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Minutes, Arts and Sciences Academic Affairs Committee Meeting, Tuesday, October 18, 2011

Arts and Sciences Academic Affairs Committee

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Academic Affairs Committee

Meeting Minutes
October 18, 2011

Opening:

The regular meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee was called to order at 12:33 pm on October 18, 2011 in the Chapel-Room Classroom #1 by Gloria Cook.

Present:

Mark Anderson, Sara Bishop, Gloria Cook, Nancy Decker, Jana Matthews, Sebastian Novak, Maria Ruiz, Samuel Sanabria, Wenxian Zhang

Visitors:

Giselda Beaudin, Director of International Programs
Jennifer Cavanaugh, Associate Dean of Arts & Sciences
Robert Smither, Interim Dean of the Faculty

A. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved as distributed.

B. Review of Agenda

C. New Business (3 items)

(Item 1) Field Study Programs Leader Eligibility Requirements

Giselda Beaudin is in the process of developing eligibility guidelines for those interested in leading field trips for Rollins College. Field trips are usually between six days and two weeks. Typically credit is involved, unless it is a service trip or immersion experience.

The need for a more defined policy arose out of recent request issues with long-time, short-time and a WPI visiting faculty member. International Programs wants to put in writing the criteria necessary then share these policies on the website and with those interested in leading a field trip prior to their filling out the proposal paperwork.

Deb Wellman reviewed the first draft and gave some initial input. Tenured faculty are automatically eligible. Non-tenured faculty must go through a consideration process. Giselda Beaudin had a more specific vision of set policies and Deb Wellman wanted to examine the candidates on a more case-by-case basis.

There are many categories of faculty who lead the trips. There are lecturers and adjunct instructors who have had a long-term relationship with the College such as Lecturer Leslie Boles who co-leads the London field-study each Winter intercession and adjunct Professor Jim Hulbert who has led Stream Ecology field-study in the Spring term for many years. Then there have been successful partnerships in which a staff member is partnered with a faculty member as a co-leader for the field study; an example would be Gabe Anderson co-leading with Dr. Dan Chong on the Thailand field study.

International Programs strives to balance the needs of the different departments. The current eligibility requirements as listed are vague and Giselda does not feel comfortable with them. Twenty proposals were submitted for the current Winter Intercession and sixteen were green lighted. Eight participants is the usual cut-off for a trip to qualify. Trips that did not make the required participation for the last two years were not offered again.

It has been beneficial to have staff members' presence on field study trips for the supplementary support, which translates, to a reduced potential risk against the college with the presence of additional leadership. This type of partnering is cost effective as well, because staff members do not expect to be compensated for their time on the trip. They are usually satisfied just to have their trip costs covered, whereas faculty often do expect compensation for their time involved. Staff members are chosen for the trip by faculty because these staff members have strong administrative and social skills to complement the faculty member's course plan. Many of these staff/ faculty partnerships have occurred with field studies in the service category.

Giselda reviews the submitted field study proposals, and then the proposals are routed through the three Deans for their evaluation and approval. Giselda was hoping the initial proposal process would weed out any unsuitable prospects. But there is a need for some type of set eligibility criteria.

One item Deb added to the list of considerations for potential faculty/ staff trip leaders was the "record of professionalism." As it reads now, this element could be perceived in a number of ways. It was also suggested that the verbiage refers to private personnel information that is not public knowledge to the various decision-making committees at the College.

If we have a faculty member who is struggling with something such as an alcohol problem, does the responsibility of saying no come from the Department Chair? The Department Chair, even for the no-credit courses, signs Field study proposal forms. There are risk management issues here. There is also a potential misperception and sensitivity of "record of professionalism." There is a vagueness of who will say no. Is it the Chairs, the Dean?

There is a need for consistency of presence with regards to faculty's presence here at Rollins prior to the field study experience and after the field study experience. A short-term or visiting faculty member could partner with someone else such as a full-time staff member or faculty member

It was suggested that the following statements be considered for addition to the current list of consideration conditions:

- ~ Review of teaching evaluations or performance evaluations at Rollins
- ~ Document problems with students at Rollins in the past or prior field study programs led by the individual

Any unfavorable issues with regard to classes are received and filed with the Dean's office. Consequently any negative issues with regards to field study budgets or clerical items are received and filed by the International Programs office. Therefore, both offices would need to weigh in on consideration of potential field trip leaders and both have information that the other is not privy to.

Gloria suggested that the committee rough out our recommendations for this policy and forward those to Giselda for review and re-tooling and then the AAC will re-visit the issue again.

(Item 2) Education Catalogue Change

Approval was requested for a change in the Education Program regarding a required enrollment in equivalent in a college math course and a US History course as addition to the first year/second year core curriculum requirements mandated by the State of Florida. Discussion ensued of utilizing Gen Eds already in place and/or any Q course. Ultimately, it is an advising issue and candidates for this teaching program must work with their advisor. Students will generally fulfill these new requirements through the Gen Ed requirements. After a brief discussion, it was determined that this is actually a CPS committee issue and it will be transferred to their authority.

(Item 3) Grading of Peer Mentors

The issue was raised as to whether peer mentors for the RCC classes should be graded by the Explorations Staff, which is overseen by the Dean of the Faculty, by the professor who's class they are peer mentoring in, or by the head of RCC. Currently, both the Exploration Staff and the professor who's class the peer mentor is working in submit grades to the head of RCC, who then "averages" the two grades. Since peer mentors earn 6 credit hours for their work, it seems that non-faculty control 3 credit-hours of their grade, violating the recent legislation passed by the faculty, limiting the number of hours in a graded class that could be offered by non-faculty to 1 hour.

Perhaps the community of faculty needs to be educated as to the scope of the work and responsibility that peer mentors take on outside of the classroom component. We should share with the community the full scope of what peer mentors do in addition to attending class.

A suggestion was made for the staff members and the RCC faculty to complete a rubric to rate the mentors on specific aspects of their work, rather than giving an overall grade. Then the RCC director could review the rubric scores and factor it into his/her grade. Perhaps we come up with five areas of strength in a rubrics that would be easy to compile at the end of the assessment period.

This issue might have to come up for a general faculty meeting. It was acknowledged that there is a turnover rate in Explorations. We could take a recommendation from Explorations regarding the work outside the scope of the classroom. Should this go to the general faculty? We have to come up with a recommendation. Maybe we should bring Mario in? It is apparent that we need better integration and communication between the two houses. Do we bring in Megan Harte, Gabe Anderson and Jerrid Kalakay in to meet with us? Multiple options and considerations on this issue. No resolution, we will continue the discussion in the future.

D. Agenda Topics for Future Meetings

October 25, 2011

- Toni Holbrook
 - Banner Issues
 - General Education Form

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 1:58 pm by Gloria Cook. The next general meeting will be at 12:30 pm on October 25 in Chapel-Room Classroom #2.

Minutes submitted by:

Mark Anderson

Approved by:
