CHSS CFC Meeting

November 7, 2017. 11:00 AM

Deans Conference Room, CHSS

Minutes

Attending: Elizabeth Giddens (English), Brandon Lundy (Geography & Anthropology), Steve Collins (Political Science & International Affairs), Sarasij Majumder (Interdisciplinary Studies), Albert Churella (History & Philosophy), Michael Lahey (Technical Communication & Interactive Design; proxy for Keith Hopper), Jamie Cruz-Ortiz (Foreign Language; proxy for Federica Santini), Dorothy Marsil (Psychology), Kenneth White (Sociology and Criminal Justice), Deanna Womack (Communications; proxy for Chuck Aust).

Ex-Officio: Dean Robin Dorff

Guest: Susan Kirkpatrick Smith (Chair, Geography & Anthropology)

Today’s volunteer for minutes: Albert Churella (History & Philosophy)

**Previous Minutes:**

Motion to approve passed with a few minor corrections:

1. “25% of General Education classes on Friday or MWF “ is the *current* situation – the *target* is 100%
2. The “additional tuition for online courses is” not the same as the $50 per-student supplement paid to instructors of online courses.
3. CHSS and Math & Science together teach approximately 50% of all credit hours, and about 2/3rds of all general education courses. CHSS alone teaches approximately 36% of total credit hours.
4. The travel baseline for lecturers is $500, not $750.
5. “data driven recommendations” should be changed to “data-informed recommendations.”
6. “projected need is about 8 million for faculty, staff, compression, gender, etc.” should be replaced with “projected need is much greater.”

**Dean Dorff: CHSS update on initiatives, developments, policies, etc.:**

The Dean indicated that he will host two or three informal sessions for CHSS faculty, during the week following the Thanksgiving break, for conversation, faculty input, etc. The dean will circulate a list of meeting times and agenda items.

**New Business:**

**Need Admin. Review Volunteers (3 CFC members, 1 Dean’s staff):**

The administrative review process requires a staff volunteer and three faculty members (drawn from the CHSS CFC membership), one of whom will serve as a chair, and a staff volunteer. The duties are not especially onerous, and provide a valuable mechanism for faculty oversight of administration. Ken White will coordinate the list of volunteers and send the names to Andrew Pieper.

**ARD/FPA Forms:**

Susan Kirkpatrick Smith (Chair, Geography & Anthropology) discussed the proposed forms for ARD and FPA, to be used in lieu of the current reliance on Digital Measures. She emphasized the following items:

1. There are currently several problems associated with Digital Measures. Faculty often spend an inordinate amount of time documenting their accomplishments, in anticipation of their annual review. Formatting is a problem, particularly for major accomplishments that relate to two or more DM categories. Significant information is “lost” within the form, making it difficult for evaluators to fully acknowledge faculty accomplishments and undermining the ability of the administration to aggregate data associated with various categories of faculty performance. Because it is difficulty for faculty to accurately predict their future accomplishments (particularly in the area of RCA), the current DM system cannot adequately accommodate changing scholarship agendas.
2. As an alternative to the current annual-evaluation system, faculty should be required to submit a current c.v. (listing all relevant academic career accomplishments, in reverse chronological order), and a narrative. Faculty would be expected to exercise some discretion and restraint in the preparation of the c.v., omitting minor accomplishments that have occurred well before the review period. The narrative can be in any format that is acceptable to each department, and a bulleted list would satisfy the narrative requirement. The narrative would be limited to no more than three pages, single-spaced, 12-point font.
3. Annual review documentation would also include a cover sheet. That cover sheet would indicate the enrollment of all courses taught by the faculty member during the review period, and would indicate any reassigned time. The intent of listing enrollments is not to suggest that some faculty have heavier or lighter teaching responsibilities than others. Rather, it is to alert evaluators to situations where faculty teach high-enrollment classes – which would give a clear indication as to why a faculty member might teach fewer sections than the customary teaching load.
4. There is one minor correction on the cover sheet, in that “Contract Year’ should be changed to “Calendar Year.”
5. In the follow-up discussion, participants noted that the original function of DM was to capture aggregate data for university-wide planning purposes. The layering of annual faculty evaluations on top of that function may be too much for DM to accommodate. Administrators have failed to cull inaccurate data associated with DM. This is particularly evident with respect to teaching evaluations, where errors become part of a faculty member’s permanent record, while producing inaccurate aggregate, university-wide data. The teaching-evaluation function of DM will no longer be supported by the vendor (and this would presumably include the cessation of security patches), raising questions as to the security of student data.

The following issues and suggestions emerged in the discussion that followed:

1. By submitting the prior year’s FPA as part of the review process, faculty could more effectively link their previously stated (ex-ante) goals to their actual (ex-post) accomplishments.
2. It should not be necessary to devote a large portion of the narrative to an explanation of the prior year’s FPA – it is sufficient to state actual accomplishments, rather than defend the level of attainment of goals established a year earlier.
3. A three-page narrative might not give faculty sufficient opportunity to explain their accomplishments during the prior year – particularly in the case of teaching, where faculty might wish to respond to student comments and evaluation scores, discuss changes in teaching methodologies, etc. Some departments currently permit faculty to submit longer narratives, while other departments do not require narratives at all (the faculty typically perceive them as an unnecessary additional burden).
4. In light of the above issue, it might be advisable to permit individual departments to establish a maximum narrative length of more than three pages. We could suggest that three pages is a desirable maximum, but permit any faculty member to write a longer narrative, if they are so inclined.
5. Faculty will have the right to respond to the evaluator’s comments, as they do at present, irrespective of the length of the original narrative.
6. We might consider using the maximum enrollment, rather than the actual enrollment, of each class, to alleviate concerns that evaluators might respond negatively to faculty with low enrollment numbers.
7. Regardless of any decision on the adoption of the narrative, faculty will still need to enter their accomplishments into DM, so that department chairs and others can generate a current c.v.
8. Susan Kirkpatrick Smith and the other members of her committee are willing to speak to individual departments, and explain the proposed changes to their faculty.
9. The Dean made the following comments:
   1. There should be departmental discretion on many elements associated with the documentation of faculty performance – what is needed at this stage is the articulation of core requirements that would be used in common across all departments.
   2. Peer institutions rarely require the level of evidence for effectiveness that is the case at KSU. KSU also seems to have much stricter rules for the documentation and evaluation of faculty performance.
   3. It is refreshing that Academic Affairs is willing to countenance an alternative to DM, and willing to accept faculty leadership in the area of documentation and evaluation.
   4. It might be worthwhile to implement the new evaluation format as a pilot project in selected departments. CFC members were nearly unanimous in their support of the proposed new process, perhaps rendering a test period unnecessary.
10. CFC members are encouraged to take this matter to their respective departments – although there were suggestions that it would be more appropriate for department chairs to take the lead on that.
11. Faculty are welcome to send questions or comments to Susan or to Ken.

**Scheduling changes:**

1. The grid system (with MWF and TuTh class blocks) is being implemented, with some minor adjustments to class starting times. It will be presented to the Faculty Senate as an information item, but it is not up for discussion.
2. While KSU is pressed for space, the grid system reflects the emphasis on student success, rather than shortages of classroom space. By implementing the grid system, the university will be able to offer additional sections of general education classes, reducing the likelihood that students facing full sections will be forced to delay graduation or else leave KSU for another university.
3. Students do not necessarily favor the new scheduling protocol, but they will eventually go to where the availability is.
4. The BOR is aware that KSU needs additional facilities, but the university can make a far stronger case for new buildings if we improve our classroom utilization – which currently ranks well below that of peer institutions.
5. The grid system could seriously affect lecturers and especially part-time instructors. They may face a five-day-a-week teaching schedule, which could cause many of them to leave KSU for opportunities at other universities. The Dean emphasized that tenure-track and tenured faculty are also subject to the grid system, and that department chairs must not permit any resulting burdens to fall disproportionately on lecturers or part-time faculty.
6. The Dean emphasized the difficulties that would accompany stagnant or declining enrollments, something that might occur if students and prospective students cannot get the courses that they need at KSU.

**E-tuition changes:**

1. The BOR has eliminated the tuition differential associated with online courses.
2. The resulting loss in revenue potentially affects the $50-per-student payment to faculty teaching on-line courses. It is far too soon to predict whether, and in what manner, KSU might continue all or part of those payments. The continuation of full payments would require the university to shift approximately $2.5 million from other funding lines, which is a very small portion of the overall university budget.
3. In keeping with the philosophy of equal pricing for online and face-to-face teaching, the BOR is considering the possibility of requiring online students to pay fees at the same rate as face-to-face students.
4. Some CFC members expressed concern that faculty teaching online classes might attempt to renegotiate their teaching assignments for subsequent semesters, or might refuse to teach online classes altogether. There was also some concern that faculty might be required to teach online courses, against their wishes.
5. Prior to the next CFC meeting, we will form a working group to develop the strongest possible case for the retention of the $50 payment, with recommendations to be put before the senior administration.

**Other Business**:

1. We will need to meet again this semester, at 11:00 AM on Tuesday, December 12. The Dean will not be able to attend, but a representative from the Dean’s office will take his place.

*Meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.*