

College of Arts & Sciences Faculty Meeting
Thursday, December 11, 2014
3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center
Room 202/Ubuntu Room

3:45 Meeting called to order by Dean Francisco

Item I. Approval of minutes from the Spring Faculty Meeting on April 24, 2014.

Motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting: motion made by Chris Bourke, seconded by Rick Bevins. No discussion. Minutes approved unanimously.

Item II. Opening comments. Dean Francisco thanked everyone for attending the meeting and welcoming him into the campus community.

He appointed Lloyd Ambrosius as parliamentarian.

Item III. Recommendation from the College Curriculum & Advising Committee to approve the proposed changes to the minor in Czech.

The chair of the college curriculum and advising committee, Lisa Kort-Butler, summarized the proposed changes in the minor and asked for questions. There were no questions.

The proposal was unanimously approved.

Item IV. Recommendation from the College Curriculum & Advising Committee to approve the proposed changes to the major in Environmental Studies.

Lisa Kort-Butler summarized the proposed changes to the Environmental Studies major. She asked for questions. Debbie Minter noted that the biggest change is that instead of a list of courses in a related area, students will now simply take a Plan A minor or a second major in the area. Dawn Brathwaite asked about courses in other departments that are no longer being offered that are listed as option. Lisa Kort-Butler responded that the ES program should be notified of such changes, but addressing such changes was not a part of this approval process.

The proposal was unanimously approved.

Item V. Recommendation from the College Curriculum & Advising Committee to approve the proposed changes to the major and minor in German.

Lisa Kort-Butler summarized the changes in the German major and minor. She asked for questions. There were none.

The proposal was unanimously approved.

Item VI. Recommendation from the College Curriculum & Advising Committee to approve the proposed new Informatics minor.

Lisa Kort-Butler summarized the description of the new interdisciplinary minor in Informatics. She asked for questions. There were none.

The proposal was unanimously approved.

Item VII. Recommendation from the College Curriculum & Advising Committee to approve the proposed changes to the minor in Sociology.

Lisa Kort-Butler summarized the proposed changes to the minor in Sociology. She asked for questions. There were none.

The proposal was unanimously approved.

Item VIII. Recommendation from the College Curriculum & Advising Committee to approve the proposed new Software Development minor.

Lisa Kort-Butler summarized the proposed new minor in Software Development. She noted how it is open to students outside of computer science. She asked for questions. There were none.

The proposal was unanimously approved.

Item IX. Recommendation from the College Curriculum & Advising Committee to approve the elimination the major in Speech Language Pathology & Audiology in the college.

Lisa Kort-Butler summarized the proposal to eliminate the Speech Language Pathology and Audiology major within the College of A&S. She asked for questions. There were none.

The proposal was unanimously approved.

Item X. Discussion regarding changes to the Bylaws for the college.

Dean Francisco introduced Dan Hoyt to discuss the proposed changes to the College of A&S bylaws. He noted that this is a discussion item only. No vote will be taken today. An electronic ballot will be going out to faculty in January for a vote.

Dan Hoyt explained that the Appendix contained a summary of three major changes and several minor changes. The major changes are 1) quorum requirements, 2) modification of the duties of the College Executive committee, and 3) changes in the composition of the Promotion and Tenure committee.

1. Quorum requirements. Current bylaws require 50 as quorum. But attendance is not usually that high. Hoyt pointed out that the kinds of changes made at the meetings, such as to curriculum, might not be valid if we adhere strictly to the 50-person-quorum requirement. He explained that Debbie Minter had researched how other organizations handled this issue and based on this research they decided to make a proposal to lower the quorum requirement to 40. Then, if this number is not met, the meeting would adjourn, reconvene, and a new quorum number of 10 would be in force.

Minter said it was important to note that when there have been controversial items on the agenda, many more faculty have attended, and in those cases more attention was given to meeting the 50-person quorum. When we were dealing with ACE or college requirements, the room was full. But at non-controversial meetings, which are the norm, the quorum is sometimes not met.

Minter noted that people may wonder: Why not just set the quorum at 10? One reason is to create a mechanism so as to avoid slipping controversial issues through with only a 10-person quorum. This proposal is modelled on the process used by other organizations that have faced similar problems.

She noted that often meetings do not have controversial items and so attendance is low. Dan Hoyt said he has been surprised that more folks don't attend even when non-controversial issues are at stake, since it is an opportunity to meet with and discuss important issues the Dean.

Leen-Kiat Soh asked what other colleges did to address this problem? Minter noted that we're not sure, but she pointed out that faculty don't vote on curriculum matters in other colleges, but we do. So the situation is different.

Hoyt noted that we really do need a quorum for curricular changes.

2) Executive Committee changes.

A) Arts & Science Council:

Dan Hoyt explained that in reviewing old governance documents it was noticed we were required to have an Arts & Science council, but we have not done that for a long time. This body had been replaced with the Executive Committee and a separate promotion/tenure committee. The A&S council was no longer functional.

B) Faculty Instructional Development Committee:

He noted that there is currently a Faculty Instructional Development committee, which meets once a year to evaluate teaching award portfolios. The proposal would eliminate this committee. The considerable work that goes into populating the committee was not proportionate to its duties. These duties could readily be done by a subcommittee of the EC, which is partially elected and widely representative of the college. He emphasized that the proposal does not eliminate the function of the committee, but rather that the function is being folded into the EC duties. He noted that this will be an easy subcommittee function because there have typically been, as this year, only 13 nominations for the 12 awards. He would like to make the awards more competitive.

Evelyn Jacobson asked how, if all of the business of the EC is confidential, such confidentiality is managed with such broad representation on the EC. How are criteria kept confidential? How is this balanced with representation?

Hoyt replied that confidentiality comes from the Dean using the committee as a sounding board. At times the committee might not approve of suggestions and that discussion would remain confidential. He noted, however, that not every action of the committee is confidential. He wonders if perhaps the confidentiality language should be revisited. He asked if such a change might address Jacobson's concern. It is worth considering how these competing interests--representation and confidentiality--are reconciled. He said he will relook at the confidentiality issue.

C. Assessment Committee:

Hoyt explained that the proposal streamlines the assessment committee: it will be reduced in size for efficiency. Diana Pilson noted that this committee was once very large. Debbie Minter explained that it's hard to fill the spots, but it is awkward and difficult to do the work when the committee is not full, so a smaller committee is more practical. The function of the committee would remain the same.

3) Promotion & Tenure Committee: Dan Hoyt explained that this committee has traditionally been structured for proportionate representation, with five faculty members: two from sciences, one from humanities, and one from social sciences, with a 5th member who rotates in a four-year cycle between social sciences and humanities.

However there is a problem with this system. By participating as Associate Dean, Hoyt always brought a Social Science perspective to the deliberations. However, at times when there was only one humanities' representative on the committee, when a person from his or her dept. came up for promotion or tenure, this humanities member had to recuse him or herself. Hence there would be no humanist reviewing the files.

The new proposal is to go to six faculty members on the committee with 2-2-2 representation. Service to be for three years. That way there will always be someone with at least one year of experience from each area on the committee.

Hoyt noted that it is hard to get people to serve four-year terms. Three-year terms will increase likelihood of service, which will insure better representation.

He explained that, while no complaints or problems had arisen with the current system, they could. He notes that this is a fairly major change. The current members of the committee will have their terms adjusted to three years, which can be easily done. With the new system, each year there will be two new members on the committee and four experienced members. And the experienced members will represent all three areas.

Dan Hoyt asked if there were any questions about this proposal. There were none.

4) Miscellaneous changes:

Hoyt noted that the proposal makes some changes in the EC responsibilities, including the addition of some functions, such as the role in the previously discussed Instructional Awards. He pointed out that a judging sub-committee of the EC, with additional adhoc members, enhanced the prestige of the CAS awards. He will also look into enhancing and clarifying the confidentiality language.

He explained that ballot language will be changed by deleting the requirement that they would be "mailed" and no longer referencing any particular method of distribution. This change enables digital voting.

He emphasized that these changes are important and that faculty take the time to consider them.

He asked for suggestions:

Regina Werum wondered how we could explain to other faculty why these changes are important not just for us but that they are also the best practices followed elsewhere. She noted that the quorum change, for example, is hard to understand and suggested we include language explaining the rationale.

Chris Bourke asked why there is no language requiring that the P&T committee members can't be from the same dept. Debbie Minter explained that such language is actually in there.

Steve Lahey asked if the EC should have the same language of restriction as the P&T committee. Minter explained that the same language is in fact in effect.

Dan Hoyt noted that when appointments to the committees are made, the Dean looks to fill the gaps. Minter pointed out that this is one reason it takes a long time to fill some positions,

Item XI. Opportunity to ask questions of the Dean.

Rick Bevins asked what has been the Dean's biggest surprise in his first semester at UNL. The Dean replied that his biggest surprise had come the previous night. He had gotten a call from a friend who was just been appointed as a scientific envoy to State Dept. Sec. John Kerry. This friend had asked him if he enjoyed his new job and he had replied, yes, he was enjoying it. He noted that he had a really great support staff, and that the assistant deans were incredible.

He went on to say that his biggest challenge is that no day is the same. What makes it go by fast is that everyone is able to talk about problems, brainstorm, and work through them. Other enjoyable things he noted were that, despite all the challenges facing the university, he has worked with excellent dept. chairs and program directors who manage to roll with the punches, think creatively, innovatively, and respond

responsibly, rising to the challenge. Their thoughtful response helps to keep the college moving forward. There are great chairs and directors, he said, as well as faculty and staff. He praised the staff, who, he noted, are easily overlooked but who are crucial to help things run smoothly. In spite of all the challenges the college faces, his first six months have been enjoyable. There were a few moments that were truly challenging, but a solid team help him get through.

Regina Werum asked him if he missed living in Indiana. He replied, "No I don't because it's sunnier here, those photons are really good."

Diana Pilson asked him when he started wearing the baseball cap? He joked that he mostly wears it with the bill to the front, but may turn it backwards.

Steve Lahey asked about the progress of fundraising. The Dean replied that he's gotten started, and it might be good to update now. He was surprised at the lack of critical marketing and fundraising infrastructure. There's not enough marketing and media, he noted, and so we need to do more, and are beginning to. The faculty, he pointed out, need to better share information with the Dean's office in order to get the message out. Another thing that was not in place was a fundraising team and strategy. He had just spoken with potential funders about the lack of an external Dean's Advisory Council. He will be putting one together, noting that there had been one but that it was disbanded about 15 years ago. He joked that he hopes the new football coach wins because losing games doesn't help with fundraising. Winning makes it easier. A new fundraising structure is being put in place, with a new staff person dedicated to funding priorities and programs. Conversations with donors are happening. Next semester he will do more travelling for fundraising.

Marco Abel asked the status of the Dean's idea of making changes to the system for allocation of temporary instructional funds, shifting to a system that would provide more long term support. Has more consideration been given to that? The Dean replied that they were trying an experiment. Under Debbie Minter's leadership, they were taking one program as a model to see if this arrangement can be made to work. They will be using that department as a test case. So yes, they are working on trying to secure longer term funding. For some programs the discussion has started, especially smaller ones, in order to get them to think about their budget in longer term. The Dean has targeted smaller programs for the experiment. Then the lessons will be applied to larger departments. If the experiment proves successful, then good, it can be widened. But if it is not successful, then it won't be too disruptive to the college. We need to think about longer term budget planning, but have to work within the budget of the university.

The Dean is starting some discussion with the EC on budgetary models. He noted that most schools use an incremental model. Some have moved to an RCM (Responsibility Centered Model). Some others use performance based models in which the budget is determined by how well the unit performs. We need to think forwardly about the best model for us, he said. At the CIC deans meeting this is a big topic. Many schools are changing their models.

The Dean asked the faculty if they are satisfied with where the college is going. Do they see where it's going? At the current time, he notes, we are putting out a lot of fires, but that doesn't necessarily mean we're going anywhere, but rather just sustaining the current position. But we should be moving forward and are currently putting some infrastructure in place to achieve these goals.

Dan Hoyt asked the Dean, based on his experience before he came here, how he has managed to stay calm putting out fires, dealing with budget cuts, the VSIP retirement package, etc. How did he manage to stay so calm with a rocky first year, and dealing with inside high fastballs? The Dean replied that he knew how to duck. More seriously, he was thankful for the assistant deans, the staff, the chairs and directors.

Julia McQuillan pointed out that she loved the college going in the direction of "the awesome power ranger" video on Halloween. It was exciting, a good direction, and she feels good about that.

Dean Francisco concluded by noting that we have three very important units in the college--humanities, social sciences, and sciences--all of which bring so much to human experience. What they contribute can't be achieved in any other college. One of the exciting things for him is learning about the diverse culture of the college and what it offers students.

Adjourned: 4:43

Respectfully submitted,
Thomas Lynch
Faculty Secretary