Report of the Academic Planning Committee
2018-2019

Duties: To consider and recommend long-range academic programs and goals for the College. To this end, the committee shall gather information from such administrators, academic schools and departments, committees, program directors, and other individuals as are advocating new programs and goals, and it shall gather such budgetary information as would be necessary to evaluate the economic feasibility of such new programs and goals. In this work the Academic Planning Committee shall work closely with the Budget Committee. The committee shall also review and respond to plans brought to the committee by the Provost concerning the termination of programs, and shall gather such information as would be necessary to evaluate the impact of program termination upon the College’s academic mission. The Chair of the Academic Planning Committee or her or his representative shall attend meetings of the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees. (Rev. May 2009, Jan. 2011)

For 2018-19 the Academic Planning Committee sought to play a more proactive role in the planning and development of the academic programs of the College as is its primary mission. This is in contrast to the Committee receiving reports of academic actions already well underway and then presented to the committee for approval. In 2018-19 the Committee made progress in its goal to be a more proactive component of the College’s academic decision process.

Early in the fall semester the chair of the Academic Planning Committee met with the Council of Deans and requested that the committee be given a preview of any new significant initiative that would come before the committee. To that end the Committee was able to preview the proposals for the Ph. D in Mathematics, majors in engineering, the proposed changes to minor requirements and to work with the Dean of the School for Professional Studies in the development of the policy for Armed Forces Credit Transfer. Also, the chair of the committee was included as a member of the Ad Hoc Course Repeat Task Force formed by Academic Affairs. The above proposals were approved by the Committee as noted in Curriculog and passed to the Senate.

The Committee notes the following actions and recommendations.

Policy Approval Process - The final recommended changes to the course repeat and replacement policies developed by the ad hoc committee was presented for approval by the Office of the Provost. The proposals were forwarded from the Academic Planning Committee to the Academic Standards Committee who made final recommendations to the Senate. The Academic Planning Committee noted that the Ad Hoc Course Repeat Task Force’s development of course and catalogue requirement changes would not go through the current Curriculog process and thus despite the significance of such work would not provide College faculty the level of transparency provided for other academic programs such as majors and programs. Given the importance of many academic policies that land in the catalogue without a process and memorialization as provided by Curriculog, the Committee requested that a parallel Curriculog process be implement for academic policy changes. Lynne Ford is exploring this parallel Curriculog system for such policies.

Coordination with the Budget Committee - In concert with its charge to work closely with the Budget Committee the Academic Planning Committee participated in the deans’ April presentation of budget needs for the coming year.

For 2019-20 proposals will be approved concurrently by Academic Planning, Budget and Academic Standards Committees rather than in sequence as is the current arrangement. The three committees will need to further their cooperation and coordinate schedules. The Academic Planning Committee established a one-week review requirement to allow time to review proposals. The request that deans provide the Committee a “head’s up” was in response to several significant new program proposals presented to the Committee over the past several years with limited time to adequately review or ask for revision given cut off dates for program submissions through the various College, State and other approvals necessary to launch the program in the time frame requested by Academic Affairs.
While the Academic Planning Committee made significant progress in its efforts to be more proactive several needs and issues were identified.

Shared governance for new programs – majors and other academic initiatives are being presented by the deans to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees prior to approval by the faculty. In the case of the engineering majors, despite a request for more information, the original proposal was presented for approval without change and with no further time for consideration if the major was to be approved for fall 2020. We note also that Interim President Osborn attended the Academic Planning Committee meeting and assured the Committee that any concerns were not justified. He indicated that the College would handle any faculty and budgetary issues that might arise with the programs. The committee voted to approve the two majors with one abstention and one no vote.

Program Approval Process - The Committee requests that the program approval process be modified to include the Academic Planning Committee in the review of any new certificates by the School of Professional Studies. As part of its discussion of proposed BPS certificates, the Committee noted that the concentrations offered as part of the BPS had grown in number and now cover a wide scope of areas beyond the original major and concentration. The committee noted that BPS concentrations are fundamentally unlike the concentrations in other majors which follow the content of the major.

Review of SPS Certificates - The committee did not approve the proposals for a graduate and several undergraduate certificates presented by the School of Professional Studies. A key issue is the 100% staffing by part-time faculty of concentrations offered by the School of Professional Studies. This staffing problem is exacerbated by the fact that the school has no full-time faculty of its own. Discussion of the role of undergraduate certificates in the College and the graduate certificates proposed by the School of Professional Studies will be a key issue to be addressed by the Committee in 2019-20.

Strategic Planning - President Hsu has announced that the College will begin the development of a new strategic plan this fall. The Academic Planning Committee respectfully requests that it be included as a key member of the development team in keeping with its charge “To consider and recommend long-range academic programs and goals for the College.”

Dan Greenberg was unanimously elected to serve as committee chair for 2019-2020.

Respectfully submitted following review by the Committee.

Robert Pitts, Chair
Academic Planning Committee