EC with Provost

Minutes

April 26, 2022

1. E.C. asked questions about Departmental Guideline changes proposed by Bethany Fleck, Faculty Trustee

Proposal is to change duties of chair regarding development of guidelines—making this a faculty vote, and can only go forward if majority. If not majority, Dean will hold a reconciliation meeting.

Greg—shared concerns. Part of chairs responsibility as manager is being erased. Instead of operating as a manager of the department, and making decisions with the advice of the faculty. Relegates chair to a voting member of the faculty. Taking the chair out of the loop is what bothers him. Also brought up that this was created because there is a concern about the guidelines changing with teaching workload reduction.

EC asked Provost to please take a closer look at this with our perspective.

Provost has been asking for department level bylaws. We don’t have a bylaw structure where we define voting members,

Everything is under the handbook, which is not nuanced enough.

Provost said he will take a closer look at this.

Revisit this the next time we come back together. Goes to the handbook committee.

1. Faculty Workload

Provost has looked at budgetary considerations

Concerns were raised about class size

Will ask Deans to look at cost models—

Opportunity to use general studies courses to offset smaller classes

Will be more thoughtful about this after commencement

Elizabeth – responded that the president is looking at class sizes, in that Dr. Davidson and John McCann are creating bigger classrooms. Provost responded that from his perspective, having the affordance to have a class of that size is different from saying you have to increase class sizes. We are compromised with some of our instructional spaces.

1. DFW rates

Provost wants to make sure we are paying attention to them university-wide.

It wasn’t clear to him whether departments were auditing these rates—may land with the associate deans. How are we intentionally depressing DFW rates without inflating grades? What is the outreach? He needs more info from us.

Andrew—chemistry tends to have a high DFW rate. Wrap-around supports help, such as student employee TA, supplemental instruction helps.

Provost-where is the investment coming from?

It does feel piecemeal—SI program is funded from Provost’s office, Elizabeth Parmelee’s office supports the TA program, workstudy

Learning assistant program, hiring Tutors (using dept money)

Students helping students is the biggest help

Elizabeth—workstudy difficult. We do have a math tutor lab, with our department budget

Also—thinks the full time faculty make a big difference—they are able to use TA etc.

Are there non-budgetary ways to help?

Jess would like to see the trends/analysis across the departments

It’s the folks who care who take the time—it would be nice to be spread that around

We do have committees for each of the courses that have high DFW, with faculty teaching them all.

DFW is also related to attendance. When they get engaged, their grades go up.

Each of the programs, SI, TA, LA etc. do their own reporting and Elizabeth is concerned that the data is not always consistent or dependable.

Need to decide what it is we want to measure. Are DFW and retention related? Yes, centralizing measurements would be preferred. Andrew would also like to centralize the programs

LA—under CASE

SI-under Provost

TA-Student Affairs/Elizabeth Parmelee

Provost pointed out that If the programs are person-dependent, then we don’t have the long-term structures in place. Provost likes the idea to centralize more. Also wants to have a more research orientation to look at this, listen to questions/comments,

Provost asked what would it take to have 80% retention at an open enrollment university?

Greg talked about some common exams, common assignments, from the class coordinator that the affiliates use, and most full-time faculty use. That is how they identified that attendance was the big issue.

What makes some SI more effective than others—disagreed sometimes with those doing the hiring

What criteria are we using to select the SI students

Students who serve as TA, SI they are retained and engaged better.

Provost hopes this discussion penetrates to other chairs. He does want to have this come back on our agenda.