

The Committee on University College
FINAL VERSION Approved 4/12/13

Minutes of February 22, 2013 meeting

Prepared by Terry-Ann Jones

Committee Members Present: Ryan Munden (chair), Robbin Crabtree, (Acting Dean UC), Anne Campbell, Terry-Ann Jones, Dee Lipman, Yohuru Williams, and Sooyeon Lee-Wingate.

Invited Guests: Aaron Perkus, Patricia Pivarnik, and Elizabeth Hastings

The first item on the agenda was the approval of minutes from the 9/25/12 meeting. Minutes were approved after a correction – Prof. Lee-Wingate was not present at the meeting, but was listed among the attendees.

The committee then discussed the proposal for a strategic plan for online courses. Aaron reported on several concerns:

- Faculty do not perceive online courses as equal in quality to teaching in class
- Retention is a greater challenge in online courses
- There are questions about the marketability of online education, yet institutions are increasingly prioritizing online education

Patricia raised the question, how it is that online education is increasing while faculty do not generally support it.

Dee asked whether the age of faculty is a factor in their reluctance to use online technology. Aaron responded that the survey that provided these data was not of faculty, but of institutions.

Robbin remarked that having an online education strategy does not mean the university is necessarily promoting online education, but rather planning for the subset of online courses. She suggested that we should focus on faculty development to equip faculty to be capable of teaching online.

Aaron informed the committee that Summer 2008 marked the peak of online course enrollment. He also commented that courses already on the books didn't have to be approved again.

Robbin said that the way to get faculty buy-in is to have a separate approval process and a stipend to develop competency.

Aaron added that it is possible for students to complete a degree (BPS/Liberal studies)

online, with the exception of a few courses that they may need to take in class or at a community college.

Yohuru asked if there is a significant cost difference for students to study online. Robbin responded that there is no cost difference; students are interested in the brand.

Robbin commented on two areas of growth in the market:

- Undergraduate, full time, pre-experience
- Part-time, post experience

Aaron summarized his presentation by saying that the evidence shows that students don't want an entirely online education, but want the option of taking a few courses online.

Robbin responded that the trend is a reflection of policy, which states that full time students are not allowed to take online courses in the fall or spring semesters. Robbin also raised a point regarding the technology. The new Chief Information Officer is assessing the University's course management systems, and we really don't know what kinds of decisions will be made about which, or how many, the University will support longer-term. Since Mentor only has one other contract besides Fairfield, it may not be a good idea to invest in teaching online on Mentor, only to have a new online system.

Ryan mentioned that it takes so much time for faculty to develop an online course that it may be a deterrent. It only becomes worthwhile if the course is taught repeatedly. Ryan asked Aaron to make this request clear. He also pointed out that a central location/office/coordinator may be necessary now that University College no longer exists. Patricia agreed, adding that with part-time studies and lifelong learning, it would help to have a centralized space to find resources.

Next, the committee discussed the proposal for future embodiment of the Committee on University College. Robbin supported Ryan's idea of developing 3 memos with different committee members taking the lead on each:

- 1) Online Education – Aaron
- 2) Lifelong learning – Robbin with Elizabeth & Patricia
- 3) CUC's future role – Ryan

The committee then discussed dissolving the Committee on University College. One suggestion was to expand the scope of the Public Lectures and Events committee and shift issues pertaining to online education to the UCC. The committee also acknowledged that

with the addition of the Sustainability Committee, it may not be necessary to replace the CUC.

The next meeting was scheduled for Friday, April 12th at 11:30a.m.