**CLAS Faculty Council Agenda**

**February 10, 2022**

**Meeting via ZOOM**

**MINUTES**

**Participating:** Michael Abeyta, Rich Allen, Masoud Asadi-Zeydabadi, Soumia Bardhan, , Sasha Breger Bush, Michelle Comstock, Ben Crawford, Candan Duran-Aydintug, Nick Fisk, Xiaofei Gao, Rachel Harding, Pam Jansma, Darryl Mehring, Florian Pfender, Sarah Tyson, Andrea Velasquez, Anna Warrener, Margaret Woodhull

**Recording**: Karen Fennell

**Welcome and Introductions**: Florian Pfender

**Minutes from December**: Florian Pfender

Motion to approve with no changes, passed.

**Dean’s Updates**: Rich Allen, Pam Jansma

**Enrollment Updates:**

* CLAS Student Credit Hours (SCH) have been declining over time and we need to look at our enrollment management process to address these issues.
* This spring, SCH generation is 5% lower than previously and we are about 15% down overall. There were declines happening before the pandemic and matters have gotten worse since. We are down almost 20% over the last 10 years.
* We have had a decade of decline that was exacerbated by COVID, and the decline has not been the same across all departments. Some departments have shown growth, but others have dropped substantially in primary, unduplicated majors.
* Our processes for scheduling courses, setting instructional budgets, for waitlisting courses and other features show our system isn’t built to be very responsive to these kinds of changes, so we are working to change the system now.
* We have the highest number of courses right now that we have let run below minimum enrollment this year and this isn’t how we want to be oriented.
* Some departments and programs have gotten so low that they are not sustainable in the current way of doing things.
* We still see some unmet pressure in the curriculum, even after absorbing waitlists. So we have an odd pattern of being full in some areas that are causing frustrations and being low in other areas at the same time. What we are seeing isn’t a pandemic-only problem.
* We know that nationally there has been a move away from the humanities and the social sciences. We have lost so many credit hours in the last 3 to 4 years and those credit hours are so big that we are bracing for further cuts, which is bad for CLAS.
* The strategic planning work on campus is putting a lot of attention on flexibility, stack-ability of credentials and core reform. Potential change is on the horizon.
* We can be leaders of this change in CLAS, but our way of doing business around curriculum management in the current system isn’t flexible enough to take advantage of the opportunities that may be coming.
* The idea that we can cancel courses a week before classes begin and replace lecturers with rostered faculty at short notice isn’t a good option for us to keep the College and the programs healthy.
* We need to look at our rigid course caps and our policies around course sizes.
* The mindset around waitlists and full courses needs to change, especially around online versus in-person courses as students can move to other institutions that are on the same campus. Students will make choices that help them make progress but don’t keep our College strong. We need to orient ourselves to be more responsive to the shifts we are going to be seeing.
* We will be reviewing the way we look at our part time instructional budgets and rethink how we can move some sections around to do this process better.
* Rich will start a curriculum management working group to make some revisions to our management of curriculum practice to jumpstart changes to our process.
* The longer-term work will involve an academic program working group. This group would look at our role in a changing campus core, at our graduation requirements and at stacking credentials. However, this needs to be connected to the operational and financial aspects of the college.
* There will be another group to look at marketing, recruiting and how this ties in with the strategic enrollment management process of the campus.
* The Faculty Council has an important role as we talk about how we think about teaching loads, course caps and how we think about meeting student demands further on. This group will be integral in thinking about how we might shift faculty load and maybe developing a no-waitlist policy and how we can be more fluid and responsive.
* There’s some early work that might be driven by what is possible financially, but we’re also talking about curriculum reform where active involvement in this group will be critical.
* We do look at SCH by headcount and by major and we know about the differences in demand by service between undergraduate and graduate enrollment.
* Some of the reason our SCH didn’t drop as quickly previously is that the campus was growing and students in other schools and colleges were taking our classes, so that was supporting our SCH even while our number of majors were dropping. The data tells some interesting stories we need to be looking at. In some places the headcount drop is meaningful and it’s impacting the sustainability of the program.
* It was suggested that representatives from the Deans’ office speak to the departments directly about these issues as information doesn’t always trickle down from committees and Chairs efficiently. There was a suggestion to have a dedicated message box or conduit for providing feedback about these issues and ideas as well.
* The campus has had a period of growth during this time, but CLAS has dropped the most compared to others who have more consistently been growing through this same time period. This is tied to national trends in enrollment, not just at CU Denver. The percentage of students taking more of their initial credit hours in their home departments has increased and this has impacted our decline as well.
* CLAS is doing a little better compared to CCD and MSU, but we still aren’t looking good in our enrollment overall.
* Let’s not work against ourselves. We need to tackle what the current barriers are in our system for students to enroll and we need to be flexible as we try new things. We’re a great College doing great work, but we can figure out ways to be more competitive.
* It was reiterated among the Council members that there needs to be more input and connection between the Dean’s office and the faculty regarding formalizing channels of communication for faculty to get their input back to the Deans’ office.
* The current year hiring plan may not be impacted by this situation as those searches are going on now. There is other work going on to see what the structural deficits and declining enrollment impacts will be for next year. The hope is that any system we build now will help support future growth and sustainability for the College.
* It was suggested to create some open or online forums to get more faculty input and to use technology to solicit faculty feedback in these areas.
* There have been conversations in the news about college-age people delaying or cancelling plans to enroll in college and going into the workforce instead. There was a question about whether this is an issue or a general trend of people just going directly into the workforce. We know from surveys that students have high financial stress and there is a trend to go into the workforce. We are planning to do work in the marketing piece to tell our story about the value of a liberal arts degree and how much we have to offer.
* The CU system employs lobbyists for the state and federal government, but it’s a fine line for how CU Denver can advocate for itself. We are doing better at marketing and advocating for ourselves, especially with first-generation students, but we have to be cognizant about how we do this.
* Being a university for life is one of the goals in the strategic plan and we need to be thinking about how we can offer curriculum to students in ways that stack and build towards credentials and show the true value of the connection of our majors to students’ careers beyond their time with us. We need to make sure people know what we are about.
* One of the things we learned in the pandemic is a lot of our students have rejected online learning, but some of our students have embraced the remote and hybrid options. We need to look at what we can do to enhance these high-flex and mixed-learning offerings. Larger programs may have the bandwidth to offer options of the same class in-person and online at the same time. Smaller programs may look at offering courses in this high-flex mode to reach more students.
* It was suggested Rich could come to a future meeting to give more enrollment updates and gather information from this group. Having other avenues for faculty to share their experiences and ideas will be vital.

**Future Meetings Format**: Florian Pfender

* It was discussed if a hybrid format of the meeting would be productive or not.
* If we do meet face-to-face, it was suggested that we find a better space to meet as the Dean’s office conference room is too small for social distancing.
* There was a vote as to whether to go to Zoom for future meetings for the remainder of the semester. The majority agreed to meet by Zoom the remainder of the spring term.

**Brainstorming Future Council Agenda:** Florian Pfender

*Staff Concerns:*

CAP is starting to implement processes and procedures for staff to vote. There were concerns about the number of staff who responded to the campus survey that they are looking for other jobs. It was suggested this be included as an agenda item in a future meeting.

*Pay Equity Policy:*

The Regents and Faculty Assembly are reviewing the equity pay policy and we could bring in Jared Hanson to talk about this with this Council.

*Encouraging Co-Teaching and Cross-Departmental Offerings:*

It would be helpful to discuss and keep moving this effort forward. This ties in with how we can serve our students best. We can look at if there’s a way to go more learning-outcomes based.

*Core Requirements:*

We can talk about the core requirements and those impacts also.

*Dean’s office members were released at this point for the Council to continue with a private meeting.*