MINUTES
Academic Senate
February 24, 2015
3:30 p.m.
Alumni Gallery

Members present: Paul Delaney (Professor of English), Mary Docter (Professor of Modern Languages), Michelle Hardley (Secretary - Registrar), Tori Ippolito (WCSA Student Rep), Paul Morgan (Professor of Economics and Business), Tatiana Nazarenko (Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness), Edd Noell (Professor of Economics and Business), Mark Sargent (Chair and Provost), Brenda Smith (Professor of Psychology), Jim Taylor (Professor of Philosophy), Niva Tro (Professor of Chemistry), David Vander Laan (Professor of Philosophy)

Absent:

Others present: Bill Wright (Associate Provost), Cynthia Toms (Director of Global Education)

I. Devotion – Cynthia Toms

II. The minutes from January 27, 2015 were approved

III. Discussion on Divisional Membership
Faculty Council asked Senate to consider possible solutions to the imbalance in divisional representation between the Natural and Behavioral Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences. This imbalance becomes an issue when considering committee assignments where divisional representation is required and when considering faculty to receive teaching awards in each division. There are currently fewer faculty in the Social Science division.

Senators discussed the 4 possible options given by Faculty Council. Option three was the one Senators liked best. This option makes it easier for Faculty Council to make committee assignments in difficult years by allowing them to consider the educational background and sensitivities of each faculty member when making assignments versus being tied to the division their department resides in.

Senators liked the option that gave the flexibility (which would require a suspension of the handbook in any year it is used) but did not like the proposed variation (where a permanent change would be made to the divisional representation which would require a permanent handbook change)

IV. Continued Discussion on Faculty Load Proposals
Mark presented some initial thinking on actions we could take to have a more equitable distribution of faculty workloads based on our previous conversation. He invited Senator feedback on each of these items.
**Academic Advising** - Senators discussed the ideas proposed for the Academic Advising area. The suggested proposal to have 4-8 co-curricular staff and faculty with lower advising loads to work with the undecided students was met with approval by Senators. In the future the idea could go further. We could consider having the entire first year class with generalist advisors, both faculty and co-curricular.

**First Year Experience** – To enhance the experience of First Year Students it was suggested that we could focus some attention on the departments that are teaching courses typically taken in the first year. The goal would be to open a dialog amongst those departments to ensure that, as a whole, students are exposed to a variety of skills and teaching techniques (high impact learning). We can also begin thinking about how we teach our bigger courses. Students want to feel like they are contributing to the class and that their presence matters, which might be hard to achieve in a bigger course where their absence might go unnoticed.

Mark will be giving a bit more thought to this. In a future meeting he will come back to Senate with some language for consideration. Once refined, that language could be brought to the departments impacted for further discussion.

**Small Class Sizes** – Mark would like to develop some general policies surrounding the review of courses that have low enrollments. He wants to avoid the idea that course enrollments are either never reviewed, or that if a class has a small enrollment that it will automatically be cancelled.

Mark would prefer to begin a period of time where we review the courses offered. If a course has low enrollment, the department chair would come to Provost’s office early and proactively with either a rationale for why the course should be kept or a plan for what would happen if the course is cancelled. The idea is to go through this cycle every 4-5 years to make sure we are not carrying classes that have historically low enrollment.

In addition, Mark would like to also look at tracks within majors that are underutilized. The purpose would be to determine if there are courses specific to the track that have to be offered in a regular rotation to support the track even though there is low demand for the track. This scenario creates a course load burden on a faculty member that might not be needed.

Senate agreed to the proposal as worded. This is the expectation that will be presented to the department chairs. There was some discussion on setting the enrollment limit at 5 versus the proposed 6. Mark agreed that 6 is not a hard and fast number (i.e. if you have only 5 students your course is cancelled) but preferred 6 as the limit which would give him a place to begin the discussion.

**V. 
Degree Qualification Profile Criteria**
This topic will be discussed in a future meeting.
Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Hardley
Registrar