

SEC/VPAA JOINT CONFERENCE MINUTES

January 24, 2012
2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Senate Conference Room
140 McFall

President: Faculty Senate Chair, John Folkins, presided in the absence of the Vice Chair, Mark Earley. Because there were two new members, he asked attendees to briefly introduce themselves.

Present: Emily Ancinec, David Border, Michelle Brodke, Michael Buerger, John Folkins, Sherry Early, Judith May, Andrew Pelletier, Rodney Rogers, Raymond Swisher, Elizabeth Wood.

Strategic Planning Committee for Graduate Programs (Survey/Final Report): Rodney Rogers

Graduate Education Strategic Planning Committee -- Background

Rogers reminded SEC that the committee has a dual focus: 1) To establish criteria for graduate programs relative to others in the current portfolio of programs that will be useful in evaluating opportunities to grow and institute new programs as well as potentially helping to identify programs with less justification for maintaining their current position of strength within the portfolio; 2) Long term formulation of strategic goals encompassing standards of quality, metrics for assessing the degree of goal attainment, and indicators of financial viability for current and new programs.

BGSU is beginning to use an October 2011 report titled National Study of Instructional Costs and Productivity popularly known as "Delaware Data" as one criterion for predicting how graduate programs should perform.

A SWOT (statement of strengths, weakness or developmental areas, opportunities, and threats) will be part of the assessment of each program. Examples of documentation of program strengths could include but are not limited to the following:

- Ability to raise significant amounts of outside funds.
- Substantial number of fee-paying students enrolled.
- The fact that a graduate program will strengthen existing undergraduate programs.

Committee Membership Dr. May requested to replace T. Herman on the committee and Dr. Rogers agreed. Rogers affirmed that every college will have representation on this committee.

Graduate Student Retention While cuts in graduate fee-waivers this academic year resulted in a drop in student credit hours (s.c.h.) that is undesirable, it is reassuring that overall the headcount was not significantly affected. Note: University administration

intends to provide incentives to colleges and departments to reverse this dip in s.c.h. at the graduate level.

Timeline

- The committee hopes to present their report and recommendations first to Graduate Council and then to Senate (around the middle of April 2012).
- Implementation of committee recommendations incorporating faculty and student input is anticipated for Spring 2013.

Points of Discussion SEC members raised the following points among others:

- It is hoped that criteria will facilitate assessing program value in different disciplines in more than just monetary terms.
- Comparisons will be made discipline-specific and within a thoughtfully constructed peer group.
- The intent should be to identify a niche within which BGSU has competitive strengths relative to other institutions of higher learning – to include such details as the size and quality of comparable programs and not just the existence of a degree program nominally comparable to one at BGSU.
- One criterion should be comparison of existing course offerings with changing demand (e.g. consideration of the desirability of ramping up our Chinese language program as the trend toward Asian languages edging out English as the most common language of global business reaches a critical point).
- It is crucial to include in the plan something about responsibility for implementation.
- The intent of BGSU administration to tie budget allocations to strategic plan initiatives articulated by colleges and departments throughout the past academic year should provide some motivation for faculty to buy into and implement the graduate education strategic plan.
- Specificity in long term goals is not very apparent at this point. Emphasis appears to be on articulating broader long term goals thus far in the process, whereas clearer benchmarks will eventually be needed.
- More specificity in long term goals -- measuring programs against existing and emerging BGSU strengths -- will eventually be provided in the second phase of strategic planning for graduate education at this institution.
- The interdisciplinary nature of a program might be another good criterion for assessing a program, since this collaborative aspect often provides research opportunities for faculty in disciplines generally lacking in such opportunities.
- Should calculation of workload include mentoring of graduate students? This varies from one graduate program to another.
- Ideally there should be fund-sharing for teaching distant cohorts (as far as Indiana). Will that be included in the future of graduate education at BGSU?
- Not all faculty desire to design their own assessment of student learning. Some would prefer to have that prescribed by some other entity.

Additional Remarks from the Provost:

Grant Funded Research/Creative Activities The Provost and Dr. Ogawa have been discussing how to enhance the infrastructure for faculty success in research/creativity at BGSU. While scientific research is not the only desirable kind of research, it does bring in

a significant amount of external funding in a percentage of grant overrides (indirect costs awarded to the University) that helps build up an infrastructure from which all academic disciplines benefit.

Accordingly, Dr. Ogawa has planned to extend additional funding to departments with an exceptional record of obtaining external grants to build on that success by constructing labs and other infrastructure that will keep BGSU competitive in the grants arena.

Humanities disciplines are encouraged to try for external funding, although there may not be as rich a pool of funding out there for them as STEM disciplines. An example of a recent Humanities award is the NEH grant for preserving local history at Auburn.

Comment: Most junior faculty would appreciate mentoring in the art and skill of 1) identifying promising grant opportunities and 2) writing successful grant proposals.

Efficiency Task Force Dr. Rogers has been named chair of this group focused on examining University processes that might be streamlined without sacrificing their effectiveness or quality. The intent is not to threaten anyone's job -- in case there is any apprehension about that -- but just to simplify and streamline the work and to achieve cost savings if possible. (An example might be the possibility of digitizing the labor-intensive and expensive process of compiling, assembling, and transmitting to the Provost's Office promotion and tenure binders.)

Update: In response for a request for Faculty Senate representation on this task force, Chris Keil has agreed to serve.

General Education Revisions: Craig Zirbel

Review of Progress Charged by the Provost and Vice Provost with moving forward the revision of the General Education curriculum following the report by the CUE Committee and the gathering of data on faculty reactions to the concept of Gen Ed revision, Zirbel briefly reviewed progress to date for SEC. Implementation of a few inquiry courses is the most notable revision accomplishment thus far.

His hope is that the process outlined for making further progress will enlist and engage faculty by putting them in charge of all aspects from prioritizing which areas to address initially and brain storming how those top priorities can best be approached to articulating concrete proposals. The process is intended to be participatory, faculty-driven, and open to campus scrutiny from the idea stage to the blue sheet stage of formulating proposals for new or revised Gen Ed courses.

Indicating that he hoped to gain Senate agreement that 1) revision of the general education curriculum is an important priority to the faculty at large and 2) the Senate broadly agrees with the faculty-driven, open process described in the draft for revising the Gen Ed curriculum approval, Zirbel entertained questions and comments from SEC members.

Points of Discussion SEC members raised the following points among others:

- A few disciplines already require over 36 credits to qualify for the majors in their academic fields. That leaves little room for adding Gen Ed courses to the course load of students in those disciplines.
- Care must be taken not to present transfer students or those changing their majors with an insurmountable burden in terms of course requirements.
- The State of Ohio is pushing eventually for a 3-year bachelor's degree, which would further limit the total number of required credit hours that can be inserted into the curriculum.
- One means of addressing the above-listed constraints might be permitting double counting (i.e. counting a course for both requirements toward the major and Gen Ed requirements).
- Ideally our most highly-qualified teachers (Ph.D.'s) would teach many of the 1000 and 2000 level courses.

SEC Recommendation

SEC members indicated support for Zirbel's proposal describing a new Gen Ed revision process.

Canvass Update: Dr. Buerger announced that a Canvass representative will be on campus the week of 1/30 -2/2 to meet with various constituencies interested in the portfolio module of Canvass. SEC requested that Buerger report his perceptions about the Canvass portfolio module to this body after the forthcoming campus visit.

Faculty Incentive for Grant-Funded Research and Creative Activities: Jude Edminster Deferred to a future SEC meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth (Bess) Wood