University Faculty Senate
Outreach Committee April 29, 2014; 8:30-10:00 am
202 Hammond

Minutes

Present: Bridges, Copeland, Harrison, Henry, Rybka, Seymour

Members Absent: Alter, Blanco, Calvin, Gifford, Lamont, Lengerich, Riggio, Sidhu, Weidemann (J. Conner attended the meeting in his absence).

Call to order: The meeting was called to order by Chair Seymour @ 8:40 AM.

1. Minutes: The minutes of the March meeting were approved.

2. Discussion of question posed by the General Education Task Force

   From Mary Beth Williams, Maggie Slattery, Janet Schulenberg, Co-Chairs Gen Ed Task Force:

   "On behalf of our colleagues serving on the General Education Planning and Oversight Task Force (GETF), we write to follow up on the presentation that was made at the March 18 University Faculty Senate meeting. We would like to request input from the Senate Committee on Outreach as we work toward developing a proposal for the general education curriculum, and in particular on the following question: How might online education be used to maximize student opportunities and flexibility in the general education curriculum?

   Discussion: Harrison is on the Gen Ed Task Force and provided some background. The Task Force is coalescing around adopting a themes approach for Gen Ed requirements in which a set of courses concerning an idea or subject (eg. Sustainability) would be offered throughout the 4-year degree. Campuses might have a hard time supporting the full range of these themes since many Gen Ed courses are currently taught by fixed term faculty at the campuses. Supplementing with online courses could alleviate this problem, but there would be budgetary implications. If students at a small campus take Gen Ed credits online, this might have an adverse effect on campus faculty enrollments and in turn support for the community.

   Additionally, this approach of more narrow, focused themes will be more expensive with smaller section sizes. A blended course (in-class and online) could increase class size.

   If the credit revenues could be shared back to the campus, the committee would be supportive of offering Gen Ed credits online to augment themes originating from campuses."
Response:

The Outreach Committee recognizes the increased flexibility, and availability provided by offering online Gen Ed courses. However, there are many details to be worked out, particularly how a budgetary model would rebalance support for the campuses. Students want to stay in their service area and online courses could help them do this; all campuses, including World Campus, should partner toward this goal.

3. Discussion of our priority items for next year:

Looking at the list of activities for 2013-1014, Chair Seymour provided the following updates:

A1. Prior Learning Assessment will get submitted this spring and will most likely be a joint report with Undergraduate Education.

A2. Extension Update (Informational) has been moved to the September meeting. Henry asked why Extension chose to stay in counties rather than move to the campuses? He says that the morale in his region is very low as they lose Extension people in South Central PA. Seymour will ask Dennis Calvin to discuss this in his report.

A3. Overview of Resources for Faculty Teaching Online - Dave Hall generated this report and submitted it to Pangborn. It will be shared with Faculty Affairs and Development.

A4. Financial Aid and Penn State Non-resident Learners is now a larger joint report with ARSSA which should be ready early Fall

A7. Report on Outreach Activities – final draft survey circulated and Seymour will send back to Dean Dewey (Academic Leadership Council) for distribution this summer. This is a large project that should produce a report next year. Rybka commented that we are trying to get at the “little o” activities through this survey. Once we do we need to look at how we value and promote community outreach activities. An online compilation could show to a broader audience that outreach is an essential activity of a particular campus. The first attempt is to grab an inventory, but more important is what are the implications of what we do - how do we promote and value these outreach efforts?

A8. MOOC update (Informational) has been moved to the September meeting (Craig Weidemann).

A9. An Overview of Program Development for online classes: we will produce a report next year. Harrison mentioned that having looked at various reports for online and World Campus, the process for developing programs is good with one exception: some programs are developed on an ad hoc basis and there is no way for them to be reallocated to another unit where there might be more expertise. The forthcoming report will recommend creating a more formal way to develop online classes to align with the strategic interests of the community.
Other things: Carnegie Elective Classification in Community Engagement: Conner said that in April PSU submitted a 90-page document listing curricular engagement, outreach and partnerships throughout the University to retain our classification. We will find out in December about our status.

4. Announcements

The Committee thanked Chair Seymour and Vice Chair Harrison for their leadership this year.

5. Adjourn – The Meeting adjourned at 9:45 AM.

Minutes submitted by Beth Seymour, Committee Chair