Minutes

March 9, 2011   3 – 4:30 pm Room 220 K CRMS

Senate Academic Program Committee

Members Present: Daniel Wermeling (chair), Greg Wasilkowski, Andrew Hippisley, Karen Badger, Esther Dupont-Versteegden, Michael Arrington, Mary Arthur

Members Absent (Prior Notice): Marilyn Duncan

The agenda item for this meeting was for the SAPC to discuss a charge from the Chair of the University Senate Council. The committee was to report its perception on: 1) an emerging issue/topic of concern, and 2) a SWOT analysis of the SAPC and the University of Kentucky from the perspective of the committee members. Below please find the SAPC report on these two topics.

Emerging Topic of Interest

Recent events between faculty, administration and the Senate demonstrate that there is increasing pressure to have courses, programs, educational policy, and other matters reviewed, modified if necessary, and approved in a timely manner. Committee members have a sense that the "system" is not functioning well and that the increased number of proposals is making the system look increasingly dysfunctional and at worst irrelevant. Members relate that constituents in their home colleges view the Senate in negative terms. For example, statements made might include the notions that no value is added, that they are unable to get answers to the status of proposals, proposals being lost, not being informed about hearings, it is inefficient in process, takes too long, there are no clear guidelines for various submissions, that progress is at the mercy of a single gatekeeper, etc. SAPC recommends that process, content and communication systems be evaluated top to bottom, and that systems, policies, procedures, standards and performance metrics be tracked and reported. Modifications should be made to improve systems and only commit limited Senate resources to activity that fits within our mandates and adds value to the process.

Senate Academic Programs Committee

Strengths:

- Good representation of expertise with broad areas of University programs, i.e., diverse faculty
- Thoughtful and productive discussions
- Timely review of the applications received
- Prevention of duplication of resource
- Review for inclusivity in proposed interdisciplinary programs
- Ensuring quality of program evaluation

Weaknesses:

- Lack of timely progress of program applications through the entire system and to the committee
- Apparent lack of clear guidelines for applicants of information required for review and approval
- Appearance of lack of transparency of processes
- No clear guidelines for review process
- Appearance of review redundancy for processes

Opportunities:

- Development of a more standardized format for applications, to ensure that all necessary information is included and thus to expedite the review process
- Development of criteria for review to ensure appropriate quality evaluation and progression through the pipeline
- Change some Senate rules so that minor changes and deletions/suspensions can be done by electronic evaluation and voting
- Senate and committee self-assessment and strategic planning to establish goals
- Develop electronic systems to minimize use of paper

Threats:

- Loss of good will and congenial relationships with fellow faculty members, due to prolonged timeframe of the review process for applications (mainly before they reach the SAP).
- Loss of confidence in the value of the review process, by committee members and other faculty members, due to unclear guidelines and prolonged timeframe of application review.
- Delay of initiation of valuable programs, due to issues mentioned above
- Loss of competitive edge in the academic marketplace due to bureaucratic delays or lost time
- Discouragement in development of new ideas/programs due to ambiguous expectations/cumbersome process

University of Kentucky

<u>Strengths</u>:

- Talented faculty with broad areas of expertise and interests
- Adequate scientific facilities and equipment overall
- Collegial, friendly environment, on the whole

<u>Weaknesses</u>:

- Serious problems with infrastructure, including unsafe buildings in need of repair and lack of sufficient classroom and laboratory space

- Absence of merit-based raises for faculty and staff for several years

- Absence of support staff, while observing increased senior administrative positions, to support growth of academic programs

<u>Opportunities</u>:

- A new president may provide an opportunity for reassessment of priorities and improved dialogue with faculty members

<u>Threats</u>:

University wide:

- Increase in tuition rate has become a serious burden for many students

- Declining faculty moral due to salary freezes for faculty and staff, administrative focus on athletics instead of academics, infrastructure problems (described above), and lack of involvement of faculty input in decision making

- Stretched faculty, shrinking staff and other resources make support of new initiatives and established ones difficult

In the Medical Center:

- Seemingly arbitrary recent space reassignments and threats of upcoming reassignments. Faculty conducting "wet lab" research cannot conduct research projects without dedicated space. Moving a lab is very time consuming and disruptive.
- Excessive, short-term focus on translational, clinical research, when most scientific breakthroughs are based on years of previous basic science research and discoveries.
- Lack of support of senior faculty with long and strong track records
- Absence of a positive, stimulating environment