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CSSC - Faculty Senate Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 28, 2015

1:00 PM until Adjournment

DSC -D

Attendees: Andrew Wright, Zulma Toro, Beth McMillan, Andrew Drummond, Lisa Bond-Maupin, Avinash Thombre, Jim Golden, Peggy Scranton, Belinda Blevins-Knabe, Joanne Matson, Karen Kuralt, Mike Tramel, Denise LeGrand

Pres. Wright opened the meeting and presented a brief background regarding the College of Social Sciences and Communication core (CSSC). The University passed the general core curriculum last year. Included in this curriculum is the requirement that the colleges create and pass a core specific to the college. CSSC is the only college that has not completed this requirement. The CSSC faculty passed a core. That core was reviewed by the Dean, who recommended against approving it. The Provost recommended against it to the Chancellor, who vetoed it. The purpose of this meeting is to agree to a process to resolve the issues of the CSSC college core curriculum.

Pres. Wright opened the floor for ideas on how to move forward.

Matson – the description of what happened is inaccurate. The college faculty and Dean need to resolve the issue. The core did not pass the Provost or Chancellor’s review. The faculty passed the CSSC core, the Dean said she was not comfortable with it, so did not support it. Then the Provost and Chancellor did not pass it.

Scranton – after it reached the Chancellor... Where did business go? There are two formal options 1) faculty generates a veto override of the Chancellor or 2) come up with an arrangement that the Chancellor will feel comfortable with in order to rescind his decision

Blevins-Knabe – to get to the root of the problem... the faculty had a vote, the appropriate committees agreed, but the process was derailed. The college is disconnected from the leadership. The faculty feels like they have been ‘thrown under the bus’, that they have been put in their place.

Pres. Wright – The approval process was not violated, although there is agreement that it was not normal. The process was legitimate, and there are reasons that the process is set up the way it is.

Matson – the faculty process leading up to the vote is called into question. It is heartbreaking that the college was excited about the new dean, getting used to the restructuring, had a 99%

positive outlook, but then was derailed by an issue so minor. It makes the faculty doubt where we are going. Many things are changing on campus, we have a tradition of working together with administration, but no tradition of how to deal with conflict such as this one.

Pres. Wright – other colleges have had curricular issues not agreed on with respect to the faculty and Dean

Matson – we do not mind arguing, but this is a bad choice to be arguing over. One needs to pick their battles.

Blevins – Knabe – regardless of whether the Dean approves or not, that part of the process was not clearly understood by all. We do not know how to do this. Can a Dean withhold curricular issues? I thought we had fought this battle.

Pres. Wright – with this issue, we have had to execute on processes that have rarely been used

Golden – What is the time frame we are dealing with?

Pres. Wright – the longer this hangs out, the worse it gets.

Golden – there will be a new college governance document approved at the end of the next college assembly meeting. Can we let the Faculty Executive Committee of the college work with the document? Void the previous one and start over?

Pres. Wright – the governance document will not be approved until it reaches the Chancellor. That process takes too long. Having a process that brings everyone together would be healthy.

Blevins – Knabe – one important issue – the faculty voice was not acknowledged. I suggest we go back to the faculty and ask the faculty for their input on the process

Provost Toro – No part of the process was violated here. We are dealing with personalities. Some individuals believe that they have to ‘die for’ this issue. Going back to the faculty is not in the process anywhere. This will introduce something that is not a part of governance, not in the constitution.

Blevins-Knabe – when the core was passed by the college, the college leadership signs and sends it on. The signature does not mean approval, just acknowledgement that the Dean has seen it. Without a signature, it is frozen. We had to work to unfreeze it. We had to do lots of work to follow the legitimate process.

Pres. Wright – objections from the Dean included resources

Dean Bond-Maupin – I never made the claim that Speech did not have the resources. I felt there should be an analysis of the impact on the Department. I met with the college Assembly President about the idea of finding faculty to find a way to move forward.

Pres. Wright – Faculty bring day-to-day expertise to the administration. The administration brings information on the allocation of resources. Faculty should always put pedagogy first. But we need to make sure the resources are there. We debate things, give our rationale, but we can find a way to talk with each other to come to consensus.

Matson – The decision on the core was made before the Dean was on campus. We were at a point where the conversation was over. It was like a slap in the face for the work we had already done. We need to reset to the point of last August and come up with a plan.

Scranton – we need to come to an understanding. Deans must work with Chairs on what we can afford semester by semester. Are we talking about a core that cannot be passed because of financial unsustainability? Or are we talking about a core as a design that we want for our college? What is wrong with our core? Is the problem the pieces? Or is it financial? What is the nature of the diagnosis?

Matson – That clarified it for me – Reciprocity across colleges was an attempt to solve the problem.

Provost Toro – The question is - is this the best or most appropriate core, or is it financial? In this case, these go hand in hand. Is speech the only place where the learning outcomes can be met? According to the data that I have, 30% of the speech courses are taught by adjunct faculty. If we cut adjuncts, this will hurt speech. But we have extra capacity in the college to meet the learning outcomes. It goes to what the Chancellor said about increasing caps to open up capacity. When we look at the margin of votes on how this was approved (very slim), I have to look at the whole thing and then go by what I think is in the best interest of the students. If you want me to change my mind, show me the evidence.

Matson – It seems on the issue of the adjuncts, we are just shifting where we are going to cut the adjuncts.

Dean Bond-Maupin- Starting from desired learning outcomes is a good potential starting place for us. If we can share perspectives, we will come to a consensus.

Tramel – The core was passed before the Dean was hired. So, it was a one-sided discussion from the faculty. Mediation and arbitration work in my field, it might work here.

Blevins-Knabe – the faculty worked really hard and were asked to move on this in the midst of restructuring. We ended up where we did. The faculty was doing their best. A lot of people put in a lot of work. It is hard to say, just erase all of that.

Tramel- Start the process again

Provost Toro- we need a concrete proposal. You have learned of my concerns. The Dean will be willing to clarify her concerns. This is an opportunity for this college to figure out what they will own. Is this the core that we want? If this is doable, come up with something positive. I will recommend to the Chancellor to allow the original core approved by the faculty to stay in place for a year while these conversations go on.

CSSC Pres. Kuralt – I need a sense of clear criteria for success. Are we talking about one course? Or more? Do we need to ensure that we are teaching with full-time faculty? I want to bring the process to the assembly and be very clear about the parameters.

Dean Bond-Maupin – we have an opportunity to show how we can work together. I will provide any information that will be helpful. Data can be a part of the process. We have an opportunity to provide a model for a strong end product.

Pres. Wright – The college core isn't limited to just the Flex area. The authority granted to the college allows the college to add more courses to the core than just those required by State Minimum Core. Although lower level courses may not be allowable under the law resulting from the Rogers-Phillips Act (747), unless they are program requirements or prerequisite to an upper level requirement.

Summary of planned actions:

Provost Toro agreed to recommend to the Chancellor to allow the faculty-approved core for CSSC to stand for 1 year. Dean Bond-Maupin agreed with the Provost. The CSSC faculty present agreed to come up with a plan for a process that will result in a college core that can be brought through the approval process and to bring that plan to the next CSSC College Assembly meeting.