Council Minutes

Executive Committee of the Department Heads Council

325 Burruss Hall

8-9:30am

September 2, 2014

Attending: Nancy Rooss (Geosciences); David Hodgson (Large Animal Clinical Sciences); Bob Denton (Communication) Anisa Zvonkovic (Human Development) Richard Rudd (Horticulture) Benda Winkle (Biological Sciences); Bob Smith (Sustainable Biomaterials), Beth Grabau (Plant Pathology, Physiology & Weed Science); Paul Herr (Marketing), Kevin Carlson (Management); Janaki Alavalapati (Co-Chair; Forest Resources); Stephanie Adams (Engineering Education), Vice Provost Jack Finney, Wanda Dean (VP for Enrollment and Degree Management)

Rapporteur: Maureen McCusker

Welcome: Chairs welcomed attending executive committee members. Provost could not join today. Wanda Dean, VP for Enrollment and Degree Management, will come in later. Discussed format and three portions of meetings. Janaki Alavalapati thanked Jack and Dr. McNamee to allow this to happen. Commenced introductions around the table. Provided basis for structure of meetings – 30 minutes at the start for the provost, 30 minutes with the guest, and 30 minutes reserved at end for the council to speak amongst themselves.

Vice Provost’s Announcement: Faculty Salary Increases: Today is the first day of faculty salary hearings. Deans and VPs will meet to discuss merit increases and process for doing. Vast majority of recommendations are unchanged, but changes are subject to occur in this meeting. This is the first of 20 meetings, and first ones with new President Sands. Merit increases are still occuring despite federal cuts: 5% cut this year and 7% cut next year, noncumulative.

1. Question: How does the merit process work if the administration and faculty recommendations for increases do not coincide? If, for example, the team decides to increase 1%, but then faculty recommendations push it up to 3%, where does that money come from?
   a. Response: It depends on several different factors. There are six new people involved in the process now.

2. Vice Provost Comment: one of the president’s new actions was to increase the promotion increases to 3%, 5%, 7%.

3. Question: What if there is a retention action needed?
   a. Response: There is a pool from which where Provost can contribute up to 50% for retention action. The Dean contributes the other 50%. These are for highly productive and active faculty who we know are being looked at by other schools (invited to give lots of talks or travel, etc). Vice Provost recommend that department heads be aware of who is being looked at and possibly recruited away.
4. **Vice Provost announcement:** there are no plans to take away leave structure, layoffs, reappointments for those who transfer to A/P positions, alternative severance options during these meetings.

5. **Question:** Do the 5% budget reductions apply to 229 budget as well?
   a. **Vice Provost’s Response:** Vice Provost is unsure because he does not manage the 229 budget. He suspects there will be positions unfilled until we can get those budget reductions back.

6. **Vice Provost’s Comment:** 5% reduction is only 1.5% reduction in VT’s budget.

7. **Vice Provost Update:** Mark McNameee had bypass surgery this summer, but he is recovering very well and is easing his way back into his position. Expectation that he will be back in full within the next 2-3 weeks.

8. **Question:** Can you update us on the new EFARS system?
   a. **Vice Provost’s Response:** It is underway. It is called Symplectic Elements, and it harvests publications and information from the web. The plan is in place to roll it out. The plan is to walk away from Digital Measures and bring it into the new system, so faculty will not lose any info they put in manually.

9. **Question:** Will this program just be able to go to each college and get info if they already have their own electronic systems.
   a. **Vice Provost’s Response:** Vice Provost is uncertain, but believes it can harvest that data.

10. **Question:** Do we have academic analytics?
    a. **Vice Provost’s Response:** Yes, but the University was not fully using it at first because it was not very good. Improvements have been made, including Social Network Analyses processes. Thus, the contract for use has been signed.

11. **Question:** Are there any changes or improvements to SPOT surveys?
    a. **Vice Provost’s Response:** Uncertain about any changes, but now they are recommending that there be more a discussion about evaluations with students.

12. **Question:** Is there an interest in having a system that allows for something more rigorous and detail-orientated than just a point on a scale for teaching evaluations?
    a. **Vice Provost’s Response:** Administration interested in knowing more about teaching responses, but there are no plans to change the scale. CIDER, however, provides lots of resources for faculty teaching development. They do in-class observations and write letters of response. Contact Peter Dolittle.

13. **8:34am:** everyone thanked Vice Provost for the updates and Q & A session, and he exited the room.

14. **8:35:** Wanda Dean commences discussion.

15. **Wanda Dean Introduction:** Looked over questions and said she would be happy to look over department funding models for Summer and Winter sessions if departments so desired.
16. **Wanda Discussion of Summer and Winter Session:** Summer and winter sessions have two different funding and revenue models. They were successful in generating revenue, so they plan to continue it. They generated over 2M dollars and 70% was given back to each department and will do so this year. Explained the process of summer and winter sessions pay and funding process. The salary of the faculty member is up to the department. It is a good opportunity for all faculty, including full year faculty members. Departments do have to show how and where the revenue will be spent. Wanda Dean urged departments to make faculty and students aware, and marketing for which is just beginning. Opening for winter session started the Friday before school started and it’s increasing.

17. **Winter Session**
   a. Wanda Dean discussed what makes a successful Winter session course (the non-boutique courses).

   b. **Question:** If non-VT students want to take this, is it possible to get them in-state tuition?
      i. **Assistant Vice President Response:** This is a state code, so most likely not. However, there is a 10% reduction in cost for both sessions and there is possibility to reduce online costs.

   c. **Comment:** Bob Denton: There has been quite a bit of discussion and tension in his department based on which courses should and should not be offered in the winter sessions. He has concerns about whether an entire class can truly be covered in that short time period.

   d. **Anisa Zvonkovic Question:** Her department is trying to get external older adults to sign up for it. Is it possible to run parallel programs to include them?
      i. **Assistant Vice President Response:** Yes, it may be possible to run parallel programs.

   e. **Assistant Vice President Comment:** It is NOT too late to add courses/programs and sign up until likely the October time frame.

   f. **Bob Denton Comment:** His department is not fully certain how to proceed with the winter study abroad process. Others agreed that it would be helpful to have a sort of liaison or point of contact for such questions.

18. **Summer Session**
   a. **Model:** Model for summer is not a revenue model; it is a performance model. This means 70% of growth would be returned to the department. Departments get the proportion of that growth based on the number of credit hours offered over the summer. That is, the more credit hours generated, the more money given back to the college and departments.

   b. **Assistant Vice President Comment:** Departments should begin brainstorming/thinking-outside-of-the-box for ways to increase enrollment in the summer. Perhaps quick, shorter sessions or adding minors in the summer. Summer is important for funding in the fall.
c.

d. **Bob Denton Question**: If departments are strict about enforcing minimal enrollment, then is it not possible that departments may actually be losing revenue because they have to cancel those classes or students decide to cancel?
   
i. **Assistant Vice President Response**: Yes, this is something the University is aware of and are working through.
   
ii. **Assistant Vice President Comment**: She will bring budgets to the October meeting and talk about the budgets for each department (unless the departments decides it would prefer not to).

19. **Discussion of other requests to Wanda**
   
a. Can you please look at revenue figures for study abroad?
   
b. There will be an update on student outcomes.