

Faculty of Science and Technology

Minutes – Faculty Council Meeting

March 24, 2010

4:00 p.m.

CSR Conference Room, Bldg. 373, Room 206

Present: Greg Crawford (Chair), Doug Corrin, Mark Noyon, Jim Wilkinson, Debbie Hearn, Rosemarie Ganassin, Greg Klimes, Sandy Patrick, Dave Bigelow, Gara Pruesse, Christine Couture (Recording)

Absent: Eric Demers, Michael Girard, Erick Groot, Tim Stokes, Duane Barker, Dave Wessels

Approval of Agenda:

Motion to approve: Mark Noyon. Seconded: Doug Corrin. All in favour. **CARRIED.**

Minutes of February 18:

Motion to approve: Doug Corrin. Seconded: Jim Wilkinson. All in favour. **CARRIED.**

Dean's Report:

Academic Planning Committee (APC):

As many people know, the APC (upon which Greg sits) is one of four committees working on aspects of an integrated strategic plan for VIU. Greg said the APC meets every two weeks; progress is slow. Most recently, they began to discuss what might be hoped for in terms of rank and title. The Academic Plan has to reflect the nature of our university, both what it is and what we hope it to become. Deliberations and recommendations will be discussed with the broader campus community as the process moves along through meetings with Faculties, briefings for Senate and other committees, and informal sharing by planning committee members. (Greg noted, in particular, that teaching appears to be the number one priority at this institution, as identified by the APC, so this will likely be at the heart of some recommendations in the Academic Plan.)

Some hope that the Integrated Plan, including the Academic Plan, will establish the campus priorities. Greg suggested that might be a little optimistic, but that it will identify some directions and will set the stage for additional work. The Plan will eventually be presented to Senate for consideration (and must be approved by Senate in order to come into effect).

Minutes will be posted for those that are interested in APC's progress (as will the minutes for the other planning committees). Greg recommended that Council and other interested faculty check the Integrated Planning website every other week, to review agendas and minutes (<http://www.viu.ca/integratedplanning> - select "Academic Planning" and navigate around). Some additional articles have also been posted, including articles on teaching quality, departmental cultures, and recognition and reward. (Greg suggested that some of this would be good reading material for Department Chairs.)

The structure and mandate of this Committee was questioned.

Action Item: Greg will seek to determine the Committee's reaction to the appropriateness of its own structure (e.g., less than half of the members are faculty) and mandate.

By-laws update:

Greg talked with John Lepage (Policies and Procedures Sub-committee), and subsequently with the sub-committee itself (along with Eric Demers), about the status of Faculty By-laws. He said drafts have been put forward by all Faculties. The Sub-committee has reviewed submissions from all Faculties and has prepared a new draft, critiquing what Faculties put together and asked that new items be discussed. Topics discussed included guidelines, student representation on Faculty Councils, where Technicians fit in, etc. Greg suggested that Senate needs to take a stronger stand on By-law criteria before we revise our current draft.

CRC status:

Greg serves on this Committee and said the Committee wants to propose four possible themes to applicants. Once a new CRC is hired, there will be potential for faculty engagement in various Faculties. Greg will keep Council posted on the final decision on themes. On another topic, Sarah Dudas had re-submitted her CRC application several months ago, responding to the concerns of one particular reviewer. According to Liz Hammond-Kaarremaa, we should know the final decision in a month or two.

Contracts/overhead:

Finance is looking more carefully how we manage grants, contracts, etc. There hasn't been a lot of accountability, so this must be resolved, especially long-term contracts/agreement. Greg learned he is accountable not only for base budgets, but also for non-base budgets. Currently, there are several deficits in some non-base cost centres, and Greg has been asked to begin to resolve these. The Dean and Finance must be kept informed on the status of these non-base cost centres. Furthermore, Greg let it be known that he wants to start negotiating a Dean's overhead for most if not all non-base projects.

Clarification on budget process:

Greg was asked to clarify how this works. He's still trying to understand it himself, but he mentioned that the Province won't increase our budget. Last fall, according to his information, the Deans were asked to develop a 3% budget cut. Anne Leavitt, as Interim Dean, put a proposal together and presented it to the Executive. The Executive eventually arrived at a plan that requires Greg to come up with a 3.28% cut across the board (teaching staff). In addition, Finance also recently provided draft documents on the 2010-11 budget. Greg is discussing these with Doug Corrin and will have further conversations with the Finance people. There will be last-minute tweaks at the end of March; it is not clear how much funding flexibility there will be next year, but it is probably not much.

Greg said that cuts are a consequence of inflation rates and no new money. In addition, according to the President, FTEs are expected to be at 95%, but are currently at 88% (and have a long history of being lower than expectations). Enrollment is too low with the funding we receive from the Province, which puts us at risk for payback. Greg spoke of his experience at another university in a similar situation for years, with no consequences until one year the government demanded \$2M back. He argued that this is another consequence of increased accountability.

It was suggested that the Planning and Priorities Sub-committee address problems of budget cuts such as these because significant programs are suffering. Greg said that, for this year at least, the Administration has handed the responsibility to the Deans.

Greg further noted that the Faculty should be prepared for more cuts for the next 2-3 years. At this time, Greg doesn't know how he will handle this. Academic prioritization might be the way to go on campus, but that will take time to organize. In the meantime, Greg would like departments to start thinking about developing prioritizations for their own activities and sharing those proposals with him, so that he can make better-informed decisions. He encourages discussions on priorities at department meetings. SWOT Analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) is another possible exercise for the Faculty in the next several months.

Action Item: Greg will provide Council with our net cost/revenue to the institution per FTE.

We need to think about this and about priorities to make things work, taking into account less money from the Ministry. Greg is reaching out for the Faculty's help.

Senators' Report:

No report, as there have been no recent meetings of the Senate. The next Senate meeting will be on April 1.

Curriculum Committee Submissions:

Mark Noyon is proposing to remove AQUA 212 (Trout Culture II) and to replace it with a new course – FISH 223 (Introduction to Fisheries Management). He briefly discussed the proposal and stressed that there would be no additional costs. An electronic vote will follow for approval. It is hoped that the new course proposal will be submitted on time for the March 31 deadline.

Department Chair Selection Policy – Guiding Principles:

Will be discussed at the next meeting.

SAWS updates and workload revisions:

Will be discussed at the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.