The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Undergraduate Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee

Minutes

Thursday, April 27, 2017

Attending: James Cremer; Steve Duck; Helena Dettmer; Elena Gavruseva; Kathryn Hall (staff); Lena Hill; Meena Khandelwal; Cornelia Lang; Jerald Moon; Roland Racevskis; Jacob Simpson; Rachel Williams

1. Deans Keller, Scranton, Gardial, and Clay will be invited to meet with UEPCC to discuss the 2020 Academic Organizational Structure initiative.
2. Marc Armstrong, Associate Dean for Research & Infrastructure and the Social Sciences, updated UPECC on the work of the ad hoc CLAS committee responding to the 2020 Academic Organizational Structure initiative. Dean Armstrong next presented a PowerPoint showing that the initiative began with Provost Butler’s goal to create a “nimble, forward looking university,” with Provost Curry now embracing this goal as well. Dean Djalali asked Marc Armstrong to create an ad hoc committee to respond to this initiative, now referred to as the 20/20 Committee.  Dean Armstrong, David Cunning, and Rachel Williams co-chair the committee. The committee also has convened faculty charrettes to help design forward-looking structural components for CLAS, with these ideas then discussed by the core group. These charrettes are organized into three groups of 1) untenured faculty; 2) recently tenured faculty; and 3) senior faculty. So far, two charrettes have met, with the 20/20 core members meeting once to date. Meanwhile, Dean Armstrong has attended a Faculty Assembly meeting, a DEO meeting, and an Executive Committee meeting to help update CLAS members on the initiative’s purpose and timeline and will meet in May with CLAS senior staff and ASG.

Discussion then focused on the overall timeline for any related structural changes within CLAS to academic programs, with the 2020 project given the December 2017 end date when a report by Deans Keller, Scranton, Gardial, and Clay will be submitted to the Provost. The four deans will continue to collect information during the first half of the fall semester. Marc Armstrong assured UEPCC members that no decisions about structural reconfigurations or eliminations would be made during the summer months.

UEPCC also wondered whether or not faculty would have an opportunity to vote on any proposed changes. Marc Armstrong reiterated the conversation that took place in Faculty Assembly with Deans Keller, Scranton, Gardial, and Clay. It appears that there might be a vote by faculty but that the President will make any final decisions.

Jacob Simpson advocated for the inclusion of students on the 20/20 Committee since students will be affected by the outcomes. The guest agreed that there could be some implications from any restructuring that might affect students, such as the disruption of the General Education Program and the fragmentation of student success initiatives. Other concerns include restructuring without actually relocating units because of the lack of “flex” spaces, making synergy harder. A discussion then followed about why staff have been excluded from the membership in the 20/20 Committee, with Kathryn Hall requesting that a staff member be added.

UEPCC asked if it might be possible that nothing new would actually result from this initiative. Armstrong noted that change will likely be proposed; however, enacting those decisions could take time. Others then stressed the difficulty faculty now have planning research and teaching across different colleges; adding more administrative layers could increase obstacles and create more bureaucracy, not less. For example, Big Ideas courses might be affected if instructors moved to different colleges, with cross-listing courses also made harder. It was also noted by UEPCC members that the word “nimble” has multiple meanings and can suggest top-down decision-making and may not be an appropriate goal for a research university that is invested in self-governance.

1. UEPCC welcomed guest Meenakshi Gigi Durham, Professor of Journalism & Mass Communication with a joint appointment in Gender, Women's & Sexuality Studies, and Associate Dean for Outreach and Engagement. Dean Durham presented proposed language to be included in the required CLAS syllabi insert, with the language focused on respect and inclusivity while addressing pronoun usage in conjunction with gender choices, as now added in MAUI for students to show their pronoun preferences. The language and idea for the insert came out of conversations first in the Department of Gender, Women’s and Sexuality Studies, and later from the CLAS Diversity Community, which wrote the proposed statement. The insert and the resulting faculty sensitivity to student’s chosen pronouns could help create a more inclusive experience for transgendered students. UEPCC supported the syllabus insert but asked that it be shorter, and suggested using the SDS statement as a possible model. The proposed insert will return to the committee after revisions are made by the Diversity Committee.

Respectfully Submitted,

Roland Racevskis   
Professor, Department of French and Italian  
Secretary for UEPCC