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Faculty Senate Executive Committee Meeting

Minutes #10

September 27, 2013

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:00AM on September 27, 2013 in the Dorothy Vocino Conference Room in the URI Library, Chairperson Byrd presiding. Senators Brady, Cerbo, and Rice were present. Senators Davis and Nassersharif were absent.

2. Minutes of FSEC Meetings #7, Sept. 13, #8 Sept. 16, and #9, Sept. 20 were approved as amended.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS

Chairperson Byrd reminded the FSEC that UCGE Chair Valerie Maier-Speredelozzi and other members of the UCGE committee would be joining the meeting at 11AM.

4. ONGOING BUSINESS

a. Discussion ensued about the revised General Education program. Concern has been expressed to FSEC members that the revisions attempt to satisfy too many goals, the rationale for the structure is difficult to discern, and by limiting the number of required courses in the content areas, the program does not provide sufficient breadth. Additional concerns include the fact that LEAP (Liberal Education and America's Promise, Association of American Colleges and Universities) was developed to assess complete baccalaureate programs not the subset of general education, the program imposes unmanageable complexity, and coordination with the NEASC document on Gen Ed is not clear. The FSEC discussed their intent to ask the UCGE committee to prepare a report to distribute to the faculty.

b. UCGE members Anne Hubbard (CCE), Peter Larsen (LIB), Valerie Maier-Speredelozzi (EGR) (Chair), and Carol Thornber (CELS) joined the meeting at 11:00AM. Chairperson Maier-Speredelozzi distributed handouts of the Institutional Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes (the "11 outcomes") that were approved by the Senate in April 2012, an advising check sheet, a sample of a completed advising check sheet, and Faculty Guidelines for General Education Course Approval. She displayed a power point presentation to describe the revised program. She reported that, after a recent presentation to the Council of Deans [9/11/13], she was asked by Dean Brownell to make another presentation to the College of Arts and Sciences [9/25/13].

Chairperson Maier-Speredelozzi described the structure of the program in detail from the perspective of the student. She said that the program is designed to be flexible to allow more options in fulfilling the 40 credits of gen ed courses. She cited one advantage was that the structure might prompt more students to consider a double major. Regarding the concern that fewer courses are required in the Arts and Humanities, she said that departments could require additional courses for their major and that it is likely that many Arts and Humanities courses could be used to satisfy outcomes 8, 9, and 10.

Discussion ensued about the other goals of the revisions: the desire to reduce to 120 the number of credits required of a major, and the need for a means of assessing the institution's gen ed program.

THE UCGE committee indicated that they have developed interactive web pages for gen ed course approval and guidelines for faculty about course approval. They are developing a FAQ webpage.

Chairperson Byrd recognized the commitment of the committee. He asked for a report from the committee that fully describes the revised program and also contains (but not be limited to) the original charge from the FSEC to the UCGE, links to other programs and resources, appropriate citations (LEAP, NEASC), proposed catalog language, and proposed Manual language. The purpose of the report is to communicate the program to all faculty as soon as possible, to allow Senators to derive their questions from the report in order to have an informed vote well in advance of the next presentation to the Senate. The sequence might include distribution of the report, a forum at a Faculty Senate meeting followed by a vote at a subsequent meeting.

Senator Rice noted that the program as presented was well engineered in terms of dealing with multiple goals.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Neff