

Minutes
Faculty Senate Steering Committee
Tuesday, February 2, 2016
3B Conwell Hall

Attendance:

Present: Tricia Jones (Pres., SMC), Adam Davey (Vice Pres., CPH), Michael Sachs (Secy., CPH), Mark Rahdert (Past-Pres., Law), Raghbir Athwal (LKSM), Teresa Gill Cirillo (FSBM), Marsha Crawford (SSW) [WebEx], Donald Hantula (CLA), Michael W. Jackson (STHM), Michael Jacobs (Pharm), Stephanie Knopp (ART), James Korsh (CST), Paul LaFollette (Fac. Herald, CST), Heidi Ojha (CPH), Cornelius Pratt (SMC), Mark Rahdert (LAW), Jeffrey Solow (BCMD), Jie Yang (KSoD), Cheryl Mack (Coord.)

Absent: Kurosh Darvish (Engr), Fred Duer (TFMA), Ken Thurman (Educ.)

1. Call to Order

President Jones called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m.

2. President's Report

Report on meeting with SFF committee – check in on term limits/potential continuing membership on committee. Also questions on representation on committee (e.g., faculty, students, perhaps adjunct faculty as well). Multi-modal evaluation discussion – need to move towards that rapidly. Meeting at end of semester to look at best practices in this area. Discussion on ways to increase SFF response rate. Response rate in Spring was 61%. Still need for some way for faculty to respond to SFFs, especially adjuncts and NTTs. Perhaps space on faculty form to indicate course changes that might affect SFF ratings. Sense that way in which SFFs are used is not working and must be changed. Discussion how to address especially negative comments. Question about use of in class forms and potentially higher response rate – across university highest was 71.5% response rate for in class. Difference is not great.

New Department of International Affairs. Discussion on February 16th about this and how work with Senate's International Committee.

Stadium issue. Faculty haven't had a huge conversation about this. Do we want to invite President Theobald and others (like Mitchell Morgan) to a meeting with stadium front and center. We will do so.

Summit on Gen Ed would be advisable later this semester.

3. Guest – Jon Nyquist (CST) – New Tech Course in Gen Ed

Question about everyone having a technology class as part of Gen Ed. Class called “Demystifying Technology” – something everyone would take and this would change requirements.

Proposal has been tabled at this point. Class almost a technology survey class – seven modules with submodules. Each module a two week ‘class.’ One possibility Computer Science would teach whole class; other option is different people from different departments with different modules would teach them.

GenEd class designed during moratorium on new Gen Ed classes. Modules as independent don’t build on each other. Perhaps too shallow (mile wide and inch deep). Short seminars on each topic.

Implementation issues – Science equivalent of IH. Too many students.

Regular review process seems to have not been followed.

Not clear if this would replace an existing science requirement.

Modules not yet complete - unusual GEEC approving course without this information available. No content but approved for piloting in the fall. Significant interest from the Provost in having this done. There are two courses – a more traditional one and the modular one. Possibility of 6,000 students a year. It would be a nightmare to staff.

Some content seems applied, some theoretical. Unclear what learning objectives are.

Concern this was presented as a “this is what is being done” without faculty involvement in process. If Provost is unhappy with science Gen Ed perhaps he should come and talk with the faculty first about these concerns. Concern this is a top down effort rather than bottom up development of such a course.

Also doesn’t meet criteria that Gen Ed has established for course development/approval.

Hard to say no to the Provost. Discussion on appropriate response. Curriculum is supposed to be a faculty matter. Faculty voice seems to have gone somewhere else. Seemed not to have followed procedures.

May be first Gen Ed course that did not go through departmental/collegial process first for approval.

4. Vice-President’s Report

Motion to approve two nominees for Nominations Committee: Cornelius Pratt and Jin Jun Luo (Medicine) to the Nominating Committee. Unanimously approved.

5. Guest – Istvan Varkonyi – Director of Gen Ed

Context – last May Provost and Vice-Provost Peter Jones said let's see about offering a tech course for the general student population. Now as Provost an opportunity to move this forward. Fact finding mission to identify what want from a technology course. Peter Jones asked for a few people to develop a concept paper on this. Two people identified (CST and CLA) talked about what might constitute a good technology course. Travel money to go to Stanford, Harvey-Mudd, and another at MIT and Harvard and went to conferences. Gathered information, talked with professors. A modular course came out of concept paper – many faculty said this would be an ideal way to teach technology, including cultural/social/political impact of technology on life.

This would be a generalist course. The modules would serve as a shop window, with other courses behind these modules. Other courses could follow modules in more depth. Course went to Provost in Fall – he was not fully convinced pedagogically. He wanted a more traditional way of delivering this course. Instead of seven competencies with modules – have one instructor doing 14 week course doing general intro minus socio/political/etc. course. More scientific/mathematical course

But these are two different kinds of things. He said okay to proceed with modules but also pilot parallel traditional course. More traditional version passed by CIS and now being reviewed at undergraduate committee in CST. Eventually will go to GEEC for review/discussion.

Questions at last Monday's GEEC meeting. How to approve course when haven't seen content? Would like to see some content. Tabled entire proposal until have content/faculty on board. Some faculty now on board to do so.

Provost informed of content concerns. He said to still do pilot. Moving forward with review in Provost's office. Will be piloted next year. GEEC is advisory to Provost – he has power to make decisions as he wishes.

Concern by some Deans this will cannibalize existing Gen Ed courses. CLA has 63% of Gen Ed courses, CST has 9%, Ed has 8%, Arts has 7%.

Question – why a rush? Unclear why there is this rush. Preferable to let this grow organically. Tea leaves suggest Council of Deans meeting on Wednesday 2/3, one of issues on agenda is Gen Ed. Potential restructuring of Gen Ed.

Three sections of 25 each for pilot study for each version. Concern that 5 faculty initially involved have a leg up on this rather than inviting faculty in general to submit proposals.

Not put forward that this class is replacing something. That would require changing the whole Gen Ed program.

Pressures of time to get this done were felt to preclude opening up to general faculty for proposals. Perhaps full modular course might be offered eventually, but not for pilot.

Logistical nightmare to mount something with so many modules. With piloting need to have integrity of Gen Ed course – competencies needed. Provost's office already looking at financials for how this would happen. It is moving forward as a pilot.

Not clear how piloted courses will be evaluated. Not really SFFs, but long term quality of this project.

General concern from Provost that he is concerned with quality of instruction in Gen Ed. One of concerns is Gen Ed is being atomized/torn apart. But this course doesn't help. Classes such as these make lots of money and best place to make money – very lucrative. Moved from capped at 40 to 120. This is happening all across university. Who is teaching – adjuncts? One makes a fortune on this. RCM is a disaster for Gen Ed. Deans at each other's throats for every credit hour. Some Deans say Gen Ed is too big - 35-36 credit hours. Reduced from 44 to 35-36. College of Ed – 24 credits (waivers) – CLA 35-36 credits.

Issue is how divide up pie. Big piece is Gen Ed.

Concern about Provost moving this forward without realistic faculty input. This is huge!! Approval of a course content free?????

Students not even being taken into consideration.

GEEC is advisory to the Provost. He can move forward as he wishes. GEEC is willing to assist with the course but unclear role it will play.

Comment that seems like a MOOC course. It is a potential cash cow.

One of issues is with a moratorium on new courses from provost why are we looking at a new course.

RCM has subverted the mission. Experience of students as opposed to raising money should be the key.

President Jones said we need to make a strong statement about faculty retaining control of course development and content and assessment of courses.

Gen Ed courses don't need to go through AIPAC. Expedited process/dispensation from AIPAC.

5. Old Business

No old business.

6. New Business

Jeff Solow (Boyer) provided names of some adjuncts who might come to an FSSC meeting: Maggie Avener, Ryan Eckes, Jennie Shanker, and Paul Dannenfelser.

Solow also suggested getting information on how collegial assemblies are working.

UTPAC committees have elected chairs (Kevin Delaney moved forward on this).

Judge McKee will be here next week for the FSSC meeting.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Sachs
Secretary