Minutes
Council of Chairs Meeting
September 21 10-12 noon
JH 3107

In attendance: Ben Attias (AMC); Hamid Johari (E&CS), Doris Helfer (Library); David Kretschmer (COE); Sandra Stanley (COH); Melanie Williams, Chair (COBE)

Guests: Julie Sonntag, Bettina Huber, David Rodriguez

The meeting began with a brief review of the function of the C of C and a question of whether the Council is to address issues as they arise or to take a more pro-active, assertive approach to handling matters at the university. The Council has performed in both capacities in the past.

Graduate DPR. T. Oh discussed the possible problems with the graduate DPR and the status of graduate students on campus. Int’l graduate students must enroll in a minimum of 9 units and this is not reflected. Too, departments may have graduate students admitted to the university but not necessarily to a program. Finally, a duplicate system encompassing the graduate admissions form is used. Information on one does not necessarily parallel that on the other form. While A & R is wanting to keep practices and processes as they are, Graduate Studies is willing to modify.

Grade Inflation Study. J. Sonntag from CoBE provided the Council with an overview and purpose of the Grade Inflation Study that the Council conducted for the years 1990-2005. Results of the study can be found on the C of C website and include university level findings. The purpose of a 2009 study would be to (1) update and expand on existing data and conduct statistical analysis of the data, (2) compare like-classes within and across departments and colleges, and (3) consider additional standards/factors imposed on programs which may give the appearance of grade inflation in those programs. The CoBE will continue its study of updated data using descriptive statistics.

The Council raised several issues with an investigation of grade distribution, including:
1. The title of the study, “Grade Inflation”, perhaps ought to be changed to “Grade Distribution” as the former is evaluative.
2. A need to differentiate between PT and FT faculty. M. Williams suggested that grades are determined more by who they have than achievement in a class.
3. Identifying which classes are included in the study. Does the study include IS courses and Internships?
4. Separating out honors classes as one might expect honors students to achieve at a higher level.
5. Class enrollment as a function of the distribution of grades
6. Perhaps we should compare grade distribution at CSUN to other campuses, take a close look at how we grade our students, how faculty from different colleges assemble syllabi and establish expectations for students as to how students might...
earn a particular grade in a course. It was strongly suggested that there is a difference.

7. Given the recent budget cuts and the UC system closing admissions to a population that would have been admitted to a UC campus, perhaps the CSU will see better prepared students applying to CSU schools.

It was suggested that the C of C would duplicate the last study, update data, and post it on the website, and refer to it as a “Grade Distribution Study.” Once Julie has completed her analysis, the C of C would appoint a subcommittee to produce a narrative.

Resolution to Suspend Recertification Process and Program Reviews. T. Maddux, Chair of the History Department, proposed a resolution to:

1. Suspend the General Education Recertification process while the university is in furlough status, and
2. Suspend Program reviews while the university is in furlough status

Both proposals will be presented to the Senate Executive Committee. The Council voted to concur with the first proposal and to leave the second to the discretion of individual departments and programs.

WASC. Bettina Huber and David Rodriguez presented on progress of WASC. They encouraged all departments to review the WASC website: http://irqry.csun.edu:8080/openweb/wasc/main/index. They reported that WASC requires a report written in two phases, as well as an e-report where university policies and program profiles are listed.

Enrollment planning/ UPBG. FTES for the current year is 25733. It will be reduced to 22952 next year. One way to accomplish this is by reducing summer by 750. The Council discussed several issues with decreasing enrollment:

1. If we limit enrollment, how to do so? Do we change the criteria for admission?
2. How does grade inflation at High School level impact enrollment, admissions at CSUN?
3. Decreasing enrollment places additional pressures on students to be sure that they are academically ready. Also, financial pressures given the increase in fees in recent years.
4. Low enrolled programs/graduate programs will likely move to Tseng where students pay the cost of their education. However, moving programs over to Tseng has the potential to dilute the course
5. The impact of decreasing enrollment at the university actually helps the Library budget: There are large additional costs with additional programs and the library would benefit by total enrollment dropping to 25,000 FTES as this results in a change in rate.
6. Additional cuts will likely result in letting PT faculty go.
7. Many chairs are getting mixed messages. It is important that the Council get a clear sense of which of these the university is looking into actually doing. Many will impact students in their programs.