Department Heads Council Executive Committee

Minutes 10/01/13

Executive Committee Members in attendance: Joe Eska (co-chair), Mary Leigh Wolfe (co-chair), James Tanko, Brenda Winkel, Eric Patterson, David Hodgson, Rick Perdue, Anne Khademian, Steve McMullin, Bob Denton, Greg Daniel, Kevin Concannon, Kevin Carlson, Beth Grabau, Rapporteur: Katie Snead

From the Provost's Office: Provost Mark McNamee, Vice Provost Jack Finney

Guests: Rachel Holloway, Jill Sible

Part 1. Meeting with Provost McNamee and Vice Provost Finney

The Provost provided updates on topics that were raised at the Department Heads Forum and Reception on September 25.

1. Renovations: Provost McNamee talked with Sherwood Wilson about the frustrations related to cost and timing of renovations that were expressed by some department heads; Wilson's office is going to try to figure out what is causing the delay (likely the workload, beyond the dollar value threshold). Committee asked if it would be possible to see a list of projects paid for by departments to see how much they are costing and how long they are taking in comparison to other projects on campus. McNamee and Finney will follow-up on this.

2. Winter session: trying to get the website up and rolling by October 5th.

3. Workers Compensation: Graduate Assistants (GAs) are fully eligible for workers compensation. If a GA is turned down for workers compensation, do not accept that conclusion.

4. Out-of-State Tuition for Study Abroad: Virginia Tech's budget is based on anticipated revenue from tuition, independent of whether students will be participating in study abroad or not. Under this model, out-of-state tuition cannot be waived for study abroad programs because that would negatively impact the overall instructional budget. Over time, this could be changed, but it is not something that can be changed quickly. University of Virginia has a budget process in which they choose forgo out-of-state tuition for education abroad programs. Virginia Tech does not.

5. Center for European Studies & Architecture at Virginia Tech (CESA): At department heads forum, a question was raised about room and board charges for students participating in semester-long programs at CESA even when the students are traveling away from CESA. The Provost clarified that the CESA financial model is that students are leasing a room for the semester at CESA, as opposed to CESA being a hotel. All individuals are charged the same amount.

6. Start-up Packages: Idea was raised at Forum about exchanging best practices among department heads, including an open discussion about budgeting and making sure faculty start-up packages are competitive. Provost’s Office would be glad to help set up such a discussion for department heads.
7. Merit Raises: There will be faculty merit raises next fiscal year. The Academic Affairs Council is working on how to make the merit raises as high as possible without compromising the programs. Merit raises will start being discussed within the next month (going to the colleges etc.)

8. Promotion and Tenure Session held in September: Focused on the process and what has changed in the past year. Notes will be posted on the P&T page on the Provost’s website.

9. COACHE Survey Results: One area of focus based on the results is helping associate professors continue toward promotion.

Institutional Research is working on department and school reports. As soon as they are ready they will go directly to the departments. Comments will be held to the college level because of anonymity.

Part 2. Meeting with Vice Provost Rachel Holloway and Assistant Provost Jill Sible

The focus of this discussion was preparation for the upcoming Department Heads Forum on October 7 focused on the Curriculum for Liberal Education (CLE). Drs. Holloway and Sible talked about what they will present at the Forum. Committee identified some questions that department heads have and asked that they be addressed at the Forum. Some notes from the discussion:

Drs. Holloway and Sible have developed a working plan for the CLE from feedback in discussions and blog posts.

1. Teams of faculty (task forces) in various domains will be put together to define the learning outcomes...e.g. scientific reasoning, computational thinking...etc. Trying to create a very comprehensive plan.
   Important to define the end goal....define the outcomes before moving on to other components.

2. Pathways to general education: looking to create a very clear pathway to meet the learning outcomes (core domains). In general it won’t look much different from current plan but there could be a focus on minors.

3. UCCLE: Had their first meeting of the year. Found that undergrads were most excited about minors. They want a structure and system that shows them the benefit of what they are doing. They need more creative ways for them to make choices.

4. Pilot projects: Eventually faculty will be charged with putting together pilot projects within the new framework. The call for pilot projects will have specific outcomes, domains, learning areas and will be called for much later in the process. Right now the focus is on definition of the learning outcomes. The outcomes will be key to the pillars.

5. Assessment: What is the vision for accessing outside the classroom....likely portfolio based...a place where students upload information to a database rather than placing more work on faculty. Many programs are already assessing learning outcomes and for a great majority of campus a gap analysis is being done. What majors are meeting the outcomes and what majors are not?
6. Taskforce: Have to have more involvement in the taskforces. Would like each taskforce to be interdisciplinary.

7. Timetable: At some point the framework has to go through governance. Then there has to be a transition process. Need a broad consensus about structure and most learning outcomes by December, then groups will be charged.

8. Motivation for these changes? Primary is the feedback from alumni, employers, students. Secondary is the issue of accreditation.

9. Question: Funding? How is CLE funded? Does money follow students? How does it move from students to departments?