

**Liberal Arts Council**  
**August 15, 2014**

Location: Innovation Pointe

Present: M. Aakhus, M. Dixon, J. deJong, J. Hardgrave, S. Rode, I. Phillips, T. Schroer, W. Rinks, MT Hallock Morris, S. Spencer, H. Braysmith, R. Gennaro, J. Evey, C. Rivera, E. Wasserman, R. Rowland, K. Oeth, R. Lutton, and P. Moore.

Guests: E. Bakke, D. Vidal, M. Harper, T. Adams, and K. Carr.

The meeting started at 8:30 a.m.

**I. CARED Presentation (E. Bakke and D. Vidal)**

E. Bakke and D. Vidal delivered a presentation entitled, "Demystifying Community Engagement, and Scholarship of Engagement." They emphasized the role of the faculty, and discussed the ways by which faculty see their roles within the context of the scholarship of engagement. CARED attempts to connect faculty with community partners and they would like to determine more accurately what resources we have as they meet with community partners. E. Bakke and D. Vidal offered to meet with departments so that they can ascertain what our faculty have to offer and who is interested in pursuing community engagement and the scholarship of engagement.

**II. Introductions**

M. Aakhus introduced new members of the Liberal Arts Council, including H. Braysmith, R. Rowland, K. Oeth, and R. Lutton.

**III. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of 22 April, with emendations, and 29 April were approved unanimously.

**IV. Advising Center (R. Rowland)**

R. Rowland spoke about the new Liberal Arts advising center and outlined its responsibilities. She also outlined an initiative by which she plans to move to paperless advising and e-files that will be housed on the m:/drive. This process will be initiated with incoming freshmen only. R. Rowland also plans to offer faculty workshops on advising and the use of Degree Works. She requested from chairs a list of the preferable days and times that their faculty would be able to attend these workshops.

**V. Budget**

M. Aakhus discussed briefly the state's mandate that public universities hold back 2% of their budgets this year. He cautioned chairs to assume that this will affect us, although that is not certain at this time.

M. Aakhus noted also that no compensation will be provided this year for the development of distance education courses. He also noted that software costs continue to increase and

that he has had conversations with IT to determine how certain costs can be shared. The college must be very careful this year in the purchase of software.

#### **VI. Release Time Report**

M. Aakhus thanked chairs for submitting information about release (assigned) time within their departments. We shall no longer be able to award new release time to faculty, although existing release time can be reallocated. He also noted that although enrollment has been declining, we have experienced an increase in the use of adjunct faculty. He requested that chairs manage carefully the number of sections offered for their courses and also the enrollment caps on their classes, including distance education sections. He also suggested that we could possibly form a Liberal Arts Distance Education committee, and several chairs expressed an interest in participating.

#### **VII. Merit Raise Rubrics**

M. Aakhus would like all chairs to develop merit-raise rubrics such as the one the English department currently uses. A copy of it will be shared with chairs so that they can modify it, if necessary, for their own department's needs. S. Spencer noted that the English rubric was developed in close collaboration with faculty.

#### **VIII. Financial Aid (M. Harper, T. Adams, and K. Carr)**

M. Harper discussed recent changes to state financial aid and other regulatory requirements. She emphasized that faculty advisors need to be aware of the requirements that students must meet in order to retain state aid. Financial Aid will identify students who are at risk of losing their aid, and M. Harper requested the assistance of chairs and faculty in contacting these students.

#### **IX. College of Liberal Arts Assessment and Strategic Plan**

M. Dixon and J. deJong distributed the draft Departmental Annual Assessment Report form that will replace the Annual Evaluation Form that chairs have submitted each 15 April. The new form places emphasis upon assessment activities within each department. This form will assist chairs when writing academic program reviews. They proposed also that chairs will meet on the spring assessment day and that each chair will provide a five-minute presentation about assessment activities within his/her department. M. Dixon and J. deJong requested that chairs read the draft form carefully and submit to them any suggestions for change.

M. Dixon and J. deJong also reported that they will revisit this fall with M. Aakhus the draft College of Liberal Arts Strategic Plan. Specifically, they intend to review the comments faculty submitted in May 2013 to the survey that had been distributed. Revisions to the plan are likely to be made on the basis of the faculty responses. A revised draft Strategic Plan will be shared with chairs early in the spring 2015 semester.

## **X. College of Liberal Arts and Enrollment (S. Spencer)**

S. Spencer delivered a presentation about strategic enrollment planning and the College of Liberal Arts. He stressed that we must continue to think about how we as a college and as departments can have an impact upon the larger enrollment management process. He will make the data he presented available on the m:/drive.

## **XI. Transcripts**

M. Aakhus advised chairs that their search committees must have candidates send official transcripts addressed to him. He is responsible for verifying the authenticity of the transcripts, which is necessary before a candidate's materials can be approved in the Provost's Office. He also noted that departments seeking to replace faculty, who have retired or departed, should submit to him the same forms used for the annual budget hearing process to request new positions.

## **XII. Documents for Faculty**

M. Dixon distributed several documents that N. Ruder has drafted for faculty. These include information for ordering textbooks and a New Faculty FAQ. These have been helpful for faculty within the History and Psychology departments, and should be very useful for all faculty within the college.

## **XIII. Promotions Committee**

M. Aakhus reported that he has nominated two Liberal Arts faculty to sit on a campus-wide committee that will work towards establishing criteria for college promotion committees that USI intends to implement in place of the University Promotions Committee.

M. Dixon also distributed a document in which the deadlines for the submission of materials for reappointment, promotion, and tenure are due. The document also included a list of faculty within the college who will be reviewed this year.

## **XIV. Open Items from Chairs**

Several chairs expressed some concerns about the academic program review process.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:15 p.m.