**CLAS Council**

**October 8, 2020**

**Meeting via ZOOM**

**MINUTES**

**Participating**:

Michael Abeyta, Anna Warrener, Masoud Asadi-Zeydabadi, Jennifer Boylan, Sasha Breger, Michelle Comstock, Benjamin Crawford, Candan Duran-Aydintug, David Hildebrand, Pam Jansma, Gabriel Finkelstein, Mia Fischer, Nick Fisk, Marjorie Levine-Clark, Darryl Mehring, Annika Mosier, Erik Oleson, Florian Pfender, Sarah Tyson, Andrea Velasquez, Anna Warrener, Margaret Woodhull

**Guest:** David Tracer

**Recording**: Karen Fennell

**Welcome and Introductions**: Sarah Tyson

**Minutes from September**: Approved with no changes.

**Dean’s Updates:** Pam Jansma

*Strategic Plan:*

* The college strategic plan has been posted with link sent to faculty and staff.
* November 6 is the deadline to provide feedback.

*Budget Office Discussions:*

* We are engaging in a process with the budget office to look at how our college budget has evolved over the last 5 years to see how we have gotten to where we are now.
* Up until now, we have managed to use carryforward and salary savings from not filling open positions to backfill our deficits and mask the fiscal problems we have been dealing with. ~~So, this is a good thing to meet with the finance team to look at the budget more closely. JoAnn Porter has been working with Lisa Atencio on this as well.~~
* We want to have these discussions wrapped up by the end of the current semester before the budget planning discussions for next spring begin.
* ~~We hope the subvention will be renegotiated as this is a major source of the deficits in the college.~~
* It is typical at most universities that the colleges of Arts and Sciences generate more revenue than their expenses, which helps support the other schools and colleges at the universities.
* ~~Back when we were working with the Huron Consultants in developing the new budget model we asked them if it was typical to have this type of budgetary issue, but they would not provide us a clear answer.~~
* ~~The Chancellor is looking at the school and college budgets very carefully as well.~~
* Todd Haggerty should be talking with the CLAS Council at a future meeting about these budget issues for the college.

*Credit Hour Document:* Rich Allen sent a reply to Joanne Brennan with feedback from the recent Chairs and Directors meeting where this document was discussed.

*Courses and COVID:*

* CLAS and CU Denver seem to be doing okay so far as regards handling COVID cases. There was a point where we thought we might have to pivot quickly to go back to being fully remote given the outbreak that happened recently at CU Boulder. As of now that is not the case.
* Class attendance is up for the semester due to students being able to attend class by Zoom.
* The Spring semester schedule looks similar to what we are doing for this Fall, with 15% of sections being in person on campus.
* Applications to CU Denver are up for first time, full-time students, but the admission rates are flat. Transfer student applications are also down. However, campus tours are filling up fast, which is a good sign.
* October 13 is Colorado Free Application Date for Colorado high school students. They can apply with no application fee to any university in Colorado, including CU Denver on that day.

*State Budget Impact:*

* Jennifer St. Peter in the Budget Office has done a good job with the budget projections for this year. We are a little ahead of what was predicted for this academic year, so we are not looking at further budget cuts right now.
* However, we have to wait and see what happens with the state budget situation as the expenses for K-12 education and Medicare/Medicaid were higher than expected due to COVID complications this year. Therefore, higher education may still experience budget issues if there are further state budget cuts.

*Faculty and Staff Survey:*

* The number one staff concern is flexible work time during COVID and the ability to have more flexible work time when COVID ends. The typical 9 AM to 5 PM workday is not feasible for many staff, especially for parents. People feel like they are working 24-7. Making adjustments in meeting times, perhaps having a Zoom-free/meeting-free Friday, might be an option to explore.
* Among faculty, the number one issue is evaluations, especially for tenure-track faculty. There will be some guidance from the Provost coming out soon, about how annual merit will be done.
* It was asked if faculty evaluations could be Pass/Fail for this one year, especially since there isn’t any money on the table for raises anyway. The Dean will follow up on this question.

*Teaching Options for Next Fall:*

* There was a question as to if there are any predictions for teaching options in the fall for faculty and students to continue to allow flexibility in how we teach our classes and opening up remote course options for students who can’t come to campus.
* We need to consider the challenges of trying to offer both in-person and remote options for each class and the workload involved.
* The Dean thinks there may be some flexibility for the fall. More information is forthcoming.

*Graduation December 2020*: Fall graduation will be virtual.

*Voter Registration On Campus:*

* It was asked if it is ok to have New Era Colorado to come to in- person classes to register voters because it is a non-partisan group. Some faculty have already been allowing them into the classrooms.
* We would need to communicate to faculty if it’s ok for New Era to do this.
* The Dean will consult with legal to get clarity on this and then a communication can be sent out to the college.

*CU Online*: The CU Online venture is moving forward and there will be an update from the Chancellor about this soon.

*Faculty Clock Stoppages:*

* Tenure-track faculty were given the option to request a one-year clock stoppage due to COVID last spring and they had to decide whether or not to apply for the clock stoppage by August. Virtually everyone asked for clock stoppage.
* Kathleen Bollard has the documents about this and statements should have been added to faculty letters of offer to reflect the additional year for tenure and comprehensive review.
* Because the clock stoppage adds a year until tenure, some senior faculty think that more research work should be done, which is not what a stoppage means.

*Team Teaching:* At the next Council meeting it was suggested to talk about how to do more team teaching of courses and how to count team teaching in the workload.

*MSU Tuition Increase:*

* MSU is increasing their tuition rate by 3% for spring.
* Their tuition rate is approaching that of CU Denver if they continue with further increases.

*New Campus Dormitory:*

* Construction on the new dormitory is coming along quickly.
* This new 500+ bed facility gives us the opportunity to create some living-learning communities so faculty should be thinking of that and how we can use this as a recruiting factor that will be attractive to out-of-state, international and local Colorado students.
* The development of learning communities would also give our commuter students something to engage in with in-campus students in the dorms as well.
* The first 3 floors of the building will be the Learning Commons with the Dean of Students, Study Abroad, The Writing Center, a math tutoring center, New Student Orientation and TRiO moving in to the new building, among others.
* Some groups will be moved out of North Commons into Student Commons as space opens up while SCB groups move into the dorm.
* There was discussion about having a Spanish language living and learning community in the dorms and creating opportunities for other intercultural and interlinguistic exchanges and coffee conversations.

**Change to Incomplete Policy**: David Tracer, AD for Student Success

*Proposed Policy Wording Change:*

* David took over the position of Associate Dean for Student Success about a year ago, first as an Interim Associate Dean and now he is in this position permanently.
* He is suggesting to make a small change to the current Incomplete grade policy language as students have expressed concern that they didn’t know what they needed to do to finish assignments, by when, and what to do to complete the Incomplete grade for the course.
* Faculty will sometimes give an Incomplete instead of a Failing grade to a student for course but without informing the student because the faculty member did not want to fail the student for the class. This created some issues last spring because of the modified grading policy option that was put in place, which allowed the student to take a P/NP/P+ for a class. However, if the student was given an Incomplete for the class by the faculty member, then the student could not participate in the modified grading option. In some cases this happened with the Incomplete grade being assigned without the student knowing about it.
* The proposed policy wording change involves shifting from “recommending” written documentation for the faculty member and the student of the work to be completed, along with establishing due dates for assignments with a mutually agreed upon completion date within one calendar year to making this documentation “required”.
* The Council approved the proposed language change from “recommended” to “required” for students and faculty to agree on setting a mutually agreed on date for finishing the work and what work needs to be completed to finish the course within one calendar year.

*Incomplete Grade Agreement Form:*

* David also presented a draft form that could be filled out by the faculty member and the student and filed electronically to document the agreement.
* There was a suggestion to have a consistent, simple form for faculty and students to use to document this agreement, unless the department already has a form they use for this purpose.
* Council members were in favor of suggesting the faculty member make a copy of the documenting form and file it with the undergraduate advisor in the department as well as the faculty member and student keeping a copy of the agreement for themselves for future reference.

*Percentage of Completion of Course and Assignments:*

* Council members were in favor of having some norming discussions amongst departments around this issue and whether there should be a minimum course completion/assignment completion percentage established of more than 50%. The old cut off for eligibility for an Incomplete grade was 75% of course and assignment completion.
* It was pointed out that we would also need to distinguish between undergraduate and graduate assignment completion and that courses vary based on how often a class is offered.
* There was discussion about whether there is a set percentage of the course that needs to be completed to be eligible for a student to ask for an Incomplete grade. It was discussed that the percentage of course and assignment completion has been more flexible so that Chairs have the discretion to decide on a departmental, and even a course by course basis, to let the instructor determine what the cut off percentage is for a student to be eligible to get an Incomplete.
* The current language of the policy says the student should have completed a significant portion of the term and of the assignments for the class to be eligible for an Incomplete grade.
* Departments were encouraged to have norming discussions around what percentage of work and the class should be completed to be eligible for an Incomplete grade. This issue can be brought back to the Council for further discussion if the departments need another body to bring this to for additional consideration.