

Academic Affairs Meeting  
September 8, 2010 – 10-11 a.m.  
Booker House Conference Room

In attendance: Brandt Allen, Daniel Bluestone, Ted Chang, Chris Ghaemmaghami, Mary Gibson, Mark Herman, Bob Kemp, Ed Kitch, John Pepper, Lynda Phillips-Madson, Michael Puri, Mark White

Guest: Justin Thompson - Assistant Provost for Academic Planning and Development

Carolyn Callahan, chair, laid out the broad charge of committee: Any academic issue to be considered by the Faculty Senate first comes before this committee for discussion. The committee is tasked with ensuring the quality of any new programs, ensuring that the right people have been consulted before the creation or closure of programs, and in general considering any academic issues.

If a major or program is not going to exist any longer, currently we don't have a template for the processes at every level to be considered before that happens. We want to protect the faculty and the Senate. With a new president, we may see many changes in programs, so we need to be prepared with a good template.

Regarding the proposed Curry school closures – it was discovered that there were no good procedures, so the request was withdrawn. The dean was in favor, but all affected faculty had not been consulted. We need to be really specific in the documentation we expect to see; we can't just accept a general statement. Curry School is now doing a complete review of its programs. Most likely, by end of this year, Curry will present a package for approval.

Chris Ghaemmaghami volunteered to serve on the Teaching Award Committee. Brandt Allen volunteered to serve on the Transcript Advisory Committee.

Carolyn informed the committee of three issues that the Provost brought to the Executive Council that belong under our purview:

**Capstone Experience:** A plan is being proposed to introduce the Capstone experience for all undergraduates. Many already exist in different forms. Carolyn will urge that this committee review the Provost's plan before it goes any further. He wants to make it mandatory, but would let each school or department define what the experience is. A question for the Provost is, "How is this going to be financed?"

The Provost won't be here next year, but President Sullivan has been reading the Commission on the Future of the University (COFU) closely and discussing it with the Provost. The President is working on a financial model and needs to deal with that first before going forward. She wants to show a return on investment for everything we do.

Question: Would the Capstone need to be approved by the Faculty Senate? Carolyn said that our University governing processes are not too clear. Some decisions come from the top up, some from the top down. In the last five years, the Faculty Senate has taken a much more proactive role; it has not simply endorsed all the Provost's decisions. The Academic Affairs Committee wishes to thoroughly review the matter in the Academic Affairs Committee, then bring it to the Faculty Senate for a vote. Our committee will need to examine the secondary effects of any change in policy: the effects on research, on faculty we hire or don't hire.

The Faculty Senate was formerly advised by the president that we were strictly advisory. With this president, the relationship with Faculty Senate is set to change, so we will do our best to give informed advice to the Provost.

**Post-Tenure Review:** The Provost is developing a policy around post-tenure review. Policies University-wide are not clear. The concern of the Academic Affairs Committee is to ensure that the proposed policy is just and fair, giving all sides an adequate opportunity to have a full hearing. The ways in which post-tenure review and the Grievance Committee overlap will be important. This would be a process where tenure could potentially be revoked, salary could be adjusted, or changes could be made in the teaching load. The process should be one where a person would be advised of problems and given the opportunity to change. To fairly enact a review, the teaching load must be defined for each school or department.

The Provost presented the Commerce School's process of annual peer review to the Senate Executive Council as an example. Based on a program level faculty review, the dean consults with faculty members and they come up with a plan for the following year. The key points the Provost was making were that there would be a full and open review as well as the opportunity to get feedback to change the faculty member's behavior, with clear timelines and expectations. A Grievance would occur if someone was not thoroughly informed, for instance. Academic Affairs is requesting the opportunity to review the process that the Provost puts forward to see if it is fair and just.

Question: Does this actually happen much, that the teaching load is adjusted? Bob Kemp said that it is pretty common in the Commerce School. He said he would love for the Faculty Senate to take this back to faculty, perhaps with discussion meetings in departments like we had to discuss Open Access.

Justin Thompson doesn't have an exact timeline for this proposal to be brought to the Faculty Senate, but he said the Provost likely will want to get this in place before he leaves.

Ed Kitch said that to do post-tenure review with any seriousness would require an enormous commitment of resources. If every tenured faculty member were to be reviewed every year by peers, that would take huge chunk of time. He thinks faculty are working very hard now. He questions whether there's the capacity to add this extra work. Carolyn doubted that every faculty member would receive a full review every year.

It was suggested that this would be touchy issue to bring to colleagues; we haven't had raises lately, so what about people who exceed expectations? His colleagues have received no answers from deans. Faculty need incentives as well as "penalties." It's been acknowledged that we are over performing compared to peer institutions.

Justin said that Rep. Albo asked for the teaching loads of all faculty. The University responded to his request with a detailed explanation of tenured faculty's teaching loads, including explanations that stressed that teaching loads are based on more than just classes taught. Albo responded positively.

Some schools do have a post-tenure review policy; these should be publicly known, and should be somewhat common across schools.

Mark White said that the Commerce School is working to create a database with that information.

Mary Gibson said that the Nursing School has been discussing work load, trying to identify what percentage each person gives to teaching, research, and service. It is difficult to come up with exact percentages. If we had to do that across the University, it would be very difficult. Even across departments, it varies. Transparency is important, though. Carolyn said that we can be helpful in conveying this to the Provost.

Ted and Carolyn were involved in a 1990 salary study across the University. Discrepancies were reported to the deans. There were a lot of outliers – some for very good reasons, some no one knew why. The most common reason given was, “It must have been the former dean.”

**Early Action:** The Provost will bring before the Faculty Senate a proposal for a non-binding early notification. Early decision had been seen as prejudicial to the economically disadvantaged; but ceasing to carry out early decision did not have the desired effect and may have created new issues with recruiting. With early action, students would find out they’re accepted but will not be required to commit until spring. There was a question about how the Dean of Admissions would deal with acceptance rates.

It was pointed out that other schools are making offers quite early, so this is seen as a competitive move.

**New programs/closures:** Several are in the pipeline, but the Provost will bring them to us when they are at a level to require our consideration. The Curry program closures are off the table for now. No new schools are being proposed; the goal is to get Batten up and running.

Milton Adams has taken over the duties of Clo Phillips temporarily during the search to fill her position.

Daniel Bluestone brought up the fact that Ivy Stack, where overflow books are stored, is being renovated, making the books completely inaccessible for 18 months. Ivy Stacks has much unique material; not having them accessible makes Architecture School professors less effective in their teaching. This issue was presented to Daniel by other faculty for consideration by the Faculty Senate. Carolyn asked Daniel to draft a document on this issue that can then be sent to the University Librarian to see if other arrangements could be made. It was further suggested that Gweneth could bring up the issue at the President’s Cabinet meeting. Ed Kitch is on the Libraries Committee and offered to take the document to them as well.

Carolyn said that at this point, there are no actionable items to take back to faculty until we have concrete proposals.

**OPERATIONAL ITEM:** At end of every meeting, the Academic Affairs Committee will discuss what issues are still confidential and which can be taken to faculty.

Carolyn anticipates a meeting every other month. Ann Witkower will look for November, January, March, and May dates and get them scheduled even if we are able cancel them later.

The meeting was adjourned at 11 a.m.