

EPC Minutes – 4/24/14

Meeting called to order at 11:05am

Present: Melinda Milligan (MM), Laura Watt (LW), Felicia Palsson (FP), John Kunat (JK), Libby Dippel (LD), Alvin Nguyen (AN), Carmen Works (CW), Tim Wadling (TW)
Two proxies: Matt James (MJ) for Nathan Rank, Terry Lease (TL) for Armand Gilinsky
Missing: Elaine Sundberg

Agenda approved without changes.

Minutes from 4/10/14: Minor corrections – Chair's Report, item #3, deficit is 1.7 mil (not 1.8); Business Item #2, SYRCE proposal, outcomes from C2 should be “broad,” not “board.”

Minutes approved.

Consent item: LIBS 205 – no objections.

Reports:

Chair's report:

1. Reviewed “on the horizon” items for last meeting of semester, including Provost’s upcoming visit; suggested that everyone think about what they might want to say/ask during his visit, also esp. looking forward to Fall re: the presidents new goals.
2. Reported on her visit (to report back) to ACT tuesday – Provost had added an item that curricular proposals weren’t moving along speedily enough, so she provided him some approval rates & our accomplishments this year –data from Mike Smith:
 - 2012: GE approved 12 proposals
 - 2013: 15
 - 2014: 15 so far plus two more in process

Over 90% approval rate over those three years; of those, three were approved experimentally.

For this past academic year, only three proposals have come to EPC as business items; therefore this has mostly been a smooth process.

Have been working on refining the forms.

Also prelim End-of-Year report (see HO) – 6 non-academic certificates, 3 academic certificates, 11 program changes – some had two readings or extended readings – but all were approved and moved forward. So yes, we are moving proposals through effectively – but we also have a very heavy workload, which ordinarily they may not see very often.

JK noted heavy workload in part due to call for proposals from the Provost – MM agreed, specifically re: certificates. Also news from Dean’s Council that “need” might not be driving hires in the future, instead focus on increasing interdisciplinarity & driving innovation, rather than filling holes.

3. Senate agenda for today.

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4. Visited School of Education's Curriculum Committee – positive discussion, they suggested that catalog deadline drives a lot of our workload, so why not back up from that & set submission deadlines for proposals – might be worth considering.

TW – JK's point about Deans warrants some discussion. MJ & TL concur. TW asked MM to suggest that ACT bring up that discussion? MM – good item to discuss with Provost.

New Business:

1. University Studies Task Force call – need to ask for extension of Task Force's existence beyond Spring 14, as it has only just started getting up and running.

TW – add to last bullet “by Dec 2014.” Edit “Dispatch chair” to “Give regular reports to EPC

JK – asked general question about how UNIV classes are being dealt with now – MM, that's the rationale for creating this committee, both to do the review and to come up with recommendations for setting up a permanent curriculum committee.

TL: are there additional UNIV sources waiting in the wings? MM: yes

Hence suggests making the last bullet the first one, so that creating the committee as the primary task.

MM: question about, if more than one person from each school is interested, what process should be followed?

TW: suggested that MM just consult with John Kornfeld and resolve among themselves.

No objections to continuing the task force.

2. Wine Business Institute Direct to Consumer Wine Industry Cert

TL: Reflecting changes in industry that allows direct shipping, changing role of tasting room, proposing new cert program that includes those new aspects of the business.

Still 8 classes (instead of 4 req 4 electives, now 5 req 3 elect).

John: are they getting jobs? TL: yes, successful.

LW moved to waive 1st reading, TW seconded – waived.

No further discussion – LD moved to approve, CW seconded.

Approved unanimously.

3. Revisions to Experimental and Permanent GE Course Proposal Forms

Mike Smith, MM, and ES met earlier this week to discuss.

GE met earlier & made suggestions.

Biggest change is make all GE courses be experimental before they go permanent (along with clarifications about routing etc.) – sense that proposals have been subject to different degrees of scrutiny depending on whether they've come forward as experimental or not, ones that have been run as experimental also having different levels of scrutiny – how to treat evenly. Also hard for Chair to not feel like he's been cast in the role of an advocate for a given proposal. So would require assessment to be done for experimental versions & include that in the proposal to go to permanent.

JK: like the proposal, but perhaps allow classes to run experimentally for 3 times instead of only two, to allow more opportunities for changes etc.

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WD: Very much against this proposal, as it missed the point – GE should discriminate more for “truly new” courses, but not hold up other proposals. Need to focus more attention on impacts on other departments, & concern its not happening enough at the exp level.

FP: 3 items: experimental status is at least one semester, could always go longer. 2. Experimental classes don’t just run & then never come back for further review – make experimental more part of the regular process. 3. Re: varying levels of scrutiny, composition of committee changes and that influences the dynamic & degree to detail/attention as being applied unevenly. This proposal would make it more fair.

TL: 1. GE committee’s ability to limit the # of students in experimental classes? 2. Requirements for assessment not included – seems logical to add? 3. Are current GE classes being reviewed at the same level as this? 4. Support JK’s idea of running a third time before becoming perm. 5. If existing course is becoming GE, should need to say what changes would be made to cause it to meet the GE objectives.

CW: concern about workload implications of this proposal; also agree with TL, rigor of assessment & how can that be done evenly? Similarly agrees with concern about review of existing courses, and that would have huge workload implications. Mixed feelings about three-year limit – concern it might drag things out too much.

LW: supports idea, while it wouldn’t solve all issues with GE, it would be a start & make sure students are really getting the learning objectives that they are supposed to.

TW: Form should include questions about effects on other depts. In that GE area; concern that assessment of everything is too much work. Need to be able to discriminate in the GE program, & allow some leeway (“Customarily GE courses should be mounted experimentally...”). Also this discussion should be connected to review/amendment of Curriculum Guide.

TL: Assessment isn’t yes/no, it’s where on a spectrum are you falling (how MUCH are they learning), and questions becomes, what’s good enough? Need some baselines perhaps?

FP: Idea behind it, perhaps not reflected in the forms, is to decrease workload for experimental proposals, & rigor of assessment not as high as we might think – just something to allow GE to review for perm status.

MM: these definitely are draft forms, so need further refinement.

CW: asked MM whether she brought this idea of School curricular committees when she met with them? MM: No, this only came up in the past week or two, and wanted to start the discussion here in EPC – but sounds like it would be a good idea to take that step? CW: yes, good to get some buy-in from our constituents.

JK: highest order concern should always be to not increase faculty workload, as there’s too much of that already.

LW: quality of classes needs to be highest concern.

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CW: agrees except don't blame the faculty for that "obstacle course" aspect of GE.

TW: asks again about the Curriculum Guide status/process – needs to go forward. Form should not be driving policy, the policy should be changed first.

MM: update on CG status – plans to work on it this summer with ES.

LW: also update, re: work done by subcommittee in 2010-11 (LW plus Elaine Newman, Thaine Sterns, and Mary Dingle)

FP: form is really a procedure (not policy)

TL: agrees with FP

CW: need a task force for working on both student and faculty attitudes toward GE.

MM: also make transparent that GE Chair would need to write a memo for exp classes as to what expectations there would be for perm review – allows a level of subjectivity & differences between courses. But also re: issue of changing personnel, make forms detailed & have specific expectations, to make process more neutral.

MM: willing to take this back to GE & continue to explore?

MJ: create a list of proposals that were NOT approved?

FP: thinks that sort of a list would reveal some of the unfairness that has happened, hence no one has followed it up.

TW: also needs to include the ways in which budget is impacting curriculum, re: impacts across different departments.

More reports:

FP, Program Review Subcom Chair – end of year report.

Main take-away from last year was that relevant discoveries that emerge from program reviews are not being fed into University Strategic Plan – same take-away this year.

Spoke with 4 programs, main feeling is we're going through this process, but the issues that we are encountering are not feeding into any university-wide planning for the future (re: hires etc) – so, how is this info going to be used?

Also lots of good things: innovations, positive self-reflection etc. – so there ARE positive outcomes from this process, but lack of resources is common theme that no one has control over. Also note third theme, re: assessment – should they be focused on program assessment, or student learning assessment? The latter didn't seem to be included much – are they actually learning the learning outcomes etc.

Recommends systematic data collection – not always clear how to follow up from the last cycle, & again, how does this fit into planning processes?

CW: seems like a great topic to discuss with Provost next week?

FP: Provost heard same recommendation last year, didn't get a response.

LD: where do SETEs fit into this process? FP: No, no one has been bringing as part of the program review package. MM: used in individual faculty review, but not for program rev.

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TW: All of these issues seem to be related – back to JK's comment about hiring direction for the future. This process needs to tie back to resources and hires – program reviews should be done in context of the whole campus and what it has to offer. Also, shouldn't change with accreditation issues – resources seem to flow to those depts. more often.

TL: pre-electronic analysis of SETEs not really practical – still questions about what right to use that info with the electronic ones.

Also idea of this Subcommittee was to help to contribute to that bigger picture – i.e. how to prioritize resources when everyone wants more.

JK: backed up TL's point.

MJ: innovative/interdisciplinary – kind of things that administrators come up with as wanting a legacy...

TW: agree – but also a good strategic plan should reflect years of faculty consideration and input.

(MM notes, new Strategic Plan is supposed to be revision of existing plan – WASC driven)

CW: last revision of Program Review form was also WASC driven, since they were about to visit.

MM: FP, what's the process?

FP: This report to EPC is the last step for the subcommittee – up to EPC to decide what to do next. But also seems to be no requirement that Provost respond to this report.

MM: with earlier process, there WAS supposed to be Provost's response, but that was being delegated down to the Deans – need for clarification about whether there should be a response.

TW: Faculty should empower ourselves, to articulate our priorities for the curriculum (rather than admin articulating it for us) – such as, to support discipline-based knowledge rather than innovative experiments.

FP: goes back to Strategic Planning process, and questions about how many faculty would be willing to really dig into this? Admins are to some degree doing it by default.

MM: Also president's two-year goals as an extra layer here. Notes that some of his recent commitments have real curricular implications, also funding of research for undergrads etc. – unclear where faculty input plays a role in all this.

Do we need a cover letter from EPC to go along with FP's report? Perhaps emphasis that disciplinary needs still exist, as well as new interdisciplinary drive etc. – how to prioritize/find the right balance)

TW: Add: Strategic planning requires time, and that time should be supported so that faculty can participate meaningfully in that conversation.

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FP: And, all this goes on (reviews written, subcommittee (struggling to get members) reads all these documents and meets etc., lots of work) with a lack of existential purpose.

CW: idea of having some public announcement (Convocation?) TL added: and highlight what those programs are doing well etc.

MM: also notes Elaine isn't here, supposed to be part of this link...

FP: especially wants to highlight that these programs ARE what the students are primarily here for (rather than GE etc.)

MM: bring this as part of our meeting with the Provost next time, OR as an additional discussion early next year?

TL: make it into two meetings, but bring some of this high-level discussion about implications of program review etc. for the Presidents commitments etc.

More reports:

TW, Grad Studies:

Differential costs for courses in Extended Education – paid by student vs. paid as part of union contract (1/30 of salary per unit) – shows up as substantially different costs to the students. (Discussion also noted that there's inequity in how much faculty can be paid for the same course.) Faculty were not aware of this! (not reflected on the contract) Has Ext Ed talked about this issue with EPC? Add to horizon list for the Fall.

Also for good of order: to note that Art Wurmouth passed away, and would like to see EPC contribute to recognition of his efforts over the many years.

MM: is coming to Senate today, and she will add EPC's support for that & recognize his contributions.

MM, Senate budget SubCom:

They will be coming forward to last Senate mtg with interesting CSU comparative data – that report will make it very evident that we spend much less per student on instruction than comparative campuses, yet we take in far more. (Uses CSU standardized data, so should be less subject to "oh, we're just different"...)

Meeting adjourned.

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