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Minutes, Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee Meeting, Thursday, February 26, 2009

Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee

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AAC Minutes (Feb. 26, 09)

In attendance: Wendy Brandon, Debra Wellman, Jim Small, Steve St. John, Susan Lackman, Scott Rubarth, Jennifer Cavenaugh, Yusheng Yao, Alex Winfree, Kory Eylmann

Minutes of Feb. 17 were passed.

Diversity Committee members (K.Norsworthy, M Hawks, M. Rafiuddin, C Strom) were present for discussion regarding Diversity Comm Initiatives and Faculty Governance Structure. Wendy first briefed Diversity Committee members about the background of this meeting: the issue of diversity was raised during AAC's conversation with the Provost last fall regarding re-visioning of the Holt in connection with the overall development of the college. The specific question that AAC would like to hear from Diversity Committee is: how to institutionalize diversity concerns and issues into the governing structure. These issues include diversity initiatives, recruiting policy and activities, relations of Diversity Committee to A&S, Holt and Crummer and transparency of the process. After Wendy, Kathryn briefed AAC members about the background the committee: Rita Bornstein, former president, convened a diversity task force among A&S faculty. The task force made recommendations to form a committee with college-wide representation including faculty and students to advocate and deal with diversity issues. Lisa Tillmann and I (Kathryn) were the first co-chairs. The committee has been proactive in advocating as well as dealing with the diversity issues. Last year, the Common Vision, a faculty advocate group for diversity, came to ask Diversity Committee to take on issues of recruitment and retention for faculty of color. Deans and Provosts are co-sponsors of the project in developing a system for that purpose. Diversity Committee made requests through Executive Committee and AAC for diversity issues.

M. Rafiuddin, new director for Multicultural Affairs, shared her experience about diversity affairs at Rollins. She considered Rollins committed to diversity and personally received help from Diversity Committee to understand "equity issue" among students and faculty. She has brought her experience to bear on institutional barriers for minority students' recruitment. She made proposal to the Director for admission in training the recruitment officers in the summer on issues of recruitment and financial aid. She also received the same commitment from Holt.

In addressing the issue of relationship between Diversity Committee and A&S governance, Kathryn talked about committee's effort to include Human Resources and Finance and Services in putting gender identity (?) in an anti-discrimination clause in the college policy.

Wendy asked how to clarify the governance links and process so that committees can work together on diversity issues and to sustain diversity work? One barrier she found was that people who did this kind of work did not necessarily get the credit. This was particularly a constraint for junior faculty members. The next issue was to sustain the

diversity initiatives through committees and institutions such as AAC, PSC, Executive Committee, Human resources and beyond.

M Hawks, director of Human Resources, said that diversity could sustain itself through collaboration, perhaps through subcommittees under the committees. We (HR) had a staff about 450, half of which did not work in academic areas. Our scope was broad and we were sensitive from project to project to consult key groups. We need to formalize these practices. Kathryn: Sustainability is an issue. Diversity Committee has informal liaison persons (Scott is for AAC, for example). But we need to formalize that. In this way we can use the power of those committees, whose members are elected. Clair Strom: One format is to identify a member from Diversity Committee to receive agenda [on diversity issues] from committees like AAC and PSC and send our agenda to those committees. Wendy: we should bring voices on the table. Kathryn: put everything related to diversity on the radar screen. Susan expressed her concern about the necessary training on diversity for those serving in the search committee for recruitment including Dean of admission's response to a diversified student body. PSC needs to be involved to develop strategies to evaluate administrators on how they handle the diversity issue. Kathryn: We need to find some way to formalize, to designate liaison persons to Diversity Committee and that may require a bylaw change. Wendy suggested a collaborative next step for AAC and Diversity Committee: Diversity Committee will make a proposal on diversity issues and AAC will discuss them and give feedback to Diversity Committee. AAC, according to bylaws, represents more than A&S but the whole college. On diversity issues interface between the three schools are important. Scott accepted the invitation to work together with Diversity Committee on this project to be completed before the end of this semester.

Discussion about the new course proposal form. Steve explained to members about the new course proposal form, which can be completed in 4 minutes. There was no significant change in the new form. Toni Holbrook was involved in the process and liked the new form and as did members. Wendy will report to the Executive Committee about the change. The suggested changes included the addition of a protocol of checks and instructions for users on necessary procedures in completing the form. Steve also discussed his ideas on how to improve the website of AAC and other committees. He suggested five pages on such a site: 1. Mission statement for the committee; 2. membership and subcommittees; 3. Minutes with highlights on major decisions for each meeting; 4. Forms and procedures; 5. Frequent asked questions with links. Such a site would have no drawback except for a little update work periodically. Wendy said we needed similar forms for major/minor, catalogue copy.

Discussion on reduction of graduation hours. Wendy attached two articles and Susan sent another article for members to read and asked for feedback, which would be put into an AAC proposal to be discussed in the colloquia on the transformation of the curricula planned on March 27. Don Davison would like the proposal presented at the next faculty meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.