Faculty Advisory Committee to the President (Regular meeting)
Minutes
10/17/22
Time: 3-4pm
Location: Board room, Randolph Hall with remote access as well

Committee members in attendance: Bob Podolsky (chair), Tracy Burkett, Bethany Goodier, William McCorkle, Brooke Permenter, Bob Pitts, Wendy Sheppard, Thomas Spade, Jennifer Baker, Rebekah Compton
Other attendees: President Hsu
Recorder: Jennifer Baker

I. President’s topics for the Committee

II. Committee’s Topics for the President
A. Status of campus master plan for addressing technology needs, classroom space (Sheppard)
   - Some departments, like math, have set classrooms and the desks are too small to fit required laptops.
   - There is not enough space between desks to do group work.
Question: How might the college improve the efficacy of the internal configuration of classrooms?
Answer: President Hsu: I can speak on this through three aspects.
One, a master plan for the campus has just begun. They take half a year to eight months. In doing this many instructors will be asked a lot of questions.
Two, the IT department has a plan of replacing equipment in classrooms every 5 years. Some equipment to be replaced every year. The President can ask IT to check for other classroom needs in this process.
Three, we are about to use a new classroom assignment system, Ad Astra Information System. It is web-based and keeps track of room scheduling for courses and events. Faculty initially must enter their needs, such as a room for group work and tables, or one with just desks, or one at a certain distance from another. In time the system can recommend rooms and run predictions of needs a few years out. The software can be overridden, too, if necessary, in a case.

B. Mental health issues on campus (Permenter)
a. Burden on untrained faculty, continuing counseling staff shortage/backlog
b. Practical steps to addressing mental health issues in the strategic plan
c. Late fall break in election years does not serve mental health, pedagogy, success
Dr. Permenter has heard from colleagues and peer facilitators who, though they are not from the same departments, have the same concern about needing to respond to their students’ mental health crises. Some students are taking steps through the FAST program but report back
that their appointments are weeks away. Faculty and mentors are worried about both the burden of being the only available help and the liability in this.

**Question:** Are there any steps in the strategic plan to solve this problem?

**Answer.**

1. There is a new director of the counseling center.
2. Faculty need to know how to refer students to the health staff.

**Resolved: The President will speak to the student affairs staff about #2.**

3. The student need for counseling services went up 75% in the past two years.
4. There is a current partnership with MUSC for 24/7 telehealth.
5. Students will be taken by staff to the ER at MUSC if aware of the crisis.
6. In the future there will be a ‘one stop shop’ for health care needs, where no one would be sent away.

**Action items for committee:**

The Student Health Services website should be checked for a comprehensive list of resources. This list should be shared with faculty as it once was, on heavy paper to post. Tri-County Crisis Stabilization Mobile Unit should be discussed with Student Health Services for an option other than calling police or waiting in the ER. They arrive to talk to people in crisis and have ten beds if further care is needed. **(843) 414-2350**

**President’s question:** Could there be a group of faculty who meet with counseling staff to discuss these issues?

C. Development of alternative RCM model (Pitts)

a. Concern about the budget driving the mission, “We will not have programs that do not support themselves”

b. Commodification of the college degree and changed expectations of students & faculty

**Question:** The model seems to be a bit of a black box; chairs do not seem to understand it at all. Could chairs be further trained in the new approach?

**Question:** Faculty fear that full time faculty will be replaced with part time or pay-by-course adjunct teaching. Are these fears accurate?

**Question:** Will the RCM done here reward schools for number of majors or number of students taught?

**Question:** Why is our current budget a good guide?

*Faculty would like to hear that the new budgeting will be for the sake of keeping us a liberal arts school.

**Answers.** President Hsu:

- RCM will not be pushed down to the department level but work at the level of the schools. The starting budget is the current budget, but with incentives for being efficient from the school and for bringing in new enrollment/revenue.
• Also, everyone will be thinking about how to be efficient (unlike in the current model).
• Programs are not likely to be eliminated by “cost police.” If a low enrolled program is identified, that is an opportunity to defend it. There are many defenses of small programs, studio art for example is necessary for surrounding programs, like art history.
• Most RCM models give money to the teaching department but do allow the major department to share the profit. This keeps the major department from attempting to replicate the non-department class.
• For example, with teacher education, on this new model you may see a higher per credit hour rate. Education might get funded at 420 per credit hour because of current low enrollment but this would still encourage you to improve your efficiency and if you find more revenue than you’d get more faculty. If you lose revenue, however, you will have to adjust.
• Perhaps we could reach out to a faculty member who ran RCM budgeting to talk to us and address issues they had.
• We could hold another town hall on this.

Counter-suggestion: Since we do not have Kennedy and Co to explain any further, we should turn to the Dean to explain this new budgeting model to their schools.

Question: If decisions are all at the school level, who looks at those decisions, to ensure that the College is meeting its overall mission?

Answer. President Hsu: This is where shared governance comes in, we will have levels of review including the committees and faculty senate, the provost and president.

*It is more of an art than a science.

Announcement: The budget committee and provost agreed to review new programs for efficiency at the three- and five-year period.

D. Emphasis on graduate programs and their projected role in filling financial gap created by the demographic cliff (Podolsky)

a. Promoting only graduate programs that are expected to be revenue positive?

Question: Is there a tension between supporting programs that meet RCM goals (budget friendly) and supporting programs that develop reputation and intellectual capital? Decisions may be at the department level, but pressure to meet goals of RCM comes from budget model from above.

Answer. President: A balance must be struck. We do not want to be like a campus where “where the money comes from is not my problem, and only spend it.” PhD programs are often subsidized by undergraduate and MA programs. So, a program like biology may want to look into a MA or certificate program for students who would like to go on to medical school but need more science. This would be a revenue generator for programs in advanced study that require pure investments in scholarship.

This issue will be continued at, and remaining issues will be tabled until, the next meeting.