

ACADEMIC SENATE MINUTES

DATE: January 24, 2019

PRESENT: Jim Barron
Cindy Dell
Keith Edgerton
Sarah Keller
Paul Pope
Rachael Waller
Mary Susan Fishbaugh (ex-officio)
Darlene Hert (ex-officio)

Scott Butterfield
Kelly McCoy
Heather Thompson-Bahm
Vern Gagnon
Jennifer Lynn
Christine Shearer (ex-officio)
Melinda Arnold (ex-officio)

ABSENT: Suzette Nynas*
Halle Keltner (student)
Ed Garding (ex-officio)*
Florence Garcia (ex-officio)
Trudy Collins (ex-officio)

Kelly Shumway
John Dorr (ex-officio)*
Joy Honea (ex-officio)*
Sue Balter-Reitz (ex-officio)*
David Buckingham (ex-officio)

* *excused*

GUESTS: Anne Cole
Cheri Johannes

Cindy Bell

PRESIDING: Jim Barron, Chair

Jim Barron called the meeting to order at 3:42 p.m. in the Chancellor's Conference Room.

I. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The five Strategic Planning Committees still need one more Senator for Stewardship. Dr. Barron agreed to serve in this position.

II. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

The minutes of December 13 were accepted as presented.

III. PROVOST REPORT

Provost Arnold noted that there will be three COB Dean candidates on campus in the next week or so. Please participate in this search process!

We have had a lower response rate for the CAHP Dean search, so the deadline has been extended. The search for the Executive Director of the Academic Support Center is now rolling as well.

The Program Alignment Committee meets this Monday to review the reports, and will reconvene on Friday.

Dr. Arnold has received several rank and tenure evaluations, and there have been multiple successful faculty searches.

IV. OTHER REPORTS

Title III Grant and RD 101: Cindy Bell, Director of Grants, & Anne Cole, City College Reading Instructor

Ms. Cole stated that one of the many parts of this grant is to encourage students to take RD 101 when their reading is not at college level. It's a great concept, but making it work is complicated. We must create some kind of policy with a cut-off score, and students who fall below it will need to do something to improve. Currently, we have about 190 students a year coming in who, according to their scores, need RD 101. Creating a policy is step one, and step two is to put it in the catalog somewhere.

Putting RD 101 in Gen Ed is problematic. The reading course is most helpful if taken in the first semester, but many students leave Gen Ed requirements until their last semester. Students who need RD 101 need to take it their first semester.

It was noted that while we have admission policies in the catalog for math and writing—which are from the Board of Regents and may be changing—this reading policy may not be an admission requirement. It could be a registration requirement instead. In other words, we would admit students, but not allow them to register for classes until they have taken a test and then, if necessary, been enrolled in RD 101.

Another issue is total credits. RD 101 will add three credits to a student's degree, and some degree plans do not have room for those credits. It was noted that students who need RD 101 also often need remedial math or English, so those students are already on a longer plan of study. It was further noted that Financial Aid can now only fund courses specifically listed in the plan of study. If RD 101 is not listed as a program requirement or even a prerequisite to a required course, Financial Aid will not cover it. However, making degree program changes will take a year or more and this program needs to get rolling now.

It was noted that a statement/policy requiring that all students read at a given level, and if they don't they must take RD 101, could be added to every plan of study. That would essentially make it a requirement.

Ms. Cole noted that RD 101 is not the best as a prerequisite. Best practice is usually to have RD 101 as a corequisite to a reading-heavy course, such as PSYX 100. Also, RD 101 is not considered remedial (like M 098, for example), so students do earn credit towards graduation for it, and the reading is taught at a college level.

It was suggested that for students in tight credit programs, RD 101 could be substituted for a Gen Ed course. Another suggestion included breaking RD 101 into modules that would be added onto Gen Ed courses. Ms. Cole noted they do not want to be in competition with Gen Ed.

Another option paid for through the grant is the Bridge Program. Students not yet in classes at MSUB can take RD 101 for free to improve their reading skills before entering college. They have also considered a 4 week crash-course at the beginning of the Fall semester.

Provost Arnold noted that the intent of this program and grant is to change the way we engage with students to academically support them. This will be a sustained effort, not one that disappears when the grant ends.

A&SC 111 ad hoc Committee

The group has met and agreed that the course should be housed, like the LSCI course, in the College of Education. That way it has an academic home. That is Phase 1. Phase 2 will be to split the load between the Student Affairs staff and faculty teaching the third credit, in partnership. Students will be grouped by major so the faculty member teaching will be in that major, and the course will include some major content. Phase 3 will be requiring the course of all freshmen. The Committee has worked closely with the Advising Center staff on this initiative. A memo will be forthcoming.

V. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Honors Program – Procedures for Courses Not Under HONR Rubric

This issue is only in regards to schedule changes, not curriculum changes. If an honors section of a history course need to be moved to another room, the department chair and dean are bypassed, because Honors takes those approvals directly to the Provost. This is not an issue of control of rubrics, but rather of communication. It was agreed the Senate will ask the Provost to make sure that both the department chair and dean of the instructor know of such changes.

B. Mid-Term Grades

Should we require them?

Students should be able to calculate their own grades and know where they are at. At the same time, students who may not be paying attention will be alerted to their situation by receiving a grade. However, “mid-term” is not necessarily helpful in some courses which are backloaded with most of the graded assignments late in the semester. It was noted that many grade appeals are from courses which are backloaded. Students should be made aware of the set up of the course, and that a mid-term grade may only include the first 10% of the course.

Cheri Johannes, Registrar, noted that Banner is capable of mid-term grades, which would be just like final grades. There is no room for comment, only a grade. Who would enforce this if faculty were required to input mid-term grades into Banner?

The question was raised as to whether mid-terms serve the same function as the Early Alert system. It was noted that a major portion of students who have been flagged in Early Alert never respond to the emails and phone calls. However, there are always a handful of students who do respond, and we retain those students. Mid-term grades will be just about as useful as the Early Alert.

It was suggested that instead of a mandate, the Senate should encourage faculty to use the D2L gradebook, which keeps a running tally all semester long, and students can access it at any time. The Senate should work with eLearning to get a round of training for faculty to use D2L, especially the grade book. We should also encourage faculty to use Early Alert.

The meeting adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

rjrm