Council Minutes

Executive Committee of the Department Heads Council

325 Burruss Hall

8-9:30am

April 7, 2015

Attending: Janaki Alavalapati (Forest Resources & Environment); Nancy Ross (Geosciences); Bob Denton (Communication); Benda Winkel (Biological Sciences); Bob Smith (Sustainable Biomaterials), Beth Grabau (Plant Pathology, Physiology & Weed Science); Kevin Carlson (Management); Dr. Mark McNamee (Provost); Vice Provost Jack Finney; Peggy Payne (Vice Provost).

Rapporteur: Maureen McCusker

Welcome: Intro by Janaki Alavalapati

Provost McNamee’s Announcements:

Updates

• University Council: Yesterday we had a final vote with changes in general education (gen ed) program. It passed overwhelmingly. Over the past two weeks, there have been lots of discussions with faculty senate, and some minor changes were made the language, but content remained the same. Now the process comes to implementing it, and Department Heads will be very much involved.

• Searches: There are lots going on.
  o Vice President for Research and Innovation: There are 3 finalists coming to visit starting in 2 weeks. Very excited about them. They are coming from such positions as Associate VP of Research and Associate Vice Chancellor for Research. They are one male and two females.
  o Senior Advisor and Vice Provost for Inclusion and Diversity: search committee was announced in today’s daily news. Search will begin as soon as possible, but must consider that summer will interfere with the timing
  o VP for Advancement: This position will combine leadership in advancement and alumni affairs into one position.
  o Provost: Dr. McNamee has no comment on this search, as he is not involved. Dr. McNamee deferred to Dr. Finney. Dr. Finney stated, the search is moving forward. There is a major activity next week and will be campus visits for the finalists for the Provost coming up in the near future. Department heads will be notified of the visits when they occur. Dr. Finney expects the visits sometime before May.
  o Dean of Science: Announced he will be stepping down at end of 2016. Goal is to form search committee by end of this year. Search will start around mid-august.
  o Associate VP under VP for Advancement: search committee not formed yet
  o NOTE: There will open forums for all of these searches

• DH Question: What will the VP for Inclusion and Diversity be in charge of?
  o Dr. McNamee Response: This is a distributed leadership model, so the coordinators carry leadership roles, but there is an individual who facilitates/coordinates them. They are ideally
searching for someone 1) who is well connected nationally; 2) can connect with consultant campus; 3) is eligible for faculty appointment; 4) is a scholar; 5) someone who has experience in administrative positions; and 6) someone who is comfortable being a supporter, not just a leader (distributed leadership model)

• Raises:
  o T & R Faculty (and Department heads) are eligible for 3.5% increase pool. University is asking senior managers to allot 1% from their own budget for increases.
  o Staff & A & P Faculty get 2% increase across the board if a University or Classified Staff member, but if the latter, there is an added payment based on years of service
  o **DH comment:** there are probably 8 positions that we will not be able to fill across our College because of this regulation
    ▪ **Dr. McNamee response:** Exactly, re-allocation is great on one hand, but not so great on the other.
    ▪ **DH comment:** I guess I’m a little concerned about the rates that the higher-level employees are getting paid, even Department Heads. I would like to get your opinion on this because these people are taking up funds. There is a very wide disparity between salaries for positions that are not very different in jobs.
      ▪ **Dr. McNamee:** There are lots of databases that drive the salaries and to recruit the best.
  o **DH comment:** I have one concern: seems to be the student media is in an incredible crisis. Seems like the administration needs to try to understand what is going on, because he thinks things are going badly.
    ▪ **Dr. McNamee:** The media on campus is run by a separate corporation, but they’re in financial and administrative difficulty. Even though the administration does not control it, they’re invested in it. Dr. McNamee does not know much about what’s going on, but does know that some administrators are working on it. Recommends that if anyone has ideas, please bring them forward.
  o **Bob Denton comment:** VTTV in communications would be happy to help out the TV aspect.

• **DH question:** Can you talk a little bit about what has happened with the Gen Ed curriculum and where you see it going from here?
  o **Dr. McNamee:** There is an effort to make the Gen Ed more comprehensive. The most innovative idea is “pathway minors,” which tries to cover major areas of general education (e.g. quantitative reasoning) and capture as many of them as possible. Each of the courses in Gen Ed that are part of that would have learning outcomes associated with them, and the course has to cover a certain number of them. There is also a requirement that each course meet an integrative outcome, which is either to incorporate an ethical or global component. Students can design their own pathway, which could take advantage of their own desires and needs (e.g. research, or study abroad). Transfer students from community colleges are assumed to have met the Gen Ed’s for entry, so this allows for a distributed model.
    ▪ **DH Question:** What are requirements for “pathways minor?”
      ▪ **Dr. McNamee:** There are 5-6 different requirements they need to take, and these can be courses for a major or a minor
  o **DH Question:** Are there still guidelines that need to be developed? OR can we begin to implement this?
    ▪ **Dr. McNamee:** Rachel Holloway and team will begin to host workshops & NLI programs to help faculty develop and prepare for this reform. The goal is to launch an experimental trial next fall.
DH comment: There is a “pathways” fair that Communications is running in May to prepare.

DH Comment: There has been a lot of development of curriculum happening, but it seems to have been happening without a target.

All together, there a few more courses added to the curriculum than before, but all the colleges have agreed to it.

Dr. McNamee: In many universities, the faculty senate is the governing body, but not here at VT. The faculty senate wants to see this sort of governance structure at VT. Dr. McNameee thinks we have a very effective governing system, so he would not support that model. Faculty senate may come forward with a proposal for this sort of reform (so stay tuned, because Department Heads would lose all control).

8:37am exit Dr. McNamee; Peggy Layne begins discussion:

Update on new electronic system

Update: In the Fall, we plan to roll out a new system, that will allow faculty to enter all their reporting system online and electronically. She would like to get a little understanding on how Colleges are currently handling their reporting system and what procedures are in place for faculty reporting, including what the reporting cycle is. She would love insights or information or thoughts to keep in mind as she develops this process.

Every department do faculty reporting a little differently: some department heads do it all, for others they have a committee that does the ratings, and the Department Head concurs or disagrees. She is unsure how “the committee system” would work.

Dr. Alavalapati department: his cycle is July 1 to June 30. Each faculty members reports “what happened last year” then he has about 1-hour meeting with each of them in July or August

Dr. Smith: we do similarly to Dr. Alavalapati in the fiscal reporting. They also have an electronic system, but not sure how faculty enter in the information, but they’re used to an electronic system. Then he’s

Dr. Grabau: all the Department Heads are responsible for the evaluations, but recently implemented a system of advisory committee, who advise the DH’s. They also have an electronic report system that is extremely cumbersome.

Layne response: Yes, I think that is why faculty will be so excited for this new product, because it harvests the publications on its own as opposed to each faculty member having to do it himself or herself. It’s called Symplectic Elements and is from the UK

DH Comment: There are a lot of changes going on (elements, travel, etc), so just want to make sure that we’re thinking about the extra stress on staff to change this.

DH question: Once this is in place, will there be a uniform reporting cycle system?

Finney response: the state is not keeping the same with its merit process (dates vary), so Dr. Finney recommends that we look at an FAR process on the calendar year, because that way we will always be ready for the merit system. For 5 of the colleges, this is not a change, but for others it is.

DH question: The system will automatically pull grant, publication, teaching information, and will it also pull in SPOT surveys as well?

Layne Response: they are working on incorporating spot.

DH question: When is the roll-out planned?

Layne: We are planning a phased roll-out, and she is open to when is most convenient for department heads.
8:47: Dr. Alavalapati exits for meeting

8:52am exit Maureen McCusker, Dr. Finney and Dr. Layne