Academic Assembly
January 27, 2020
2:05 – 3:35pm, STCN 130

MINUTES

Attendance: Chris Paul, Yancy Dominick, Frank Shih, Mimi Cheng, Katie Oliveras, Sarah Bee, Marc Cohen, Margit McGuire, Terri Clark, Russ Powell, Felipe Anaya, Shane Martin, Nicole Harrison, Mark Taylor, Kate Koppelman, Michael Ng, Arie Greenleaf, Gregory Silverman, Clara Cordova, Pat Buschel, Nalini Iyer

(Attendance Notes: *Kirsten Thompson respectfully sends her apology as she is unable to attend this meeting of the Academic Assembly due to a prior commitment.***)**

Minutes Taken by Lindsey Nakatani

I. **President Update**   **2:05 – 2:06**
   a. Tacoma Dome – 2020 Commencement
   b. The AcA president has been in attendance of budget meeting and other essential Strategic Planning meetings. Discussions have been conducted with a focus upon decisions having the least amount of negative effect upon the faculty as possible, while also remaining mindful of the impact on all communities of Seattle University.

II. **Review 01-13-20 Minutes**   **2:06 – 2:07**
   a. **Motion:** Move to approve meeting minutes from 01/13/2020. Seconded: **VOTE:** APPROVE: 13, OPPOSED: 0, ABSTENTIONS: 2
      i. **Motion is passed** – AcA 01/13/2020 Meeting Minutes Approved.

III. **Provost Update / AcA Officers Update**   **2:07 – 2:25**
   a. **Planned Parenthood Update:** The AcA's resolution in the FQ of the 19-20 AY, resulted in the creation of a leadership group to address issues of this kind. The first meeting was very positive. The group is quickly getting to know their group membership and acquainting themselves with the opinions of their constituencies. The leadership group will initially focus on drawing upon the expertise of the faculty to create educational content for the university. The SGSU VP will connect with student communities to inform them of the leadership group's work. The Graduate Student population is represented on the leadership group. The membership roster will be sent out by the AcA president.
   b. **Strategic Planning Council:** The special convocation to launch the Strategic Directions Document was jointly planned by the President's Office and MARCOM (Marketing and Communications Department). The convocation was intended as a launching point; however, the event seems to have sparked further questions. Especially with regards to the question of semesters vs. quarters, which became a prominent point of the Strategic Directions Document due to its reappearance as a key conversational point in the initial listening and planning sessions. The process to explore this question has undergone repeated changes. The original timeline had a deadline for a decision by the end of the current academic year. With feedback this timeline was adjusted to move the deadline to October 2020. The Strategic Planning Council and the Provost intend for this process to be based upon data and comprehensive information, for the process

to be conducted with professionalism and for the process to be transparent. The goal is to have the culmination of the work done by both the university community and the leadership group result in a faculty referendum and a staff referendum by October 2020. Any recommendation to the BOT (Board of Trustees) and the President should come with strong support from both the faculty and staff. There is awareness of the strength of opinions surrounding this issue. A clear and definitive process should be decided upon so that all parties can move forward in a collaborative spirit to find the best recommendation for the institution. There are several issues related to the Semesters vs. Quarters question: faculty workload, faculty handbook revisions, course load models, academic portfolio etc. Majority of this leadership group's membership would be faculty. The AcA will work closely with the committee on committees to populate the group. The Strategic Planning Council will be focusing on taking all action items from the Strategic Directions Document and prioritizing and initiating processes to address each one. Initial work will be conducted on the top 3-5 of the document's highest priority points.

IV. **SU Advance Task Force Update – Jodi O'Brien**   **2:25 – 2:45**

    a. Ms. O'Brien thanks the committee for their time and is looking forward to receiving feedback on the Advance Team's work thus far. The internal advisory board, in collaboration with external consultants, have helped the Advance Team evolve over the last four years. SU Advance was formed under the National Science Foundation's, Advance - Institutional Transformation Program. This program funds in-depth assessments of an institutions' efforts to advance women and minorities in the sciences. Findings, revisions and improvements will then carry over into other institution practices. The SU Advance Team has been looking closely at faculty tenure, rank and promotions. Seattle University is a Carnegie classified institution for community engagement and in this spirit, the SU Advance team has been looking in-depth at the role of its faculty in advancing the institution. The team took a complete inventory of "what faculty do" and found over 200 distinctive items that faculty perform that assist with student advancement, the institution's advancement as well as faculty advancement. However, none of these items were considered as factors for rank and tenure promotion.

    b. Representatives from the National Science Foundation recently visited, and the university and the Advance team were congratulated on their research, their participation process, activity designs and forward-thinking efforts. The SU Advance team's unofficial motto has been to "fail forward, regroup, reassess and keep moving forward."

    c. The SU Advance Taskforce has been charged with looking at revisions and improvements to the promotion, rank and tenure process that would better align the process with the University's mission. This work initiated with a comparative analysis of 60 institutions across the United States on their rank, tenure and promotion processes. For the past year the taskforce has been putting together a draft of language for revised promotion guidelines. The taskforce's next step is to solicit input from the AcA about the new, proposed guidelines and to see what the AcA would like to hear from the SU Advance Task Force's re-visit to the AcA on October 24th, 2020.

    d. Questions/Discussion:

        i. Very clear and consistent guidelines are essential, so that each school/college committee and administration can run their own promotion process. *How do we approach this issue with clarity, while maintaining a comprehensive, holistic approach to*

the question? Do the AcA members have any suggestions for this process? Individual work will have to be done on the college/department level to revise guidelines. University wide guidelines would have to allow for some flexibility depending upon the requirements and needs of the school/college. There is currently a lack of coherent, consistent information and guidelines for promotion, rank and tenure processes at SU.

ii. *How has this work re-defined or addressed the idea of service?* In theory, instructors are asked to demonstrate excellence in teaching, service and scholarly work. However, the practice is a continued focus and prioritization on scholarly work. Institutions are not as successful if they ask their faculty to focus on scholarly work alone. *How can service be re-defined to include a wider range of faculty duties and contributions?* The three buckets of faculty contributions, i.e. service, scholarship and teaching are part of the problem. The initial questionnaire asked, "what are some activities that faculty perform that contribute to the university that are not necessarily recognized in their promotional materials?" The Advance Team has been gathering information around these unrecognized services and community engagements and how they can be considered in the promotion process. Because current promotion guidelines are so vague, the default has been to consider scholarship as the main mark for promotion. The goal of the Advance Team is to better train the SU community on how to take a holistic approach to faculty formation and to revise the promotion guidelines so that they align with Seattle University's mission.

V. **Program Review Committee Update**   **2:45 – 3:00**

a. The Program Review Committee (PRC) examines submitted revisions, reviews and course or degree creations through the lens of the entirety of the university community. Overview of Process:

i. Programs are reviewed on a 7-year cycle and in some cases, external accreditations are accepted in lieu of internal reviews.

ii. New program or degree proposals must be approved by the BOT. Revisions and reviews are approved by the AcA and Provost.

iii. Review/Revision documents have been posted on the AcA Canvas page for membership review.

iv. Reviews are routinely initiated by the Deans and are also verified by an external reviewer who is usually an expert in the relevant discipline.

v. Documentation contains a brief history of the program, challenges to the program and recommendations to the program leadership.

vi. This memo is then affirmed or re-written by the AcA. Once affirmed it moves to the Provost for either affirmation or further review.

vii. The PRC also takes a second look at changes and recommendations that were conditionally approved in past cycles.

b. **Motion:** Move to wave the one-week rule. Seconded: **VOTE:** APPROVE: 17, OPPOSED: 0, ABSTENTIONS: 1

i. **Motion is passed** – One-week rule is waived.

c. PRC Memos for Consideration:

        i.   Communication Program Review

        ii.   Theaters Program Review

        iii.   Masters Professional Accounting (MPAC) Revision

        iv.   Masters Non-Profit Leadership (MNPL) Review

        v.   Women and Gender Studies (WGST) Review

  d. **Questions/Discussion:**

        i.   The Academic Affairs Committee of the BOT has noted a lack of a consistent process for evaluation of financial implications of program revisions/creations. When the academic portfolio review is conducted, a consistent methodology for consideration of the financial implications of any revisions will need to be in place. Faculty will need to have a close look at their budgets and factor in the growth and aspirations of programs.

        ii.   Past practice has been to encourage faculty to write program reviews/creations/revisions with a heavy emphasis on advocating for more resources. This has proven to be an unhelpful framing for faculty writing these reviews, especially during a period when resources are being reexamined and reallocated.

        iii.   What is the required standard number of majors for a program to be considered viable? Does it differ based upon the department/discipline? Some disciplines are often taken as a minor, do those student populations count? There are no standard benchmarks within colleges to quantify this measurement.

  e. **Motion:** Move to table the 5 PRC memos until next meeting of the AcA. Seconded: **VOTE:** APPROVE: 10, OPPOSED: 2, ABSTENTIONS: 1.

        i.   **Motion is passed –** PRC Memos will be re-visited at the next AcA meeting after further review.

VI. **Semester Consideration Process Update**   **3:00 – 3:34**

(NOTE: Time was set aside for non-AcA members to speak at the end of the discussion)

  a. The Provost would like work on this issue to start immediately. The Provost would like to hear the AcA's input on the process. This issue should be based on serious professional study and should be data and research driven. Key areas of impact will include retention, student learning, recruitment, faculty workload etc. This decision will impact every area of the University. The culmination of this work will result in a staff referendum and a faculty referendum. Any recommendation made to the President and the BOT would have to come with strong faculty and staff support.

  b. *There is concern that, given the expediency of the current timeline, the work could not be finished in time, and therefore a well-informed decision could not be made. How much of this work will rely on faculty labor? How much of this work would be unpaid? Would this work be conducted throughout the summer to achieve a good level of comprehensibility? Would summer work for faculty be compensated? When, for how long and how often would the taskforce meet? Why is the deadline so soon, and why does this issue have to be considered first?*

  c. Based upon the scope, depth and complexity of the question and how the landscape has potentially changed since the last time this issue was considered; the current deadline seems unrealistic. The taskforce would need resources, admin support, research support, flexibility etc.

  d. *How would this change to the academic calendar impact families with children?*

e. The Strategic Planning Committee felt that movement on all the other action items in the Strategic Directions document, hinged upon this decision. Progress on other items would be stymied if this decision was not made first. The taskforce would have to include representatives who could speak to the changes this would cause in the technological infrastructure of the University. Would the infrastructure withstand and assist this transition?

f. This decision will affect the research being done on workload, definitions of splits and equivalency questions. There has also been movement to revamp the entirety of the university core curriculum. How will this semester decision influence that work? There is concern that part-time/full-time non-tenured track (NTT) faculty positions would be sacrificed in the shift.

g. Would this taskforce report to the Strategic Planning council? They would report to the Strategic Planning Council, but this taskforce will be a joint effort between the AcA and the Provost's Council.

h. *What amount of faculty labor would it take to revise every single class in the curriculum?* Review of the entire University curriculum and the move to semesters seems like an overambitious entangling of two huge tasks. There is an overwhelming amount of work to be done on both fronts. *Would the work overload faculty? Would detailed, content level work on the curriculum be sacrificed to the logistical problem of the semester shift?*

i. It was the call of the Strategic Planning Committee, that any decision made on this issue must be accompanied by a detailed and specific proposal for the implementation of the change. There would be no shift without specific directions and a detailed proposal.

j. *Research would have to be done to ascertain hard numbers and data. E.G. Does the University even have the classroom space for this change?*

k. Point to be considered: class contact minutes for semesters would likely remain similar to that of quarters. If the class contact minutes stay the same, would this shift cause such a huge amount of work?

l. *What would the emotional impact of this change and all the work in support of this change, have on the SU community?* The current climate and morale must be taken into consideration. *How is this going to impact the daily lives and labor of the faculty, staff and students?* The lifestyle and work/life balance implications of this change should also be considered by the task force.

m. The taskforce should also focus on student learning, student retention and the implications for minority and marginalized communities of students. The quarter system currently impacts minority students. Some negative impacts will happen despite best intentions.

n. The taskforce should examine how other schools navigated this change, their process and the impact it had upon their communities.

o. Previous experiences of faculty with this change at other institutions have been difficult. The decision was made at the executive level with very little planning and caused tumultuous situations for the following years. There is an entire host of idiosyncratic factors to be considered. A structured, detailed plan will be paramount to minimizing any negative impacts. Processes will have to put in place to ensure that the data isn't viewed from a narrow window. October deadline seems like an unrealistic prospect given all the factors that must be ascertained and considered.

p. The tone of the discussion to this point has made this question seem like a done deal. Given all the data that has to be considered and all the different disciplines that must be represented, the committee membership must have representatives from as many of these areas as possible. *What is the percentage of local schools on the quarter system? How did all the other action items of the Strategic Directions Document become contingent upon this question?*

q. The ConC (Committee on Committees) will send an open call for faculty volunteers and will then make recommendations on committee membership to the AcA for confirmation. The Provost's office will send the ConC more details about committee service.

r. The taskforce will consist of 12 members: 1 from each college (8 members), an NTT faculty representative, a representative from university core dept., a graduate and an undergraduate education representative. Nominees will be asked to write a 100-150-word statement.

s. SGSU: The "Current State of the Undergrad Survey" is currently being conducted and this issue is being surveyed. Data from the survey will be available in two months.

t. Enormity of process has been recognized. The question of flexibility of the deadline will be explored with the relevant parties.

VII. **Financial Repositioning (Questions & Discussion)**

a. There is concern within the CAS (College of Arts and Sciences) that the deadline for impending cuts and budget changes are in two weeks and there has been little, to no discussion before the deadlines.

b. The financial repositioning appears to be happening rather quickly in comparison to the timeline and process outlined by the Strategic Directions Document.
   i. **The AcA moves to hold an additional meeting on Monday Feb. 3rd, 2020 to address questions surrounding the financial repositioning of the University.**

VIII. **AcA Internal Project on Evaluation & Workload Benchmarking** **3:34 – 3:35**

a. Workload: AcA President will send out templates of typical, faculty weekly hours for AcA membership to consider for later discussion on workload.

b. Student Evaluation: AcA membership will review sample questionnaires for later discussion.