Academic Council Meeting

Monday, October 7, 2013,
3:30 - 5:30
CNS 200

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: Professors: Joe Dennin, David Downie, Bob Epstein, James He, Shannon Harding, Chris Huntley, Ginny Kelly, Alison Kris, Nikki Lee-Wingate, Irene Mulvey (Executive Secretary), Martin Nguyen, Elizabeth Petrino, Shawn Rafalski (Chair), Susan Rakowitz (Secretary of the General Faculty), L. Kraig Steffen.

Administrators: Deans Lynn Babington, Bruce Berdanier, Don Gibson, SVPAA Paul Fitzgerald.
Student Representative: Timothy Manning.
Guests: Professors Scott Lacy, David Sapp, Kurt Schlichting, Ms. Jessica York.
Observer: Professor Rick DeWitt.
Regrets: Professors Wendy Kohli, John Thiel, Roxana Walker-Canton; Deans Robbin Crabtree, Faith-Anne Dohm.

Professor Rafalski called the meeting to order at 3:35. Before turning to the agenda, Professor Rafalski welcomed the new student Representative, Timothy Manning and invited committee members to introduce themselves.

1. Presidential Courtesy.

SVPPA Fitzgerald briefly touched on several topics.

The Board of Trustees had approved the Amendments to the Handbook that the General Faculty had approved in June.

The Freshman class currently stands at 963. The current budget had assumed 950. The freshman class includes increases in both students of color and international students. 39% are male, up from the 38% the preceding year. 40% of the current class applied utilizing the test-optional choice. The high school GPA, quality of high schools attended, and strength of high school courses taken, which collectively are better measures for predicting college success than standardized tests, are collectively higher than the preceding class. The discount rate for financial aid for the freshman class is approximately 40%, which SVPAA Fitzgerald characterized as generous but not financially onerous for the University.

Tuition associated with graduate students enrolled for the summer and fall terms of the 2013-2014 academic year is within $50,000 of the $5 million revenue budget associated with these programs. Additional enrollments are expected during the winter intersession and spring terms.

2. Report from the Secretary of the General Faculty.

Professor Rakowitz, Secretary of the General Faculty, reported that Committee on Committees
was working to fill one remaining vacancy.

3. Report from the Executive Secretary

a. Approval of minutes of 9 September 2013.

Prof. James He noted that he should be listed as present. Several members drew attention to non-consequential editorial issues, which required correcting.

   MOTION (Epstein/Steffen): To approve the minutes of 9 September 2013 as corrected.
   MOTION PASSES 15 – 0 – 0.

b. Correspondence

Professor Mulvey, Executive Secretary, noted three items of correspondence in the packet.

4. Council Subcommittee Reports.

Professor Mulvey noted that no sub-committees were ready to report.

5. Petitions for Immediate Hearing.

Professor Rafalski opened the floor to AC members to consider the petition for immediate hearing sent by email 30 minutes before the meeting and distributed to AC members by the petitioner immediately prior to the meeting. No AC member made a motion to entertain the petition for immediate hearing.

Following its consideration of the agenda items below, the AC unanimously agreed to return to this item as it needed to decide how the materials submitted to AC members immediately prior to the meeting should be handled procedurally.

   MOTION (Rakowitz/Steffen): That the material distributed for today's petition for immediate hearing not be included with today's minutes or in correspondence because it includes personnel information.
   MOTION PASSES 15 – 0 – 0.

6. Old Business

There was no old business to consider at this time.


(a) Election of faculty members to the Honorary Degree Committee

Professor Rakowitz reported that three faculty members had been nominated for the three faculty positions on the Honorary Degree. The Academic Council elected Profs. Lane, Massey, and McFadden by acclamation, to serve as the faculty members of the Honorary Degree Committee.

(b) Motion on Subcommittee on Calendar Issues, and election of members
Professor Rakowitz drew the Council’s attention to the relevant information in the packet. Professor Dennin stated that while more concise, there appeared to be little substantive difference between the proposed new language and the proposed old language. Professor Epstein said that as the author of the old proposed language, he supported the new proposed language.

**MOTION (Rakowitz/Fitzgerald):**
Each September, the Academic Council will elect a 2-person Calendar Review Subcommittee from its elected membership to review all Fairfield academic calendars before their publication and make any necessary recommendations for changes to the Academic Council and the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

**MOTION PASSES 14 – 0 – 1.**

Shannon Harding and Nikki Lee-Wingate were elected, by acclamation, to serve as the 2-person Calendar Review Subcommittee for 2013-2014.

(c) Proposed revision to JoR language regarding Midterm Estimates

Professor Rakowitz drew the Council’s attention to the relevant information in the packet.

Director of Exploratory Academic Advising Jessica York and Associate VP for Academic Affairs David Sapp reviewed the background of the proposal and its endorsement by the Academic Planning Committee. Midterm estimates have proven to be an important tool for identifying students that might need assistance. The current language is out-of-date, however, given administrative changes at the University. In addition, shifting responsibility for requesting and receiving the estimates away from the Registrar’s office and to the Office of Exploratory Academic Advising might improve the faculty response rate, which is sometimes less than 20% in a given term.

During the subsequent discussion, Professors Dennin and Huntley emphasized the need to amend the proposal so that it states specifically that the estimates should be submitted to the Office of Exploratory Academic Advising

Harding and Epstein proposed adding specific reference to first-year students in the second sentence of the proposed language.

In response to a question from Professor Downie, Ms. York stated that if the existing language was removed from the JoR and not replaced, this would not necessarily inhibit the ability of her office to request the information from faculty. Professor Downie stated that this could be an example of an opportunity to avoid micromanaging. Simply removing the outdated language from the JoR would allow the Office of Exploratory Academic Advising to continue its work and eliminate the potential need for the Academic Council to consider additional changes to this language in the future.

In response to a question from SVPAA Fitzgerald, Ms. York explained how her office uses the information in the mid-term estimates to assist students and how these efforts have proven effective both in helping them improve academically during their transition to college and in sustaining the University’s high retention rate.
Professor Kris noted that the timing of the reports could be an issue as it could come too early or too late to identify a potential problem. Professors Epstein and He noted that early grades, and even mid-terms grades should not be the only indicator used by faculty and others to identify students having trouble.

**MOTION (Fitzgerald/Epstein):** To delete the following language on page 33 of the Journal of Record:

"First-Year Midterm Estimates:  
In order to identify and intervene with students who are having trouble in several courses, it will be required that all faculty teaching first year students notify the Registrar halfway through the fall and spring semester if a student is in danger of receiving a C-, D or an F. The Registrar will notify the student, and notification will also be made to the faculty adviser, the appropriate Dean, and the Dean of first year students."

And to replace it with the following new language:

"First-Year Midterm Estimates:  
In order to identify and intervene with first--year students who are struggling in a course or several courses, it will be required that all faculty submit midterm estimates in the fall and spring semesters for their first-year students in danger of receiving a C--, D, or F to the Office of Exploratory Academic Advising. The student, along with the faculty advisor and the appropriate Dean or Director, will be notified."

MOTION PASSES 13 – 1 – 0.

**MOTION (Rakowitz/Steffen):** To reorder the agenda and consider item 7(e)  
MOTION PASSES 15 – 0 – 0.

**(e) Proposal for a Sociology-Anthropology Major**

Professors Lacy and Schlichting outlined the proposal for a possible new major in Sociology and Anthropology, noting it would utilize existing resources to give students more options. The origins of the proposal stemmed in part from the results of the department’s self-study, including specific recommendations by an outside-reviewer.

In response to questions from Professor Dennin, Professors Lacy and Schlichting outlined some of the options that students would have after completing the major, including graduate school and work in fields related to, in general terms, survey research, marketing, international development, and ethnographic research, among others. In the future, the major could also become linked to the health-science initiative through courses in medical anthropology and social epidemiology.
In response to several questions from Professors Harding and Dennin, Professors Lacy and Schlichting stated that current students had not been polled to gauge interest in the major. Their belief that students will enroll in the major was based on: reports from the outside reviewer regarding interviews conducted with students; the number of students who had considered or enrolled in IDMJs similar to the proposed major; conversations with current and former sociology majors, and student enrollment in some of the classes that would comprise the new major, such as Physical Anthropology. They could not provide precise estimates regarding the number of students that would pursue the proposed major in the future. Currently, there are approximately 62 students majoring in sociology, and the department graduates about 20 students each year.

In response to several questions, Professors Lacy and Schlichting clarified that a student majoring in “Sociology and Anthropology” would not be able to double major in Sociology or to minor in Sociology or Anthropology. In response to a question from Professor Steffen, Professor Lacy clarified that references to medical anthropology in parts of the proposal were references to physical anthropology.

Professor Lee-Wingate noted that some students pursuing the new major would benefit from pursuing a minor in marketing as qualitative market research employs some anthropological techniques.

**MOTION (Epstein/Petrino): That the Academic Council Approve the Proposed Major in Sociology and Anthropology.**

SVPAA Fitzgerald spoke in favor of the motion. The new major would provide students more options and the proposal had been reviewed in detail by the relevant committees.

Professor Dennin spoke in qualified favor of the motion, believing the proposal should have included more specific information regarding student demand.

Professor Downie spoke in favor of the motion.

**MOTION PASSES 15 – 0 – 0.**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN (Epstein/Steffen)**

**MOTION PASSES 15 – 0 – 0.**

Meeting adjourned at 4:45.

Respectfully submitted,
David Downie