

## Curricular Affairs Committee

### Draft Meeting Minutes for Monday, October 17, 2016

1-2 pm, eLearning Conference Room

Members Present: Ken Abramowicz; Sine Anahita (FAC guest); Casey Byrne; Jennie Carroll, Chair; Mike Earnest; Alex Fitts; Claire Gelvin-Smith; Cindy Hardy; Eileen Harney; Jayne Harvie; Kate Quick; Rainer Newberry; Caty Oehring; Bobbi Jenson for Ginny Kinne.

Members Absent: Ana Aguilar-Islas; Lisa Lunn; Bradley Moran; Dejan Raskovic.

#### 1. Approval/Amendment of Agenda

The agenda was amended to remove new business 4.a. since Jennie hadn't heard back yet from Laura McCollough.

Sine Anahita was introduced. She had brought notes from the Faculty Affairs Committee's discussion about the program deletion / suspension policy to share with CAC.

#### 2. Approval of Minutes

##### a. Draft Minutes 10/03/16

The minutes for October 3 were not approved as a quorum was not present to approve them at the start of the meeting. (Quorum was reached later, however.)

#### 3. Old Business

##### a. Program deletion and suspension policy

##### i. Faculty Senate Discussion

The Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) had concerns about the discussion that occurred at the last Faculty Senate meeting. Sine shared those concerns with CAC. (Attached: FAC Comments of 10/12/2016)

FAC's objectives were to reinvigorate shared governance; increase transparency in the process; and involve faculty more directly in the process as early as possible, particularly in affected programs. The current situation with Strategic Pathways and budget cuts makes more program cuts likely. They wanted to think of efficient ways to involve faculty in the process where programs are facing the threat of extinction or suspension, but they don't want to gum up the normal program review process.

The current process is very static and does not include an opportunity for faculty in affected programs to suggest alternatives or come up with meaningful ways to avoid being cut. For the Sociology review this year, she invented a fourth section and followed a Strategic Pathways model of providing options for pros and cons.

In true shared governance, the faculty review committee would be selected by the faculty and not by administration. They discussed ideas for making that possible. They would also like to see program review meetings be held as open meetings rather than closed. Also, the committee votes should be open.

Sine also shared some of her own ideas, which included having a Faculty Senate representative from the affected area be involved in the reviews. For example, the social sciences representative to Faculty Senate would be involved in the Sociology program review.

She also suggested that the administrative review committee for program reviews include the department chair or a senior faculty member from the department. This would be more efficient when questions arise or the committee is working with inaccurate information.

There are not enough options for decisions included in the current process. The only three that are included are to continue the program, or to continue the program with an action plan, or to discontinue the program. Another option would be to provide time for the department to put forth proactive changes such as providing ideas for a new structure. Currently, if a program is suspended, there is not a means to unsuspend it rather than discontinue it. An appeals process was another possibility mentioned, along with the idea that an appeal would start the special review process, thus linking the two processes. Academic program reviews are on a different cycle than special program reviews right now. The two processes occur independently. Regular academic program reviews occur every five years.

General concerns were shared about the suspension of the Sociology program and what the resulting lack of student knowledge in this area means for other disciplines and students' overall education. Having the means to put forth alternatives to program suspension is important. It needs to be added to the formal process.

The committee decided to form an ad hoc committee to look at ways to make changes to the process that would allow for more faculty involvement and provide the ability to put forth proactive alternatives to discontinuing programs, thus preserving for the university a diversity of ways of thought, to provide a complete education in the best interests of students.

Sine described the model she's been working on for an Integrated Social Sciences program or department. It would contain the marginalized programs like Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies; Philosophy; Sociology; Economics; Geography; part of Natural Resource Management (the cultural geographers) and perhaps Political Science, for example. Each program could then offer the degrees for which it has faculty resources. All Sociology could offer would be GER courses and a minor; but others could still offer baccalaureate degrees. An interdisciplinary degree could be offered, as well.

Bobbi J. commented on the marketability of these types of degrees. Sine noted that UAS offers an integrated social sciences degree, as do other universities who are also dealing with program reductions.

Cindy H. noted that broadening the GERs buckets means students may not have background in certain areas. She asked if combining many departments into one would limit what they could offer as courses in the buckets. Jennie noted it still needs further discussion, but the different approaches to knowledge need to be preserved. She'd like to see the course subject designators preserved for individual areas of studies.

Rainer noted the two issues being discussed (program review and special program review for which changes in process need to get through the FS sooner rather than later), and what can be done with impacted programs. Alex commented that special program review is currently underway, and regular program review will begin in December. She hopes the process wouldn't change in mid-process. It was pointed out, though, that the changes discussed so far mainly impact the end part of the process.

Any more immediate changes would be accomplished via a motion that the chancellor would approve or disapprove. Sine suggested the motion include item d. that was included in the FAC comments:

**d. If the program is already under suspension or is threatened with immediate suspension, the program faculty will be given the opportunity to suggest alternatives, e.g. curriculum changes, restructuring, new models of collaboration, etc. [connect with Strategic Pathways]**

Ken commented that in this time of contracting budgets, the administration must do something, but they are looking at the programs in isolation. Our process doesn't facilitate those tough decisions that have to be made. He'd like to have the process include ways faculty can help administration understand at a macro level the effects of the vertical cuts they take. Faculty are responsible for program integrity; while administration has to deal with the budget. They should be working hand in hand with the Chancellor's Cabinet in the process. Jennie responded that these are the aims of the ad hoc committee they proposed, but the immediate changes to the program review process still need to be addressed.

Sine noted one step they could take would be, at the first step of the process concerning the faculty review committee, to make the meetings open and representative of faculty (e.g., appointed by Senate, or elected at the college level, so that it is a transparent process). Alex said the committee is set for this year, but perhaps that change could be made for future years. For a more immediate change, Sine suggested the addition of item d. (copied above) to the process.

The suggestion was made to change the name "special" academic program review to "early" instead.

Jennie reminded the committee about their initial reason for bringing the discussion to the senate: which was to clarify what was perceived as an erroneous view that Faculty Senate had more say than it did in terms of program deletions. Ken argued for the view that the language gave Faculty Senate the power to stop a program deletion, though the chancellor still had the power to suspend enrollment to that program. He would like Faculty Senate to have more of an active role in the whole process of

program review, especially with respect to the vertical cuts being made. Time constraints cut the discussion short at this point.

4. New Business

- a. Student Code of Conduct (Invitation extended to Laura McCollough, Dean of Students, not confirmed) – POSTPONED for a future meeting'

Jennie was not able to get in contact with Laura McCollough, so this item was postponed for a future meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM.

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**Attachment** from the Sina A. and the Faculty Affairs Committee:

**FAC 10-12-16 comments on proposed revisions to program review process**

summarized by Sine Anahita sine.anahita@alaska.edu

Objectives: reinvigorate shared governance; increase transparency of the process; increase faculty involvement in the process

- while in the past, most program reviews have gone smoothly with few programs discontinued, with Strategic Pathways and budget cuts, more programs will be threatened with forced mergers, discontinuation, program reduction
- need to find a way to identify programs that may be threatened early in the process so that program faculty can be involved in discussions
- while the Provost made the valuable comment that program faculty are able to be heard through the original program review document, the form is static and does not provide a real opportunity for program faculty to discuss possible alternatives, new collaborations, etc.
- Direct faculty involvement:
  - faculty review committee members selected by faculty, not deans (could be done by Faculty Senate appointment, and/or elected from each college)
  - faculty review committee meetings be open
  - faculty review committee meetings allow program faculty to be present, to answer questions, and to participate in the discussion
  - faculty review committee votes be open
- Other suggestions made by Sine Anahita were not fully discussed and agreed upon, so consider the following with that in mind:
  - Faculty Senate area representative should be involved at some level, e.g. Social Sciences Representative present at faculty review committee; might apply only to threatened programs; alternately, Faculty Senate could appoint a member to serve on the faculty review committee

- at the administrative review committee, the department chair and/or a senior member of the department should be present; again, might apply only to threatened programs
- currently, there are not enough options to consider, e.g. if a program is already suspended; suggest the following addition to Section 3, “The Provost in consultation with the Chancellor’s Cabinet...”

**d. If the program is already under suspension or is threatened with immediate suspension, the program faculty will be given the opportunity to suggest alternatives, e.g. curriculum changes, restructuring, new models of collaboration, etc. [connect with Strategic Pathways]**