

10-28-2009

Minutes, Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee Meeting, Wednesday, October 28, 2009

Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee

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Minutes approved at the 11/4 meeting

AAC Minutes – October 28, 2009

In attendance: Jim Small (Chair), Alex Boguslawski, Wendy Brandon, Chris Fuse, Laurie Joyner, Barry Levis, Tocarra Mallard, Sebastian Novak, Dawn Roe, Don Rogers, Steven St. John (Secretary), Lito Valdivia

The meeting was called to order at 7:36 a.m.

Minutes. The minutes of the 10/28 meeting were unanimously approved pending one addition (AAC's support for the Dean's Office decision to continue not to list no-credit courses on the official transcript) and one minor change.

Old Business.

Blended Learning

Jim suggested that both he and Laurie update AAC on the status of Information Technology's Blended Learning Initiative, which AAC had learned of and discussed for the first time the previous meeting. Laurie iterated that she had heard of the Blended Learning Initiative at the same time as the rest of the faculty. After the previous AAC meeting, Laurie asked to meet with Provost Casey, and she joined a meeting that included Roger Casey, Holt School Dean Jim Eck, and Chief Information Officer Pat Schoknecht. Laurie clarified in that meeting that AAC's concern, and what she believed was the interest of other concerned faculty, was not so much the concept of blended learning, but that the Blended Learning Initiative had not involved the normal governance process. Pat indicated in that meeting that she had wanted Crummer faculty to be able to access the Blended Learning grants, but Laurie pointed out that the Blended Learning Initiative was essentially centered on the Holt School and as such should go through PSC. Laurie reported that in that meeting, Roger, Pat, and Jim expressed agreement with this conclusion.

Barry stated that while he was concerned that the Blended Learning Initiative should go through the governance process, he also had concerns about blended learning itself. He said that he would not want to see Rollins College's Holt School become a "University of Phoenix" and expressed a concern that the Provost might favor this. He noted that such a shift from a local to national orientation would run counter to Holt's mission statement.

Laurie reiterated her belief that the A&S faculty must be involved in any re-envisioning of the Holt School's mission. She felt that any initiative (such as this one) that came from outside the governance process could lead the faculty away from its own stated goals. She did note that A&S must understand and be aware of the external pressures currently facing the College (i.e., the economy).

Don noted that A&S and Holt have become detached from one another in large part due to A&S's disinterest in Holt (i.e., through AAC). Jim stated "we're paying for that now and we're trying to correct it." Don felt that the Blended Learning Initiative was a direct result of the Kaludis Consulting Report, and that this would represent a fundamental change in delivery systems. Barry felt that both the initiative and the consulting report happened in the context of worries last spring that Holt would not make its enrollment targets, but in fact Holt has since met and exceeded those targets.

Laurie, in response to Don's comment of Blended Learning representing "a fundamental shift", said that she believed that Roger, Pat, and Jim would disagree with that analysis. Laurie's understanding of their perspective was that faculty are already experimenting all the time with incorporating novel technology and teaching methods, and that blended learning falls within this range of classroom variation.

Steve asked Laurie whether the Blended Learning Initiative was still active or if it had been withdrawn. Laurie responded that Roger, Jim, and Pat were hoping to fund course development for this summer and were concerned if PSC would be able to take it up in time. She suggested that AAC invite Jim and Pat to hear directly from them.

Wendy asked if the term "pilot" had been used and Laurie confirmed that language was in Ed Huffman's email attachment (hereafter, the RFP). Wendy said that any pilot must go to the entire faculty. Laurie asked the committee to read through the RFP carefully so that AAC might direct specific questions or suggestions to Jim and Pat. Jim stated he would make the RFP available on AAC's Blackboard site. Chris noted that there should be no delay. Wendy suggested that the issue should go on Executive Committee's agenda so that EC could stop the RFP (to be "reset" through the governance process). Laurie expressed her belief that the committee that prepared the RFP now intended to send all proposals to PSC, although Laurie noted ironically that she was still not clear on who this review committee was, who appointed the committee, and what was their charge.

New Business.

2010-2011 Academic Calendar

Jim introduced the issue of the 2010-2011 Academic Calendar and noted that among the issues surrounding it were to what extent it could be made to line up with both Seminole County and Orange County Schools calendars (which were unfortunately different from one another), and a concern that days off should be balanced across the days of the week (unlike a couple of years ago when both Fall Break and Thanksgiving Break involved Thursday and Friday). The draft of the calendar from the Dean's Office this year had Fall Break on a Monday and Tuesday and good balance across the days of the week.

Laurie noted that there were a couple of uncertainties on the calendar. The first was a possible change to when new students would report, that they might report two days later this year than previously. Lito noted that this would make it hard for first years to get to know each

other. Laurie stated that she believed the change was based on student feedback and staff shortages. Wendy noted that this was not really germane to the academic calendar, and the rest of the committee agreed.

The second issue Laurie noted was that November 4, 2010 was Founder's Day, the 125th anniversary of the founding of Rollins College. A year's worth of campus and community events celebrating Rollins history was set to culminate on that Thursday and the following three days. In particular, it has been proposed that classes be cancelled on that Thursday to support a day of campus celebrations.

Jim and Chris argued that canceling even one day had a disproportionate effect on biology, chemistry, and physics, where some courses have multiple lab sections throughout the week. Losing a weekday means losing the entire week, since the lab sections must stay in sync with the lecture portion of the class as well as with the other lab sections that meet on different days. In some cases where there are no Friday labs, having the day off on Friday would be less burdensome. Alex noted that whichever day is cancelled affects somebody and that many classes meet on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Don noted that this is a once in 125 year event. Tocarra wondered if the events could be moved to the evening, and Wendy recalled that the 100 year anniversary events were all at night. Laurie noted that daytime events were in part being proposed to make community involvement easier; one of the goals of the celebration is to highlight Rollins College to the local community.

Jim felt that we should have more information about this before deciding on the calendar, and Sebastian noted that there was a power point available detailing some of the plans that were in place.

Wendy moved to accept the draft of the calendar as proposed. The motion was seconded. The committee voted 9-2 in favor of the calendar, with Jim and Barry against and with Annie not present.

Maymester

Laurie reviewed a detailed timeline of the decision making process that led to the Maymester term in May, 2009. In brief, that timeline included:

2/22/2007 – A survey reveals that 87% of responding A&S students desired an expanded Holt summer term and 92% of those in favor sought general education courses

2/23/2007 – Laurie (then incoming Dean, not yet in office) asked Deb Wellman by email why Holt, rather than A&S, would oversee this summer term; Deb's response was that A&S had never had a summer term

10/30/2007 – A task force was created to study the possibility of expanded summer course offerings

11/2008 – Laurie attended an ACS meeting and collected information on summer tuitions at similar schools

2/27/2009 – The first suggestion of an abbreviated May term in A&S is suggested among the ACS Provost and Deans meetings

Academic Affairs Committee: Minutes of the 10/28 meeting

3/23/2009 – An email invites students to take a Zoomerang survey to gauge student interest; 113/152 respondents express interest with P, V, C, and A courses most requested

3/26/2009 – Roger calls a meeting of Dean's Office staff, housing staff, and food service determines for the first time that a May term can be supported

3/27/2009 – an email goes out to all faculty and students indicating that a May term is being considered depending on student demand; a later email goes to parents (3/31); feedback to Dean's office from parents, students, and faculty is uniformly positive. Laurie stresses that this email went to faculty the very day after the meeting with the Provost in which Maymester was, for the first time, seen as possibly doable.

4/2/2009 – Maymester discussed in AAC and the minutes reveal again uniformly positive response from AAC.

After detailing the timeline, Laurie noted two other points. First, that no favoritism was shown in terms of course offerings. Laurie asked the registrar for a list of courses with the most pent-up demand. That list was sorted from most-demanding to least, and faculty were contacted in that order about whether they could offer a May course. Second, Laurie noted that faculty pay for those courses was in line with pay for intersession courses, in which faculty are paid up to \$4000 for a one-week course if the faculty teach a double-section in terms of enrollment, and directorships of International Programs, where pay ranges from \$2000 – 5000, again based on enrollment. Laurie noted that faculty pay was, generally speaking, a non-uniform and perhaps non-optimal process, and one that deserved attention, but that it was by no means an issue specifically tied up with Maymester pay.

Time precluded further discussion of Maymester. Laurie said that she was looking forward to sharing with AAC other details such as revenue generated and student and faculty evaluations.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 am.