Faculty Advisory Committee to the President
Meeting minutes, 09/09/21

Committee members present: Bob Podolsky (chair), Dan Greenberg, Wes Dudgeon, Robert Pitts, Joseph Weyers, Steve Short, Bethany Goodier, Margaret Hagood, Suanne Ansari, Chris Mothorpe, Patricia Dillon, Vijay Vulava, Kathy Béres Rogers (scribe).

Also present: President Andrew Hsu, Provost Suzanne Austin, John Loonan, Paul Patrick, John Morris

The meeting began promptly at 8:30 a.m. over Zoom.

I. **Hsu Agenda:**
   a. Holidays: Margaret was told that the College observed Confederate Memorial Day instead of Labor Day. Later, she was told that we observe Labor Day in December. The question of why we do this has come up in the past. This is an issue of diversity and inclusion that she wanted addressed.
      Dr. Hsu pulled up a holiday calendar, and we do “observe” Labor Day on December 30th this year. Between December 23-31, most of the faculty would not be working, but staff would, so we bank holidays around winter break.
      John Loonan added that staff members would want to keep this schedule so that they can have these days off; Dr. Shu agreed with this.
      Provost Austin asked what the other institutions in South Carolina are doing. Margaret- it’s important for us to continue to look at this. It’s a forward-thinking request. When we look at how it gets projected out into the world, it doesn’t echo what we’d like to see for REI/Diversity.
      Provost Austin suggested replacing Confederate Memorial Day (CMD) with Juneteenth. John Loonan said CMD is a state holiday; he’s on the Pillar 3 Committee, and they have been discussing what we can do to comply with the state but also celebrate Juneteenth.

   b. Staff Reductions-
      John Loonan began by explaining that the College had saved money by eliminating funded vacant positions and the VSP program. That savings has eroded by 20% because we replaced 8/9 of those positions, and 52% were in the business affairs area.
      Bob said that Grice Marine Lab was told not even to try and replace a staff member who was critical to their operation. Their impression was that attrition was driving the goal of changing the staff situation. For the benefit of new members of the FAC, Hsu showed us a slide illustrating how staff numbers have risen in the past few years.

   c. Vacant Positions- Why have so many not been filled?
      i. We can’t hire because people don’t want to work here. Pillar 3 is analyzing pay structure- staff and faculty pay analysis.
a. Instead of just saying we can’t replace positions, the people who stay would benefit from that departure and make more money, but it might be setting those people up for failure.

d. Add-Pays: Dan asked where we are in streamlining add pays, which are cumbersome and add burden to our staff. JL agreed and will take steps to take these things off of our plates.

e. Facilities-
   1. Too many vacant positions
      John Morris (JM) said it’s an industry-wide problem. How do we backfill our vacancies by outsourcing these things?
   2. HVAC issues: JM said we have invested $10 million on mostly HVAC problems.
   3. Communication: Bethany suggested more communication about rooms, so that faculty don’t have to flip their classrooms on the fly.
      a. Created a building liaison program to improve communication.
      b. Work order management system- improved customer portal.

John Loonan and John Morris left the meeting.

II. Provost Issues

a. Education/Public Health update. Reflecting a concern by Wes, Bob said that some faculty felt there had been a relative vacuum of information following last year’s flurry of activity.

   1. Information: Suzanne Austin replied we had planned to move HHP into SSM, but the board of trustees was not willing to support that (SSM fees). Have met with everyone in that department and the Dean of the school to discuss a proposal to go to the board of trustees. They are working on a proposal for a School of Health Sciences that would start off with the current (HHP) school. SA asked what we would recommend as the next academic program. MUSC is interested in us doing more collaboratively. We have 200 students a semester doing experiential opportunities at MUSC.

   2. Faculty Input: Bob raised the question regarding how it was presented during the SSM convocation. Rather than the Dean saying this is where we are, a faculty member had to ask. Hsu said that it has been three semesters (?) so that’s a good deal of time. They didn’t take it to the entire faculty, but to the faculty of only that school.

b. QEP: Sustainability Literacy

   1. Provost Comments: We should separate individual faculty from the issue of the QEP. SACSCOC’s expectation was that the institution would have a broad conversation about the QEP with broad buy-in. When we submit the 5 year report, we have to identify our next QEP. We need to take our resources and dedicate them to the next QEP.

   2. Faculty Concerns:
      a. Bob- 90 faculty being trained. Expecting that to move us forward is not going to be sustained through a major. So what is the process by which faculty will play a role in making this decision about sustainability literacy across the curriculum?
b. Margaret- What was the plan for when the QEP ended? What did we expect to happen?
c. COVID stuff
   1. Information Sharing
      Bob asked whether we could have a decision tree to make the process less
cumbersome for faculty. Dan said the information has been sent out, but sorting
through emails is difficult. But having that in a diagram somewhere would be very
useful.
   2. Campus-Wide Testing
      Beth- Why have we opted not to do campus-wide testing? Paul says the AG said it’s
illegal. We were the first ones to say we were going to do it; we have backed off,
and Clemson and Carolina have started to do it anyway. We are going to have to
bring in MUSC as a testing partner- what is the best way to provide active
surveillance?
   3. Crowd Sizes
      Steve (in chat) pointed out the disparity between classes and other events that are
capped. Both the president and provost said we need in-person instruction, and we
should be shouldering more of the responsibility, but both Dr. Hsu and Provost
Austin agreed that faculty can make their own decisions in order to feel safe.

The meeting concluded around 10 a.m.