**CLAS Faculty Council**

**March 10, 2022**

**Meeting via ZOOM**

**MINUTES**

**Participating:** Michael Abyeta, Rich Allen, Masoud Asadi-Zeydabadi, Jennifer Boylan, Sasha Breger Bush, Michelle Comstock, Candan Duran-Aydintug, Nick Fisk, Xiaofei Gao, Pam Jansma, Marjorie Levine-Clark, Darryl Mehring, Annika Mosier, Florian Pfender, Sarah Tyson, Andrea Velasquez, Anna Warrener, Margaret Woodhull

**Guests**: Julien Langou, David Tracer

**Recording**: Karen Fennell

**Welcome and Introductions**: Florian Pfender

**Minutes from February**: Florian Pfender

Motion to approve with no changes, passed.

**Proposed Grade Option Changes**: David Tracer

* The University-wide educational policies and standards (EPUS) committee has proposed a change to the uniform grading policy (Policy 1025) that is used system-wide for grading students.
* During the pandemic the P/F was extended to P/P+/F grading and it has been proposed system-wide to keep the P+ in the P/F grading scale where the students can select that grading option. The P/P+ will not be included in the GPA. It should be noted that we are talking about changing the P/F policy, not the grading policy.
* It is further proposed to add the grading options of S/U, Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory for experiential learning and field travel courses.
* This proposed policy change was presented to EPUS and it was voted to keep the P+ and add the S/U to the uniform grading policy. This proposal was considered non-controversial.
* It was proposed in the Faculty Council that representatives bring this proposed policy change to their departments for further discussion and then come back to the April Council meeting for a final decision and vote.
* One concern was that the change to the grading options could make things more confusing to students as to what counts for the major and what counts in the GPA. It could also be confusing to potential employers when they look at the transcript.
* One of the rationales for doing this is that various grades have an impact on veterans’ benefits and also financial aid impacts, so it can be important to be able to distinguish between what grades assigned are for those reasons.

**Dean’s Updates**: Rich Allen

* To deal with some of the enrollment downturn challenges and the impact on our curriculum planning, we are hosting Part Time Instructional budget meetings. We are also putting together a curriculum management group to look at ways we can better manage our curriculum and to look at how we can deal with low-enrolled courses and waitlist.
* He has met with Rob Stiner, who has sent templates to departments to ask for more detail, provide more guidance, share section counts and look at the details of the section counts.
* We are talking to some departments about reducing their section counts where we see a history of low enrolled courses. Anthropology, Sociology, History, Political Science, Modern Languages and Philosophy are all having an acute problem. We need to look at how we are impacted, and not just by the pandemic. Communication and Economics are impacted by changes in enrollment at ICB. This is an attempt to get in front of some known problems.
* He has met with department Chairs and Advising about the connection of Advising to the enrollment management group, plus faculty, to work on these issues.
* We want to invite faculty to listening sessions on these issues. We will launch these listening sessions at the April 1 Spring Forum.
* We are building this narrative and our first goal is to address mismatches in demand and to create some guiding principles. We want to get to a place where we have a service obligation to our students that we make seats available for core required classes. We can create standard section sizes and adjust our waitlist absorption practices and that will help us better plan for our needs. We can look at parts of our curriculum to identify needs and look at our section sizes and courses sooner to address student demand. We want to get away from this problem of late cancellations.
* There will be some courses that will need to be canceled late and some courses that will need to move forward with low enrollment, but we want to plan for this better.
* There have been some good ideas shared and we are in good shape relative to our timeline
* Late enrollment by students is a continuing problem and this throws off some of the planning. There are places in our curriculum where we are we are already managing many sections of the course. English has a long history of doing excellent work in this area.
* These shifts in enrollment patterns for students can be difficult to track. We have a campus culture that allows for late enrollment up to two weeks into the semester by our students, and this is difficult to manage. We can look at our capacities and the data around enrollment headcount to better predict when students enroll, what sections we end up with and how many seats we need to offer.
* We can try to engage the campus in conversations as to why letting students enroll so late is actually harmful for students and the curriculum.
* We need to be thinking about what we can anticipate in terms of cuts and changes for full-and part-time instructors. There may be some places that we won’t be able to offer as many sections to lecturers as we have in the past. We also have some places where departments are offering beyond their capacity and there isn’t the demand for what they are offering. It’s painful to have to cancel courses at a late date. If we end up encountering more budget cuts, we will have to rethink the way we’re doing things.
* One of the things we know is happening is that we don’t have the kind of predictability for faculty and students that we want and we have different needs in different areas.
* One of the bottlenecks is around seats in online core courses. The fill rate is about 80-85% for online core courses across the core areas. We see some of these courses are jammed up and we still have room in other areas with too many seats for the demand. This is a curriculum management issue. We need to look at how we make agreements with faculty about course caps and waitlists. These individual decisions are time consuming and not efficient.
* Some students want an online course and aren’t willing to move to an in-person section. Taking another course that’s open when it isn’t the course the student wanted is not meeting demand either.
* Our current system asks too much of our faculty right now and this is time intensive. We want to move towards a better model of how we offer courses. It would be more efficient to standardize course caps and waitlists. At some point there could be an automatic trigger that splits a section
* If we have the budget to support it to increase capacity for the course, this would create a standard way to cap a course and absorb waitlists. This makes it more predictable for the faculty member and for the student to be able to get into the course. So there is an expectation of waitlist absorption early on in the core courses and to start this early to create these seats for students so faculty won’t be asked to do more than is expected at short notice.
* This way the department won’t be asked to cancel one class to make room for adding another course that’s needed at short notice. So we can build this into our practices and our culture in advance if we can make room for this in our budget.
* This will help us deal with rooming issues as well.

**Creation of Ethnic Studies Department**: Florian Pfender, Pam Jansma

* CLAS BPC unanimously voted in favor of forwarding this proposal for approval. This proposal is cost neutral as the College already supports Ethnic Studies as if they were a Department.
* They had a lot of majors when they started the degree. Many of those graduated and they didn’t get a lot of new majors between 2016-2018. A lot if this had to do with the political climate at that time. Plus, there were some advising issues and flyers on the campus that denigrated the program during that time. There have been more majors enrolling recently, they have a lot of minors and the Ethnic Studies courses fill well, particularly in the core. Many students in other majors take the Ethnic Studies classes.
* We are not creating a new program, we’re already doing this program work and supporting it in our budget. It functioned like a Department even though it wasn’t officially a Department.
* There are no space issues as they already have space assigned in the Plaza Building. They will have a Department Chair going forward.
* Motion to vote in support of Ethnic Studies becoming a Department presented, seconded and unanimously approved.

**Council of Chairs’ Communication**: Julien Langou

* The discussion today is to see how issues overlap and to improve communication between the two Councils.
* The Chairs’ Council sometimes feels they have a disconnect in following policies and rules and there isn’t really a mechanism for change among the Council of Chairs.
* It is good to have a separation between the Chairs’ executive and Faculty Council legislative segments for the College, but it would also be helpful to enhance communication between the two groups.
* The Chairs’ Council would like to discuss having a mechanism for feedback and exchange of information between the two groups.
* Julien was asked for an example of an issue that would benefit from feedback between both groups but there was no pertinent example to give at the moment.
* Sometimes members will hear the same presentations at both the Faculty Council and the Chairs’ Council meetings. The question was raised if there could be better efficiencies that could be accomplished or more definition of the different roles of the groups and if there should be cross-pollination between members.
* It was suggested there could be more efficiencies by having a more combined communication approach, but at the same time preserving the ability of untenured faculty to be able to voice their minds without the concern of their Chair being present.
* There was discussion about the possibility of establishing some informal meetings where anyone from both Councils could attend. However, it could be complicated or concerning if there are more informal meetings where some members of the two Councils get together but not everyone does.
* It was noted that the Minutes of the Faculty Council are posted for all faculty to view to see what was discussed and what items are ongoing for further discussion. The agendas could also be posted in the same location as the Minutes so faculty could view them and provide input ahead of the meetings.
* The Faculty Council members are the representatives for their departments and they are supposed to report back to their departments on the business that is discussed.
* Minutes just need to be sent to Tim Stalker once they are approved by the Council and he will post them on the Council website.

**Internal Faculty Council Discussion**