**CLAS Faculty Council Agenda**

May 12, 2022, 9AM

Meeting via ZOOM

[https://ucdenver.zoom.us/j/96407385451](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://ucdenver.zoom.us/j/96407385451&sa=D&source=calendar&usd=2&usg=AOvVaw2WUf8ALfvtHXxwMt6B669S)

**Participating:** Michael Abeyta, Soumia Bardhan, Jennifer Boylan, Sasha Breger Bush, Michelle Comstock, Candan Duran-Aydintug, Nick Fisk, Xiaofei Gao, Pam Jansma, Darryl Mehring, Annika Mosier, Erik Oleson, Florian Pfender, Anna Warrener, Andrea Velazquez

**Guests**: Jon Wilson

**Recording**: Karen Fennell

**MINUTES**

**Welcome and Introductions**: Florian Pfender

**Minutes from April**: Florian Pfender

Motion and approved with no changes.

**Dean’s Update**: Pam Jansma

*Grad Bash, Faculty and Staff Appreciation*: Larimer Square Event will be held 2-5p 5/13

*Spring Commencement*: In-person Graduation ceremonies will be on 5/14.

*Budget*:

* We have our budget allocation for CLAS and it is higher, but we are still running a deficit so we will need to cut expenses in a strategic way for next year.
* The tuition split between the amount that went to the school of instruction versus the school of record was previously 65%/35% and this has now been adjusted to a split of 75%/25%.
* Central also cut the participation fee from 15% to 13.5%, which impacts subvention.
* We are looking at areas of increase and decrease in enrollment over the years to strategically adjust to meet areas of high demand.

**CLAS Honors Policy Revision**: Jon Wilson

* Faculty took this proposal to their departments for more discussion and there was a suggestion to create a third path for access to honors, whereas the new proposal would constitute a reduction in pathways for achieving honors and a reduction in the number of students who would be eligible for honors.
* Some departments feel we should be maximizing opportunities for students to achieve honors.
* The current policy factors in all credit hours earned, including hours transferred in from elsewhere.
* With the new proposal, we are trying to clarify that students should earn at least 45 credit hours and have a cumulative GPA of 3.75 or have GPA of 3.75 in their final 45 credit hours.
* The new proposal focuses on a student achieving a 3.75 GPA cumulatively with at least 30 of those credit hours earned in CLAS.
* Some Departments are in favor of the new proposal because it focuses on credit hours taken in CLAS. Transparency in how the calculation is made is important.
* With P/F hours there is already wording in the policy that 6 credit hours can be counted P/F. The new proposal would eliminate this maximum of 6 credits P/F to count for honors.
* There was discussion about the importance of having honors on the transcripts for applying for graduate school and getting scholarships as these honors become tangible markers of success.
* Students could have up to three types of honors on their transcripts; university, college, and department level. Departments can have their own criteria for honors and consider whether the GPA is the factor they want to consider most for departmental honors or not.
* There was a question about grade forgiveness and how it impacts the transcript. Grade forgiveness has been around for 2-3 years now and students can retake up to 18 credit hours of 1000-2000 level courses in which they received grades of C- or below. Jon Wilson hasn’t seen the data on the number of students who may have utilized this option.
* There is also the Fresh Start option for some students who come back to the university after a break who previously didn’t do well and are given the opportunity to start over if they are below a 2.0 GPA. There aren’t a lot of students who come back via the Fresh Start program. Advising works with students to try to find the best pathways to work with these students. Advising has to check calculations manually in these cases to see if they qualify for honors later.
* The degree audit is an electronic tool students can use to calculate where they are, but it’s not so easy to calculate the GPA for the final 45 credit hours and this is where students need help from Advising to do these calculations manually under the current policy.
* There was discussion about if this group wants more data and to review this issue again and how critical is the vote of this group to the implementation of the new policy.
* The main incentive of the new policy is to streamline the process for how we can calculate honors, to make the calculations more transparent, and to emphasize courses taken at CU Denver and courses taken in CLAS as opposed to courses taken anywhere in the CU system or anywhere within the university.
* Departments can establish their own levels of achievement for departmental honors aside from this new policy.
* There were concerns that we are losing flexibility within the departments at the cost of making things more efficient for the software and if this is the right thing to do for our students to adjust our policies to reflect changing technology.
* This policy has been vetted by EPCC and the CLAS Chairs and Directors. We would have to look at the bylaws to see if Faculty Council votes are the binding decision as to whether or not this policy would move forward.
* We need to consider how much do we want to look at forgiving early mistakes students made in their coursework and then having them be eligible for honors later.
* Our student body often comes in with deficits in their learning or preparation and then they learn the skills they need to succeed later. We have a lot of first generation students for whom the first semester is difficult.
* There was discussion about creating a second pathway where we could look at everything a student has completed except for the first 30 credit hours. We could propose a second pathway to calculate two different GPAs, one that is the cumulative GPA and new GPA that doesn’t include the first year or first 30 credit hours completed.
* There was a question about what would we count for transfer students since we count the course credit hours but not the grades in the GPA. Grades from the CU System are counted in the CU Denver GPA, courses from outside the CU system count as credit hours but we don’t count the grades.
* We can ask for more data on what the impacts would be to our students of counting the credit hours and looking at the GPAs in these new ways. Students don’t often know how to calculate their GPAs.
* Our top students might feel slighted if anyone could get honors and it downgrades the value of what honors represent. How do we make honors accessible but also meaningful? It’s a difficult balance to give out the right amount of honors.
* The benefit of the new policy would be to move away from having to do honors as all manual calculations and also to make how students achieve honors more transparent. We can support a change to make honors more transparent and easier to calculate.
* We are suggesting that rather than calculating credit hours from the beginning of the student’s career, that we count the credit hours students have achieved at the end of their time in CLAS. We want a different option that accounts for students’ struggles early on in their academic career.
* This group would like to see a revised policy before making a final vote.
* Florian will write up a new draft to distribute to this group and then do a formal vote by email.

**Outstanding Undergraduate Student Award for ICB students**: Florian Pfender

* ICB students are a large proportion of students eligible by GPA to receive the award, but they are typically without a chance of winning because they don’t bring enough “extra” qualifications or activities to the table to be as competitive as candidates for the existing undergraduate awards.
* The award is typically given to someone who has overcome some kind of struggle and also done a lot of volunteer work. ICB students tend to concentrate just on their academic work.
* Right now we only have one BA and one BS award. The academic standards committee is floating the idea of an additional award to just recognize ICB students. The suggestion is to make a third award exclusively for ICB students.
* There was a question about if the award criteria is made available somewhere for students and others to view.
* Erick Chavez in Advising runs a report by GPA to determine which students are eligible for the award and he contacts them by email to notify them they are eligible to apply for the award.
* It would be helpful to have more transparency about the awards, how you get nominated, and how you get evaluated for the award.
* The question was asked if it is part of the criteria on which students are evaluated that they have to overcome some kind of struggle to be considered or if that is just something the students include in how they write their letters?
* Items that are assessed include the student’s academics, the student’s letter and the letters of reference for the candidates. The committee then rates and interviews the finalists to determine who receives the award. It’s not always the most transparent process.
* The ICB students may need additional guidance as to how to write their letters to describe their struggles and the barriers they have overcome as international students. It could be helpful for ICB students to receive some mentoring in this way.
* Making the award review criteria more available and transparent would be a benefit to all students.
* Bios of previous award winners have been posted in the CLAS Dean’s Notes, but not everyone sees that publication online.
* Florian will talk to Erick about creating a webpage of information about past winners that would also include more information about the award criteria.