Faculty Advisory Committee to the President
Meeting minutes, 10/08/21

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

Also present: President Andrew Hsu, Provost Suzanne Austin

The meeting began at 10:35 a.m. over Zoom.

1. President Hsu expressed notable overlap between the agenda and topics he also wanted to discuss. He agreed with our suggestion to move from a Q&A format and more to advice and suggestions based on these topics.

2. Committee topics
   a. Online instruction: post-pandemic place of online instruction at CofC
      i. President Hsu: COVID certainly accelerated online education and kept it here to stay, but in-person instruction is our main commodity. We should be careful of a heavy shift to online education due to just short term student demands, but consider how online instruction, and fully online programs can help attract new students.
      ii. Bob: Pre-pandemic we talked about getting a different audience, but how much is COVID pushing us beyond looking for a new audience?
      iii. Provost Austin: Online education can help attract a new audience, but we need to think of how in-person instruction funding our infrastructure (e.g. room and board), but yes COVID accelerated an online shift.
      iv. Dan: We’re doing online education better than we were and that strengthens our ability to offer online courses when appropriate. Agrees we can’t go too far online and values F2F. Anecdotally, students report liking a mix of OE and F2F for flexibility. We could market programs we already have that are available online. Contact chairs if there is parent/student response that F2F are “full” when really it’s may be a student’s personal preference of time or late registration that leads them to selecting an online course
      v. Provost Austin: some institutions limit X credits earned online. Should we?
      vi. Chris: Noted the high variability in quality of online education. For example in person classes may be taught by roster faculty, but online is for adjuncts. BPS is taught entirely adjunct staff and not sure if it’s a model that should be followed. Maybe more training beyond online education, better tech, and specific classrooms for teaching hybrid could help.
      vii. Dan- Chairs can monitor adjuncts in online courses.
viii. President Hsu: Should we certify online courses?
ix. Provost Austin: TLT has done a good job, but IT running training versus Academic Affairs can lead a disconnect and less faculty involvement. Quality Matters is national certification program for online courses.
x. President Hsu: 2M certified courses have higher qualities.
xi. Provost: TLT could work with CETL about these types of certification options.

xii. Beth: Our talk about online education makes it sound less than, but there is a need to change our language. It doesn’t and isn’t always less than. We need better promotion of our online strengths to students and parents needs to be stronger promoting online education.

xiii. Provost: A standing senate committee can vet technology in classroom.

xiv. Pat: Agrees problems with oversight for adjuncts, but courses should vary with roster and adjunct. Better pay can help attract better adjuncts. Adjuncts are often isolated from dept, so they miss out on dialogues about instruction with roster faculty. We need strong targeted marketing like NYU to promote our online courses.

xv. President Hsu acknowledged adjunct pay is low.

b. Dean Evaluations

i. Provost: Dean Survey will begin around Oct. 20, be open 10 days, and then after 60-90 days of review with senior leadership, Deans will meet to share results with faculty in a town hall format. Faculty survey of chairs are being done by deans, but the methods may not be the same across schools.

ii. Susanne: Concern from faculty was more about evaluation of Deans. Consistent and continuous evaluations are needed.

iii. Provost: Last Deans survey may have been 2017-18? Provost worked with Simon Lewis, Deanna C., and Deans, to create a more manageable survey. Results will be kept personal, but Deans will organize a townhall to discuss results with faculty.

iv. Chris: A transparent and clear process like faculty evaluations they have from Chair would be best.

v. Provost: There are annual evaluation of Deans by the Provost, and Deans annually evaluate Chairs.

vi. President: How often should we seek faculty input? We could look into a policy.

vii. Provost: This survey will inform thoughts on ongoing assessment of Deans. Plan is to do assessment every other year.

viii. (Chat dan confirmed evaluated. Bob asked for what criteria used)

ix. Beth: Schools vary in chair evaluation procedures and many faculty feel very limited in opportunity to provide input.

c. Future QEPs:

i. Provost: Anything can be considered for next QEP, but selection has to be bottom up, not by 2 people alone, and needs to be broad. Previous
institutions have used open forums for months and surveys with wide input.

ii. No faculty comments were made.

d. Committee on Commemoration and Landscapes: interpretation of the Heritage Act, better coordination with the BOT

i. Bob: Various committees doing work to represent historical past of names of buildings, but need better coordination with BoT. How can we work best with BoT and coordinate committee work and BoT actions.

ii. President Hsu – An ad hoc moved to a new standing committee, and recommendations from ad-hoc work was shared with BoT. Current committee was not given tasks of developing naming policy or guiding principles, but charged with establishing better interpretive signage.

iii. Bob: it is unclear if committee has charges to consider naming issues and recommendations.

iv. President Hsu: would like suggestions for how to move forward, but without a naming policy could be putting cart before horse.

v. Bob: we need clarification on committee charge.

vi. President Hsu: agreed to clarify charge.

e. Great Colleges Survey

i. President Hsu Takeaways: at local level (dept) there is high trust and satisfaction with chairs, but trust drops a lot with admin. How can we improve?

ii. Steve: past leadership left a big deficit in trust.

iii. Dan- Agrees it’s a carryover effect. With transparency it’s still hard to get the word out to everyone. One area of concern is people are uncertain about RCM.

iv. Wes: Agrees to carryover effect. COVID had made it difficult to communicate with both students and faculty, and emails can get missed. Change can make folks anxious, and so many changes probably created the lower trust. The next round of survey may help show higher trust with current admin.

v. President Hsu: How to improve shared governance and reach everyone (not just limited number of faculty)?

vi. Vijay: Echoed comments above. In 16 years Hsu is 4th president, Austin is 4th provost, there’s been 3 SSM deans, and 2 dept. chairs -- that’s made a lot of flux, but current admin is more transparent, but some things haven’t changed. There are problems with a legacy culture and past admin legacy appointments may be showing that distrust.

vii. Provost: The process and transparency, such as opportunity to participate in the next QEP matters.

viii. Margaret: trust building can take time when there’s a past of bad relationships. Compensation is definitely one of the areas of low trust. Historically the addition of lots of senior leadership with high
compensation, but faculty seeing no increase lowered morale. Actions
taking to remedy this situation can help.
ix. President Hsu: Data show a clear correlation between satisfaction of
faculty with compensation and satisfaction with senior leadership. Quite
a bit a difference in faculty satisfaction among different schools, and that
correlates well with satisfaction of the senior leadership team.
Anecdotally is that what we feel is true?

d. Chris: Can the survey be subdivided by school?
xi. President Hsu: Yes, and Deans should have access to school data. Some
schools. The best school satisfaction with compensation and admin was
45% and 55%, respectively, the worst was 12% for compensation and
lower for admin. Ideally, an average of 4% a year salary increase over
next 5 years would create a 20% increase and put us above our peers.
How to do it?

xii. Bob Pitts: Need procedures for faculty involvement in decision making
and established procedures haven’t been followed. Reassurance that
procedures are followed would really help improve trust.

xiii. Bob Podolsky: any process to help faculty feel like they were involved
before decision was made could really help. Merit pay increases made
Chairs feel like their hands were tied and lowered morale. Transparency
in the process was poor, and faculty who felt they met the bar for merit
may have been excluded due to a firm percentage cap.

f. Faculty compensation: Merit and COLA increase processes

i. President Hsu: what’s the right process or percentage for merit? We did
3% across board adjustment and then put aside 1% of total salary budget
and to give to 25% of folks for merit based raises. About 30% received t a
merit-based raise. We could move all 4% of salary increase to merit-
based raise that could be higher or lower based on performance, or the
other extreme everything is across the board raise, which may be counter
to a high performance culture. The recent model was 75/25 split for
COLA and merit. We didn’t prescribe a process and left merit raises to
the local level to chairs.

ii. Dan: 25% cap felt too low and left some faculty just below the drawn
cutoff line. There could be natural breaks in merit to draw a line instead
of an imposed percentage. Flexibility could be good. Some distrust can
always occur due to Chairs not being able to be transparent about who
receives raises.

iii. Chris: It would be helpful to let people know why they did or did not or
receive a raise.

iv. President HSU and Provost Austin: Deans gave chairs parameters
v. Provost Austin: If we have merit, then we need criteria at dept level in
consultation with faculty members, so that people understand what it
takes to earn merit in the dept. Each dept could have these
conversations.
vi. President Hsu: what percent should go into merit? Nearing end of meeting.

vii. Steve: Psychology has clear guidelines for merit categories, but recent low pay merit raises have left faculty demoralized about why they should achieve the highest merit criteria only to be receive very small increase in salary of a few hundred dollars compared to the next lowest merit category.

viii. Beth: There has been erratic and infrequent merit increases, and there is a need to fix compression

g. Advisory committee to Provost
   i. Provost Austin: There is real value to having both the Provost and President together at this meeting. A separate committee would just lead to redundancy and need to communicate issues back and forth between it and the FACP.

h. Current on campus COVID Testing
   i. Bob: confusion on COVID Testing available to students from Student Health Services
   ii. President Hsu: Students should be able to get a test for SHS
   iii. Dan: That’s what’s in the Faculty Senate minutes, but not what’s they’ve stated when called.
   iv. Beth: Students have not reported being able to get a test from SHS
   v. Steve: It’s not clear on the websites that walk-in testing is available from SHS. Can we make it possible?
   vi. President Hsu: will look into this issue.

Meeting adjourned at 12:08pm

Minutes submitted by Steve Short.