**CLAS Faculty Council Agenda**

**September 9, 2021**

**Meeting via ZOOM or in NC 5018**

**MINUTES**

**Participating:** Michael Abeyta, Masoud Asadi-Zeydabadi, Soumia Bardhan, Jennifer Boylan, Sasha Breger Bush, Michelle Comstock, Benjamin Crawford, Pam Jansma, Nick Fisk, Darryl Mehring, Annika Mosier, Florian Pfender, Erik Oleson, Sarah Tyson, Andrea Velasquez, Anna Warrener, Margaret Woodhull

**Recording**: Karen Fennell

**Welcome and Introductions**: Sarah Tyson

**Minutes from May**:

Unanimously approved with no changes.

**Dean’s Updates**: Pam Jansma

*COVID and Campus Updates:*

* The campus is doing a good job in the residence halls.
* There’s a town hall for faculty today at 11a.
* Clear masks for teaching are available in the Dean’s office for faculty and departments to come pick up.

*CLAS Hiring Plans:* Chairs will be notified today about hiring plan decisions and how to proceed.

*Campus Climate Survey:*

* There will be a CU system wide climate survey distributed soon to all faculty, staff and students to participate. The messaging around this survey when it goes out is important since the last time a survey like this was done it was not handled well.
* There is a plan in place for distributing the results of the survey once it is complete.
* There was a question about if the data would be made available afterwards to review and analyze for further study. It would also be helpful to know why it is important to participate in this survey.

*University Strategic Plan:*

* University strategic plan is published now and there will be task forces forming soon to focus on the plan’s 5 main goals.
* Pam reorganized the CLAS strategic plan information to reflect the organization of the university’s 5 goals.
* The Provost has convened a task force to look at IRC faculty status and needs and report back to him by the end of October.

*Student Scholarships:* There will be a push to get all scholarships for students listed in the portal to make it easier for students to find them.

*Graduate school and graduate degrees:* The Graduate School wants to gauge interest in allowing students without undergraduate degrees to matriculate in graduate programs. The Graduate Council will discuss this shortly. Each graduate program will make its own decision.

*Integrated Studies:*

* We are moving the Integrated Studies track into its own degree with both BA and BS options.
* This degree is designed for people who have lots of credits, but who haven’t been able to figure out a specific major.

**OER Task Force Volunteers**: Sarah Tyson

* There was a call for volunteers from this Council to work with the Task Force and OER. Masoud expressed interest in serving for this group.

**Integrating the CLAS Strategic Plan into the University Strategic Plan**: Pam Jansma, Sarah Tyson

* We are looking at the College strategic plan, which was just reorganized by the Dean to align with the text of the University strategic plan, but there were no substantive changes.
* Regarding the equity component of the plan, it’s not clear what the definition of equity is, what we are doing to help units guide their policies and what metrics we are using to assess our progress in equity. How do we know if we’re actually doing something? What is equity and how is it being reported and measured?
* Everyone has their own definition of equity and it looks different to different people. Antonio Farias is working on this issue and how to gather this information and use the data.
* There are no metrics in our strategic plan on purpose because we need to think carefully about what information should be collected.
* There was a discussion about definitions of equity and if we are looking at equal outcomes across social groups. Equity still means different things to different people and it’s also about opportunities, respect and having different voices at the table as well.
* We have equity gap data for our courses that were collected by Rich Allen. We can see that non-white students are having a more difficult time and we have been addressing this issue in the Dean’s Office for a while now.
* This might be made available in Tableau. Rich Allen can look at the data and see what we can share. CU Boulder publishes their DFW data and we could use this as a model for how we might be able to publish our information in a similar way.
* The follow up to this effort would be providing support for faculty to improve. This is what Rich has been doing for years with the faculty equity teaching seminars.
* We need to remember that not every student is prepared the same for their courses and not every course is structured the same way.
* In Math, we have designed stretch classes as well as co-curricular teaching that helps students catch up to get the additional learning support they need to succeed in the next level courses.
* Chemistry is looking at doing something similar with placement exams and putting students in classes that better fit their needs. Chemistry does a pretest of student skills for their first semester students to identify those students who wouldn’t do well in certain courses and to catch students early to get them properly placed at the start. It gets harder to catch students who are struggling in their courses the further they go along in the program.
* The English department relies a lot on the Writing Center for individual coaching to bring their skills along. The Writing Center is now located in the new Learning Commons facility.
* Rich has been running the Student Experience in STEM Project, which has been helpful in connecting with other universities in what they have been doing to help students too.
* There was a concern expressed about possible grade inflation during the pandemic. There are workshops on “un-grading” and the growth mindset for learning assessment. It involves a shift for the instructor in what they are looking for from the student. If you’re grading based on the student acquiring the skills they need for the course it’s a different way of looking at grading outside of the A-F grading perspective.
* The ultimate measure of student success is what they do after graduation and if they are achieving career success. We’ve not been keeping good track of our alumni as a College overall. Some of our departments are better at keeping track of their alumni than others.
* There was a question about looking at whether our own RTP and review criteria should be revised to reflect how we should be looking at equity issues now. If you look at the strategic plan there is a section that notes departments should be including DEI into the primary unit criteria and faculty merit reviews.
* If a department has changed their review criteria for a faculty member going from Assistant to Associate Professor, they can choose if they want to be evaluated under the criteria under which they were hired or under the new criteria. However, if a faculty member is going up for Full Professor, the Regents changed the guidelines such that the person must be evaluated under the criteria in place at the time of promotion. The Teaching component under which faculty are reviewed for excellence has been expanded to include teaching beyond the classroom. Faculty don’t have to be Excellent in both Research and Teaching to be successful in obtaining tenure. Faculty must be excellent in either Research or Teaching and then meritorious in the other two categories. The goal is to incorporate DEI in everything that you do, DEI is not a separate category. How we implement all this is still unclear.
* Faculty hiring and retention are affected by these changes.
* We have been doing well in CLAS with faculty going up for tenure and Full Professor in the last few years.

*Best Place to Work*:

* The Dean will task the CLAS Staff Council to generate some ideas on how to make the College a best place to work for staff. This should be in tandem with efforts and ideas at the campus level.
* CLAS faculty do a lot of work that isn’t necessarily accounted for in campus spreadsheets.

*Funding Opportunities:*

* Faculty should keep an eye out for additional grant opportunities now that we are an HSI.
* There are also state and federal funds available from the pandemic that faculty can apply for.
* The Provost would like to see a bottom up approach to the 5 signature areas where a lot of faculty can fit and we should leverage and grow those 5 areas for faculty research. Those 5 areas haven’t been specifically identified yet and more information is forthcoming.
* There was discussion around funding of international students, scholarships made available by CU Denver and how many credit hours they were allowed by their governments to take online.
* It was mentioned that there are challenges getting top graduate students because we don’t offer health coverage for them. The Graduate School is looking at this further.

*Innovation District*: There’s discussion about creating an innovation district to connect with businesses and corporate entities to partner with them because of who we are and the research faculty expertise and student intern opportunities we could provide.

*Targeted Hiring Efforts:*

* Antonio Farias’s office was given some money to look at targeted cohosting hiring efforts.
* CLAS can talk about a targeted equity cohort hiring plan for next year, but this would have to be in the spring. We had to make hiring decisions for this year very quickly as it wasn’t clear what our situation would be coming out of the pandemic.
* Surveys have shown that 9 put of 10 employers say they want employees with a broad liberal arts educational background and who have had internships while they were students.
* Employers under the age of 50 are also looking for employees who are engaged in equity and social justice.