

Faculty Senate Minutes
Friday, February 6, 2015
UC206

Meeting called to order: 3:00

Present: Jason Fertig, Joanne Artz, Rex Strange, Tony Maria, Alisa Holen, Matthew Hanka, Jennifer Williams, Mikel Hand, Wendy Bredhold, Shelly Blunt, Ron Rochon, Peter Whiting, Jessica Garcés Jensen, Ethel Elkins, Peggy Shields, Gabriela Mustata Wilson

1. Approval of minutes from January 23, 2015: Approved with minor revision; four abstentions.

2. Report from Claire Berardini (Noel Levitz):

- Claire discussed the progress that has been made since November 2013, stressing that USI needs to put planning structures into place for the future.
- Asked how the strategy for USI might be unique, Claire responded that the pain points (e.g. first and second year retention) are different for every institution. Focusing on first year advising and freshman seminar always makes sense, but something different about USI is the size of our undecided population. We need to expand on this by reallocating resources to improve retention of the undecided students. UNIV 101 needs work, and could be modified to facilitate retention of undecided students. Another group to focus on are students struggling in their first semester. This group spans a range of preparedness, based on GPA, so there's potential for getting many of them back on track.
- Jason asked how Faculty Senate might contribute to this planning for the future. Claire indicated that Noel Levitz had done most of its work with the Enrollment Management Group and with deans, but that others will have to step in to help develop an ongoing strategy for continued progress.
- Gabriella asked if there is evidence of a relationship between student retention and faculty retention. Claire commented that she didn't have any relevant data, but best practice is to maximize full-time faculty, especially at the 100-level.
- Another place to focus is high-enrollment classes with high failure rates. Are we making errors in placement? Is academic support (e.g. tutoring) insufficient? This is a topic that faculty can certainly help to address.
- Mikel pointed out that students coming in with a lot of credits are not always high performers. Claire agreed, and indicated that missing out on the freshman support network was a problem.
- Peter asked if there were conclusions stemming from the Early Alert Survey. Claire replied that a three-week grade is not very meaningful, so she has discounted the survey data relating to this first Early Alert trial. The Early Alert was administered as it was because there was no time to revise it. The alternative was to do nothing at all. Input at week three that might be more meaningful and manageable could include criteria such as a concerning degree of absence from class, missing assignments, signs of disengagement or poor performance.
- Claire emphasized continued effort to improve UNIV 101. Currently, the course does not have enough structure or content to make it consistent. She recommended throwing out topics like time management in favor of new, original material. The focus should be on academic transition, academic planning, and community involvement.

- Ron indicated that he would like to form a committee to address pain points and work toward developing ongoing strategy.

3. Report from Jason Fertig:

- Jason suggested that we shift the time of Senate meetings to 2-4:00 for the rest of the semester. Matt made a motion; Alisa seconded. Unanimous.
- Jason met with Sandy Frank about clarifying online course codes. They will meet again to continue this discussion.
- We need to appoint two representatives to the Student Publications Committee. Jason is looking for names.

4. Report from Ron Rochon:

- Moving forward on the search for V.P. of Finance. An ad will come out on Monday. He hopes to have candidates on campus by April.
- Ron mentioned that he appreciates the response to the distance education initiative.

5. Old Business: Data archive charge

- Jason announced that he will meet with Jennifer Green on Feb. 17.
- Joanne pointed out that student workers would be helpful, but the Library doesn't have funds to pay them.

6. Report from Rex Strange on the ad hoc promotion and tenure committee:

- The committee met on Monday. Discussion has been focused on working to make the evaluation process more similar across the board. There is agreement that there should be two levels of scrutiny before reaching the dean.
- Ron commented that the committee should look at the practices of aspiring peer institutions. Also, since it seems unlikely that the matter will be resolved by May, a decision needs to be made as to whether the University Promotions Committee will continue next year.

7. Ongoing Business: Senate strategic planning charge

- Jason urged us to continue soliciting feedback from faculty.

8. Closing Comments:

- Peggy stressed that we need to decide how to elect members for the University Promotions Committee.
- Jason reminded us that the Senate meeting will start at 2:00 next week.

Meeting was adjourned: 5:05.

Respectfully submitted by: T. Maria