ACADEMIC COUNCIL
AGENDA
Monday, December 1, 2014 from 3:30 to 5:00 PM
CNS 200

1. Presidential courtesy

2. Report from the Secretary of the General Faculty

3. Report from the Executive Secretary
   a. Approval of minutes of AC meetings
      i. Minutes of Meeting on November 3, 2014 (attached)
   b. Correspondence
      i. Email from AC Executive Secretary to President dated 11/19 (attached)
   c. Oral Reports

4. Council Subcommittee Reports
   a. SC on broader academic freedom language for governance documents (AC 2/27/12)
   b. Subcommittee to consider proposing IDEA form for administrators (AC 4/4/11)
   c. Subcommittee on grievance procedures (AC 5/8/13)
   d. Subcommittee on time codes (AC 5/8/13)
   e. Standing Calendar Review Subcommittee

5. Petitions for immediate hearing

6. Old Business
   a. UCC proposal for Pass/Fail option (materials in November AC packet)
   b. Discussion of AC approved amendment to the Faculty Handbook for Committee on Non-Tenure Track Faculty (materials in November AC packet)
   c. Discussion of AC approved amendment to the Faculty Handbook on language on maternity leave policy (materials in November AC packet)
   d. Recommendations from FDEC re online IDEA evaluations (postponed to a future Academic Council by request of FDEC)
   e. MFA in Creative Writing, Five-Year-Review (Pending Item B; materials in Nov. AC packet)
   f. Report from Committee on Committees re language for Journal of Record and Handbook to implement the dissolution of University College (Pending Item G; materials in November AC packet)

7. New business
   a. Confidentiality and liaisons/faculty representatives to Board Committees (materials in November AC packet)
   b. Request for clarification of Faculty Handbook from EPC (materials in November AC packet)

Lists of Attachments, Pending Items, and Ongoing Items are on page 2
List of Attachments:
For item 3.a.i. Draft minutes of 11/3/2014 AC meeting (pages 3-10)
For item 3.b.i. Email from AC Executive Secretary to President dated 11/19/14 re AC motion for your attention (page 11)
For item 6.a. Proposed Policy on Pass/Fail Option for Undergraduate Courses from UCC (pages 33-35 in November AC packet) and see 10/6/14 AC draft minutes (page 12 in November AC packet)
For item 6.b. Correspondence between GFS and President (pages 28 & 29 in November AC packet); Proposed revisions to Handbook language from the President (pages 30-32 in November AC packet)
For item 6.c. Correspondence between GFS and President (page 29 in November AC packet); Memo from AC Executive Secretary to President dated 10/20/2014 (page 13 in November AC packet); Response from President dated 10/21/2014 (page 14 in November AC packet)
For item 6.e. Five-Year Review of MFA in Creative Writing (pages 40-46 in November AC packet); relevant ASCC minutes (pages 47-48 in November AC packet); relevant EPC minutes (pages 48-51 in November AC packet)
For item 7.a. Memo from Senior VP for Administration & Chief of Staff to Board Committee liaisons (pages 61-62 of November AC packet); Correspondence between GFS and VP Reed (pages 63-64 of November AC packet); AAUP statement on Confidentiality and (page 65-68 of November AC packet)
For item 7.b. Email from EPC Chair to AC Executive Secretary dated (page 69 of November AC packet)

Pending Items:
A. Faculty Data Committee (AC 12/3/07).
B. MFA in Creative Writing, Five Year Review due in 12/2012 (AC 12/3/07).
C. AC revisits the accessibility of teaching evaluation data, Due spring 2012. (AC 4/19/10)
D. AC review of Merit Appeals Policy, once one or more have been adjudicated. (AC 11/1/10&5/13/14)
E. AC three year review of Intellectual Properties Policy, spring 2014. (AC 3/7/11)
F. MPA, five year review in 2017-2018 (AC 9/10/12)
G. Committee on Committees report on JoR and Handbook language to implement the dissolution of University College (AC 11/4/13)
H. Revisit report from ACSC on Mission Statement re non-tenure track faculty in fall 2014 (AC 9/8/14)

Ongoing Items:
1. Report by SVPAA to AC each semester to inform the council of any approved exceptions to the Athletic Department’s policy of not scheduling athletic events that conflict with final exams.
2. Report from the Committee on Conference with the Board of Trustees after each meeting with board members. At the end of each academic year, discuss items for the Conference Committee to put on the agenda for their meetings with members of the board the following year
3. Standing Calendar Review Subcommittee: A subcommittee of two people will be elected by the AC each September from its elected membership. The subcommittee’s charge is 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.
In Attendance:
Faculty: Professors Mousumi Bhattacharya, Dave Crawford, Joe Dennin, Don Greenberg, Shannon Harding, Irene Mulvey (Executive Secretary), Martin Nguyen, Elizabeth Petrino, Rona Preli, Susan Rakowitz (Secretary of the General Faculty), Amalia Rusu, Emily Smith, L. Kraig Steffen (Recording Secretary), Debra Strauss, John Thiel, Kate Wheeler, Jo Yarrington.

Administrators: Deans Bruce Berdanier, Bob Hannafin, Don Gibson, Meredith Kazer, Jim Simon, SVPAA Lynn Babington.

Student Observer: Jason Abate

Invited Presenters: President Jeffrey von Arx, Eileen O’Shea, Tracy Immerso

Regrets: Professor Mike Cavanaugh

The meeting was called to order at 3:32 pm by AC Chair, Prof. Preli.

1. Presidential Courtesy
   President von Arx, having attended former SVPAA Paul Fitzgerald’s inauguration at USF, brought greetings from Paul although he reported that he had to endure some big hills and (much needed) rain. President von Arx also presented the following updates:
   • Enrollment strong this year
   • However, the Discount rate was high at 44%
   • There will be a hard cap of 1000 for next year’s enrollment
   • The Discount Rate goal will be to bring it down at least 1% point
   • We ended the fiscal year with a 3.6 million dollar surplus, down from 6.9 million in the previous year.
   • Local competitor institutions, Sacred heart and Quinnipiac, had higher surpluses, on the order of 10-12% of operating budget
   • Fund raising efforts have been going well, the new stadium is fully financed and the Recplex. Project is at 75% of the needed funding.
   • The Integrated Nursing and Health Studies Initiative along with the SON and Health Sciences Building Project will now be our principle focus. A combined fund-raising and debt approach will be used for its financing.
   • The approvals for the SON and Health Sciences Building Project are almost all in place
   • We are in a reasonably strong position, especially in comparison to other Jesuit institutions a number of which are in serious financial trouble.
   • Traditional revenue growth (Tuition) is expected to be inelastic and not exceed 2%. Projections for our costs indicate we are likely to exceed revenue within 2-3 years.
   • Fairfield 2020 task forces are working on many recommendations to address these budgetary and other concerns. Major recommendations to come out next month and this will be a critical year of transformation. It is important for all of
us to be forces for positive change. The issues have been discussed in detail in an open and transparent process. I encourage all of you to be involved in the work as it comes to completion.

There were no questions.

2. Report from the General Faculty Secretary
   Prof. Rakowitz indicated that there will be a November General Faculty meeting and 2 Handbook amendments on the agenda along with any amendments that may come from this meeting.

3. Report from the Executive Secretary
   Prof. Mulvey corrected a minor typographical error in a memo sent from President von Arx regarding changes to the maternity leave policy, a date of 2006 was changed to 2008 on page 14 of the 11/3/2014 packet.
   a. Approval of Minutes for the Oct. 6, 2014 minutes of the Academic Council

   **MOTION [Yarrington/Harding] to Approve the Oct. 6, 2014 minutes
   MOTION PASSED  [17 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions]**

   b. Correspondence
      i. AC Executive Secretary sent the President a memo on Maternity leave, as charged by the Council, and received the memo included in the packet for this meeting in response. This is item 6b on the current agenda.
      ii. The ETC recommendations were accepted as submitted to the President.

   c. Oral Reports
      In reference to the Handbook Amendment to be discussed under item 6.a. r, Professor Liz Hohl, a member of the AC Subcommittee that worked on the matter, sent comments. The AC agreed to accept these comments for consideration and they were distributed.

4. Academic Council Sub-Committee Reports.
   e. Standing Calendar Review Subcommittee (S. Harding and J. Yarrington).
      This standing AC subcommittee was formed as a response to a 2013 report that recommended the AC review the process by which the academic calendar is established with an eye towards concerns regarding the semester length (expectations for which are mandated by NEASC). FFU has historically been on the short end of the expected semester length with 13-14 weeks of courses and between 1 and 2 weeks of final exam days. There has also been an ongoing concern regarding the degree to which total course days can vary wildly due to which day one takes a course. (A Monday turbo for example could have many fewer class days then a Wednesday turbo.)

      A goal is to set the calendar for the next two years. Associate VP Malone would actually like to set the calendar four years out. Today the Committee is looking
for approval of the 2015/2016 academic year and then also for 2016/2017 if possible.

The fall semester is notoriously short, F15 is 13.5 – 14 weeks (depending on how you count the 9 days of finals). The committee discussed two options: 1. starting on Tuesday September 6th and going with 13 weeks or 2. starting August 25 (which would require a change to faculty contracts) and then ending on May 25.

J. Yarrington: The committee recognized that the number of days for all classes is a critical concern.

S. Harding: There was positive feedback on the two day “Fall Break” approach this year. There is also consensus to keep the “academic Monday” after President’s day. The idea of shortening senior week was met with considerable resistance from the administration due to the challenges of vetting all the seniors for graduation.

J. Yarrington: Another concern is the timing of the withdrawal period, stated as 9 weeks in the rough draft but in the JOR as 7 weeks.

At this point the floor was opened for discussion.

D. Greenberg: Why not just have classes on Labor day?, Many schools do this.

S. Rakowitz: To clarify, the withdrawal policy is set as “the midpoint of the semester” which should be the end of the 7th week with a 14 week semester.

D. Crawford: Starting mid-week can be problematic, there may be parking issues, many parents cannot get off of work, and the weekend move-in ritual is often a major event (as is the end of the semester pick up) for parents, especially for 1st year students.

S. Rakowitz: Regarding the finals schedule for spring 2016, is it wise to have only one Reading day and then three days of finals? Could we front-load the reading days? (as is done in the fall).

S. Harding: Sunday reading day is, well, traditional.

S. Rakowitz: How about loading up the front end with two Reading days (Wed, Thur) then finals on Fri and Sat. and another reading day on Sunday?

S. Harding: That would then leave the possibility of a student having four days in a row with finals. (Mon-Thur).

S. Rakowitz: They can use the current Wed/Thur Reading Days, Fri/Sat exam days, Sun. Reading Day followed by Mon/Tue/Wed finals.

D. Crawford: There is another concern in play. Many faculty have final papers due on the last day of classes and do not have formal in-class finals. (more than a little rumbling around the room about this violation of the policy that the final assessment, whatever its form, may not be due any earlier than the date assigned
by the registrar for the final exam, and the need for better policing) Since this means many students have only 2 maybe 3 actual finals it increases the pressure for them to play “I’m outta here” games with scheduled finals.

Jason Abate (student): I prefer spaced out reading days but that may not reflect the feelings of a majority of students. Reading Day spacing that works best is highly dependent upon the actual final schedule for a particular student in a particular semester; hard to say which is best.

S. Harding: The current “normal” pattern is for the fall finals to have 2 Reading Days, then 1, and in the spring to have the opposite - 1 Reading Day, then 2 Reading Days pattern.

E. Petrino: What about doing a student survey to ascertain their opinions regarding Reading Day scheduling and other issues like starting before Labor Day?

Jason Abate: In all honesty, you have to be careful starting before Labor Day and having a big holiday weekend before exams/homework etc. builds up. Many students will see it as an excuse to party. The “write up” statistics back this up. Better to start with an intense period of academic focus to get them into that mode early. I do like the idea of a student survey.

Irene Mulvey: The Salary committee would likely be very concerned with the idea of moving the contract date forward, many issues would need to be reviewed.

J Thiel: What does the Sub Committee really hope for from this meeting?

S. Harding: Hoping for approval of after Labor Day start with the understanding that snow/hurricane days could make a mess of things.

**MOTION:** [Rakowitz/Mulvey] Move to have 2 consecutive reading days at the beginning of the exam period for spring 2015.

S. Harding: Speaking against the motion, I don’t think 4 consecutive final days is a good idea.

J. Dennin: Should we wait for the student survey results? I am speaking against the motion.

S. Rakowitz: Another part of this is that the first day of reading days is often filled with FDEC events and other faculty meetings, having the second day open allows for more student contact at the beginning of finals.

I. Mulvey: Survey could be problematic, answers are likely to be all over the map and will be clouded by non-academic issues. The administration has tried for years to reduce reading days and we have pushed back. It is good to have student support for Reading Days.

**MOTION FAILS [5 in favor, 9 opposed, 3 abstentions]**
MOTION [Mulvey/Harding] to accept the recommendations for the AC 15/16 as received with the understanding that the withdrawal date will be corrected.

J. Dennin: Spring recess and Easter break are very close together, will this chop up the semester flow in an inappropriate way?

S. Harding: moving spring break earlier would push it into February.

J. Yarrington: It would be nice to start SB earlier in terms of the Easter break.

MOTION PASSED: [15 in favor, 0 opposed, 2 abstentions]

S. Harding: The committee would appreciate some clarity on issues concerning the AY 16/17 calendar.

J. Dennin: What is the Committee's understanding of how close to Christmas we can go?

S. Harding: The principle constraint is that the winter break is supposed to be about a month by the Handbook.

S. Rakowitz: There is a error in what we have been sent, are we planning on starting on the 6th of September or the 1st? Would we then end on the 21st? I believe we should hold off discussing this calendar until this uncertainty is resolved.

The consensus of the council was that the uncertainty in the dates as presented vs. what was in the packet did need to be clarified and in the interest of time given the thick agenda for the meeting that this item would be put off until the next meeting.
would be added as requested. Spare laptops would be provided by ITS for the few students who did not have one to bring.

M. Bhattacharya: What about smart phones?

T. Immerso: Yes, in theory they could work although the formatting is often problematic. Laptops/Tablets are ok.

E. O’Shea: A “best practices” sheet would be provided for faculty describing how to do the evaluations in class. This will be prepared and rolled out to faculty at the December FDEC workshop.

M. Bhattacharya: I have had problems with insufficient wireless bandwidth. Students ended up not being able to log on.

T. Immerso: In consultation with P. Francis it was determined that the network should be able to handle all students at once. Perhaps this is a localized problem with the DSB network?

J. Thiel: Why can’t they complete the survey outside of class time?

T. Immerso: IDEA has found that in-class response rates are clearly higher, fewer distractions, better data.

J. Yarrington: Adjunct completion rates vary widely, which leads to very spotty feedback data. Only faculty under scrutiny have high use rates.

J. Thiel: Why not make in-class/out of class a choice?

E. O’Shea: There is a choice

J. Thiel: pp 39 of the recommendation – doesn’t give it as a choice

T. Immerso: Faculty member can give out URL and allow students to fill in the evaluation on their own time.

E. Smith: Just to clarify, opting out on the yellow form means there would be NO yellow form at all?

T. Immerso: You can add the yellow form, or other forms from your Department as you wish.

E. Smith: Could you clarify again the policy for students who do not have a laptop?

T. Immerso: A vast majority of our students have laptops according to ITS. Grad. Student population is less well documented.

J. Simon: Higher response rate for in-class IDEA completion is well documented, giving out the URL could drop response rates to 50-60% or less.

B. Epstein: Is there a unique URL per class and are multiple forms available?
T. Immerso: One ID per entry.

B. Epstein: is it anonymous?

T. Immerso: Anonymous as any online unique log on access process can be.

D. Crawford: It might be better to call it “Confidential but not Anonymous” The faculty member will not see the name of the respondent.

D. Greenberg: Why should they believe it is confidential when it is not anonymous?
I. Mulvey: This needs to be cleaned up. Putting IDEA online seems to be a good idea but what is before us is a mixture of “best practices” and “guidelines for” and it is not clear which is which.

MOTION: [Rakowitz/Babington] Council recommends IDEA evaluations be done online with individual faculty members given a unique URL for each course section to distribute to their students.

I. Mulvey: I am in favor of the motion, the JOR language can be brought back to the AC for consideration.

MOTION PASSED: [15 in favor, 0 against, 1 abstention]

S. Rakowitz: Yellow form proposal is for an “interim” policy? Do we need a vote on that? What are our options?

E. Smith: Do nothing, Request Yellow form (Opt. In), Add a qualitative evaluation piece of your (Departments) own.

S. Harding: Add in option seems cumbersome; why not just add the 5 questions to the end?

E. Smith: Students need reflective writing time. Also, with no yellow form we lose the class demographic data at the bottom of the page. This information can be valuable for junior faculty seeking promotion and tenure.

S. Harding: Just add a line that says 1= Senior… etc.

T. Immerso: IDEA reports are by class, so it is hard to get the individual response that you get with separate yellow forms.

D. Strauss: Whatever we do, we need to make sure we advise junior faculty accordingly, these evaluations are important for R/T decisions.

MOTION: [Thiel/Dennin] In course evaluations, yellow narrative forms will continue to be distributed via paper packet but will no longer be distributed automatically for all courses. Instead, faculty will opt-in for Yellow Narrative Form paper-packet distribution via the IDEA preferences app. If faculty members do not actively chose distribution of the yellow narrative forms the default will be no packet delivery.

I. Mulvey: Aren’t the yellow forms required? Isn’t this a policy change?
E. Petrino: Why were the yellow forms considered to be opt in? (not required?)

E. Smith: These yellow forms are very significant. Doing them online would save a huge amount of time for Immerso’s office. Return of the paper forms is also very inconsistent, creating even more work. The committee had considerable discussion on these and other points and thought it was worth piloting the online yellow form process for the reasons given with an understanding that educating junior faculty on their value is an important task.

J. Simon: I would consider loss of the Yellow forms as significant step backwards.

I. Mulvey: I am against the motion, as we have not decided if yellow forms are optional or not.

M. Bhattacharya: Yellow forms give valuable information for course modifications, this should be a separate decision.

K. Wheeler: Why is doing it online a problem? Are we assuming that typing cannot be reflective?

D. Greenberg: The Yellow forms are useful, they can be read and digested – faculty may miss things with the online forms. This could lead to difficult challenges for R/T committee. The security concerns regarding giving out URL’s are real, I believe we should continue to give out the yellow forms as currently done. IDEA is worthless.

S. Harding: I am against the motion for the reasons already stated. We also now seem to have two sets of evaluations. I would say we include the extra questions as a default.

J. Dennin: The faculty member should have a choice. Demographic information that we would lose if we went online (Class information major/yr) is valuable information. I am with Don on this, No IDEA, just give out the Yellow form.

**MOTION FAILED:** [3 in favor, 10 opposed, 3 abstentions]

**MOTION:** [Rakowitz/Crawford] Due to the late hour it is proposed that we RECESS this meeting until next Monday, November 10, at 3:30 pm. Vote on the motion:

**MOTION PASSED** [15 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions]

The meeting was RECESSED at 5:10 pm.

Recording Secretary
L. Kraig Steffen
Jeff,

1. Thank you for attending the Academic Council meeting last month on November 3. The Council is meeting again on December 1 at 3:30 in CNS 200 and, as mandated by the Faculty Handbook, Presidential Courtesy is the first item on the agenda. I am writing to see if you plan to attend the December 1 meeting.

2. In addition, the Council passed a motion on 11/3 charging me, as AC Executive Secretary, to convey to you the Council's request that you send a representative to the AC to explain exactly how the health insurance premiums for 2015 [which were sent to the Faculty Salary Committee, the Trigger Committee and the Health Care Review Committee, and taken up by the AC on 11/3] have been determined.

Thanks
Irene