

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR'S COUNCIL MEETING December 11, 2013

Those in attendance were: Alistair Welchman (for Michael Almeida); Yoris Au; Edwin Barea-Rodriguez; Bruce Barnett; Mark Bayer; Rajendra Boppana; Janis Bush; Susan Colorado; Mari Cortez; Thelma Duffey; Alan Dutton; Ann Eisenberg; Belinda Flores; Robert Fuhrman; James Groff; Norma Guerra; Richard Hartley; Paul LeBlanc; Laura Levi; Gregg Michel; Stewart Miller; Harry Millwater; Lalatendu Misra; Sandy Norman; Anson Ong; Thomas Papagiannakis; Gail Pizzola; Chris Reddick; Raydel Tullous; Ken Weiher; Xiaohe Xu; Miguel Yacaman; Wan Yao; Yinlong Zhang

Those absent were: Michael Almeida; Vince Canizaro; Mansour El-Kikhia (excused); Gregg Elliott; William Flannery (excused); David Frego (excused); Waldemar Gorski; Yilmaz Hatipkarasulu; Marita Nummikoski; Daniel Pack; Joachim Singelmann (excused); Martell Teasley; Tammy Wyatt

Guests: Lisa Blazer; Joe DeCristoforo; John Frederick; Cie Gee; Angel Gibbons; Julius Gribou; Sarah Leach; Rebekah Smith

Chairs' Role as Stakeholders for HOP policy and processing of approved policy changes *Rebekah Smith, Faculty Senate Chair*

Dr. Smith gave an overview of the formal policy review process. She said that there is a senate HOP committee and a university HOP committee. The senate HOP committee is elected by the senate and is composed solely of faculty members. The university HOP committee is a 14-member standing committee that is made up of administrative, shared governance, and compliance representatives.

Dr. Smith said that new policies, policy changes, and policies undergoing a regular review cycle sometimes have an optional senate pre-stakeholder review period. The policy's responsible executive or committee member submits this feedback to the policy coordinator, which is sent to the university HOP committee who decides whether the policy changes are substantive or not. If non-substantive, the policy is posted online. However, if the policy is substantive, stakeholders are identified to begin the review process.

Dr. Smith said that when the policy up for review reaches the senate, the review timeline is verified and the policy is sent out to senate members (to be shared with other faculty members in their area) for review. The senate HOP committee compiles the feedback that is received and makes a recommendation for the senate to vote on. The approved senate recommendation is sent to the policy committee member or responsible executive who shares it with the university HOP committee, and the committee votes on whether to send it forward to the office of legal affairs. The committee member or responsible executive receives recommendations from legal affairs and brings them back to the university HOP committee. The policy is forwarded to the President

for approval, and sent to the office of general counsel for final approval. After undergoing each of these steps, the policy is posted in the HOP.

The chairs discussed posting the policies up for review on the department chair council's webpage to help facilitate a more thorough review process. Dr. Smith reminded the chairs that the timeline for stakeholder review is crucial and that providing specific recommendations/input is most helpful when reviewing policies. There was further discussion on whether or not a position should be created on the senate HOP committee for a representative from the department chair council. The chairs decided to pursue this possibility.

PeopleSoft Update

Norma Guerra and Edwin Barea-Rodriguez, DCC Co-Chairs

Dr. Guerra gave a brief update on the status of the PeopleSoft project. She said that thirteen training sessions have been identified, and two sessions have already been developed. March 1st is still the confirmed "go-live" date. She said that the PeopleSoft team has agreed to provide the department chairs with additional information on the systems that will be impacted at the chair's February meeting. Dr. Guerra said that PeopleSoft will accept a list from the chairs identifying their top training priorities. She said that she and Dr. Barea-Rodriguez will email the chairs directly for this information.

Sharing of Common Courses among Colleges

Stewart Miller, COB

Dr. Miller discussed the possibility of cutting costs in graduate programs by condensing courses. He said that there is often a sense of singular course ownership which can leave other faculty members vulnerable if the course's main instructor leaves. Faculty would be able to help out their colleagues while also meeting students' needs more effectively by condensing courses among colleges. Dr. Miller analyzed the number of course offerings last year for statistical and methods courses among graduate students. He said that within one year, 102 statistical and methods courses were offered with 96 open sections (94%) and 29% had a seating capacity capped at 20 or fewer students. He said that 80% of these classes had less than 20 students, and 38% had less than 10 students. There were some concerns regarding the way in which workload would be distributed and how prerequisites or requirements would work for undergraduates if courses were to be condensed. Although there would be some challenges to work through, Dr. Miller encouraged the chairs to consider this possibility.

Provost's Update

John Frederick, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dr. Frederick discussed curriculum streamlining in accordance with the GRIP. He reminded the chairs to be sure that they are offering courses that students need frequently enough, and to consider the need (or lack of) for chronically low-enrolled courses. He told the chairs that they should be able to count on at least 90% of the funds they received the previous year for summer course offerings. However, he said that if there is great student demand for a particular course, the budget may be adjusted accordingly. He also reminded the chairs that class scheduling should be set according to students' needs. This is especially important when multiple sections of

the same class are offered. The sections should be varied by different times and dates if possible. He said that it may be helpful to begin looking at schedules up to one year in advance, to estimate course scheduling as early as possible.

Dr. Frederick told the chairs that the course survey response rate has improved this year. The response rate is 56%, which is up 16% over last year.

He encouraged the chairs to attend next week's commencement and said that faculty will be sitting in the front rows as they have done in the past. In addition, faculty members will sit with their PhD students and assist with hooding. A shuttle is expected to provide service between the Alamodome and the Downtown campus.

Dr. Frederick thanked the chairs for their work on this year's Promotion and Tenure case summaries. He said that he would like to follow-up on this topic in more detail at the next chair's meeting in February.

Mr. Gribou reminded the chairs that a memo was sent out regarding the hiring of foreign faculty members. He invited the chairs to contact him if they have any further questions.

Process for addressing a Student Grade of "F"

Joe DeCristoforo, Associate VP Registrar's Office

Cie Gee, Associate Director Registrar's Office

Lisa Blazer, Associate VP Student Financial Aid

Mr. DeCristoforo explained the implications of the new financial aid regulations that have been established through the federal government. These regulations help distinguish students that withdraw (removing all courses and no longer attending the university for a specific term) from students that "unofficially withdraw" (remaining enrolled in courses within a term but no longer attending). He said that the office of financial aid will contact faculty members for verification on their student's last date of academic activity (last date of attendance, test, assignment, or online discussion, etc.). The last date of academic activity will determine the amount of federal funds to be returned. This must be done within 30 days of a student's withdrawal. The student's unused federal funds must be returned within 45 days of withdrawal. However, if there is no proof provided for when the student left, 100% of their federal funds must be returned. Once a student has completed more than 60% of the semester, the student is allowed to keep 100% of the aid even if a withdrawal occurs after that point. To clarify the requirements, the chairs recommended changing the language online to read "stopped academic activity"; replacing "stopped attending".

Early Alert Retention Network (EARN)

Angel Gibbons, OIT Customer Relations & Communications

Ms. Gibbons reminded the chairs that the EARN pilot program had been implemented during the fall semester to selected faculty members, and said that EARN will be available to all faculty members in the spring of 2014. She said that faculty will receive additional information and a link to the website on January 6th. She told the chairs that she will be corresponding with them regarding the opportunity to give a short presentation at their departmental meetings next month.

The next Department Chair Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 12, 2014 beginning at 3:00 p.m. in the BSE 2.102 Multipurpose Room.