is better leverage during their job application experience.
- Dr. Petrino asked if there was any procedure providing feedback on student internship experiences. The Dean mentioned that Dr. David Sapp produced much data over the time that he was internship coordinator and presented it to the English Department. He also is familiar with and has contributed to the scholarship on internships.
- Based on chair interest, facilitating quality internships will be a topic of discussion during the summer Chairs' Retreat. How to supervise an effective internship experience? How to help students connect the dots to their major as well as to the core? It is really about students having experience in the workplace, reflecting on them in relationship to their goals, and finding connections. She will reach out to some chairs to present their experiences and will ask Dr. Sapp to present something from the literature and assessment piece.
- Dr. Borycka suggested that a discussion take place during the Chairs' Retreat around capstones and gateways, as well. There seems to be a variation among departments. As part of the Retreat it would be helpful to hear pros and cons and experiences from others. There are several dimensions. The Dean agreed.

### **Announcements and Routine Issues**

- During the last DC meeting there was a deep conversation about chairs' roles and responsibilities in relationship to pre-tenure review and earlier in the year about R&T review. The Dean encouraged faculty, who are affiliated with pre-tenure colleagues in a program, to engage in mentoring in appropriate ways. It is important to ensure interdisciplinary courses are observed and they have conversations about their interdisciplinary teaching. Interdisciplinary programs are homes for faculty and it is important to contribute substantively around faculty engagement with the program. Letters of evaluation should be sent to either the chair or the Dean.



- Enrollment management—The Dean mentioned that departments received a memo regarding soft and hard caps. The Dean asked chairs to post soft caps, but they need to have a hard cap for certain circumstances. She informed chairs that Ms. Peterson will be adding sections prior to June orientation and between session 1 & 2 of orientation. New enrollment caps will be treated as a goal (soft caps) and the enrollment caps that were long standing as hard caps. Freedom is needed for the Dean’s Office to help students quickly. Ms. Peterson will make decisions to help students who are transfers, have holds, or need to change their schedule. The Dean asked faculty to treat Ms. Peterson as a colleague and professional. She is deeply knowledgeable about the curriculum and extremely caring about the students in trying to assist them to reach their requirements. Our goal is not to systematically put departments at hard caps but not to have to consult for every decision. The Dean’s Office would not go over the hard cap and if it seems that we need to consistently extend to the hard caps, then the Dean will discuss opening another section to accommodate the greater need. There are questions and pressure in general to raise all of our caps, especially for those departments that changed their enrollment cap.
- Glitches in the online Merit review system are being worked out and it will be ready sometime in April. Faculty should expect a prompt to apply for standard merit. The Dean sent Academic Council a proposal stating that pre-tenured faculty should not be required to apply for Standard Merit. They should automatically achieve Standard Merit, as long as their continuing tenured contract is renewed. Pre-tenured faculty are vigorously reviewed every year through deep conversations with faculty and the Dean. As soon as Academic Council has finalized this, the Dean will alert all CAS faculty.
- Another University web-page rebranding was just announced and is contracted out to a high-end firm. The Dean asked chairs to be sure that their designated departmental web person is paying attention to announcements. It is vital that the CAS Dean and faculty meet with the newly assigned firm, especially since the College is the centrality of the University. She expressed the interest of being part of the conversation from the ground floor and throughout the planning stages.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.