

Faculty Economics and Benefits Committee (FEBC)

Minutes, Thursday Sept 24, 2011

Present: D. Richards (Chair), J. Conant (as liaison from Senate Exec.), N. Corey, M. Green (as liaison from the budget office), T. Mulkey, L. Maule, L. Phillips, S. Shure (arrived later after vote taken to approve April minutes).

Absent: R. McGiverin

Minutes for the April, 2011 FEBC meeting were approved pending correction to the date (should have read April 22) by a vote of 4:0:3. (Three abstained b/c they were not on the committee in April).

D. Richards requested discussion/clarification of charge #3: the actual authority to review and make recommendations on budgetary matters is now held by the Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) and has not been approved for transfer to FEBC by the Board of Trustees. Until the Board approves the transfer of authority, charge #3 remains irrelevant.

D. Richards announced that Diann McKee cannot meet on Thursdays at 9:30, M. Green will fill in for her.

D. Richards also announced that Candace Barton cannot attend bi-weekly FEBC meetings but recommended Jeff Jaskow attend to talk about VEEBA. D. Richards will add the discussion of VEEBA to the FEBC's agenda for its next meeting and invite J. Jaskow to attend.

D. Richards suggested that, until charge #3 becomes official, the committee focus on charges 4,5, and 6 which are:

4. Additional benefits for adjunct faculty
5. Summer school policies
6. Flexible work alternatives

D. Richards asked for and received the authority to cancel any meetings for which there is not a sufficient amount of business to discuss.

L. Maule initiated a discussion of charge #5: summer school policies.

A long discussion ensued, most of which is encapsulated here.

L. Maule shared her concerns about the variability in class size for courses offered in the summer. She argued that b/c the university has limited resources in the summer, tighter oversight should be used to ensure that bigger classes are offered both on-line and on campus, that they meet students' needs, especially their Foundational Studies requirements, and that the University work to eliminate the inequities in summer stipends for those faculty who teach 10 v.

50 students in a summer course. L. Maule proposed that faculty receive a stipend based on the number of students enrolled in course (15-25; 25-35; etc.).

D. Richards commented on the practice of people arbitrarily capping # of students that can enroll in a course so that they can receive a double stipend.

L. Maule responded that creating two sections is simply a façade.

L. Maule: Variability in enrollments and courses offered is immense.

N. Corey: Graduate courses enroll smaller numbers.

L. Maule: Worry is capping courses at 15 or 25.

D. Richards: Enrollment is based on pedagogical criteria.

L. Phillips: What's wrong with paying a faculty person double if they are teaching double the students. I cannot successfully teach more than twenty-five students in an on-line writing intensive course in six weeks. If my courses are capped at a higher number, the quality of the course will go down.

L. Maule: Trying to avoid a situation in which three sections of the same course are offered in the same summer session, all capped at fifteen.

N. Corey: Isn't the desired faculty:student ratio coming from the President?

J. Conant: Speaking as the chair of a department, chairs balance a number of criteria when determining course enrollment. It should be up to department chairs, not an outside committee, to determine where to cap course enrollments.

L. Maule: We have summer school policies as a charge before us. Chairs should discuss this and act as a more unified body. As a University, summer school course offerings are not making the best use of what are limited resources.

J. Conant: Different and less intrusive mechanisms should be pursued rather than an arbitrary cap.

D. Richards: Focus should be on the minimum rather than maximum enrollments.

L. Maule: Offering robust courses should be the goal or, at least that perspective should be brought to the table for discussion. Resources should be diverted to classes with 30 or more people enrolled.

J. Conant: When schedules are monitored by college offices, problems are created. Are the courses offered graduate courses, are they experiential learning courses? Courses vary.

L. Maule: The issue should be brought to the table and discussed by chairs, deans in a reasonable way. Summer schedules need to be managed better. I would argue for a 25 person minimum across the board. Summer is not like the regular school year; summer work is contracted.

J. Conant: Chairs should determine maximum enrollments.

L. Maule: But b/c of limited resources, we need to expand number of students enrolled in courses. We need to look at the overall trends and at the data.

D. Richards: Let's look at the data.

J. Conant: Potential problem: Departments operate on a fixed summer budget which then affects the number of courses they can offer.

L. Maule: Students' needs should be taken into consideration and summer courses offered accordingly.

T. Mulkey: Students tend to add at the last minute making it almost impossible for departments to plan ahead.

L. Maule: But by April, 75% of courses have made, not all last minute. Are summer course offerings about faculty getting paid or about creating a curriculum that meets students needs and uses resources well.

J. Conant: There should be some mechanism in place by which chairs/deans get together to determine curricular issues and some recognition of the budget, that, yes, a minimum # of students should be enrolled in courses offered.

L. Maule: Demand plays out.

M. Green: But the University has yet to spend its summer resources. The challenge is in offering more courses. Every summer not enough courses are offered and the University can not find enough people to teach especially as enrollment is growing. Double summer enrollment means double the revenue and the money will be there to pay for instruction.

T. Mulkey: Has been issues w/courses with varied enrollments. Some offer courses of up to 150 people on the web, that's 10x the minimum, but didn't get any extra pay and yet the same person, teaching a 400-level course with 6-11 students has that course canceled (and then is not paid despite the fact that they are teaching 150 students). How then are depts., people compensated?

J. Conant: An averaging component now in play.

T. Mulkey: I can see why depts are setting caps.

S. Shure: some depts cancelling are canceling summer courses b/c summer courses skew the department's student credit hour ratio.

N. Corey: Asks M. Green: what is the magic number, will 8 students pay for the course?

J. Conant: There's also no way to estimate the proportion of students who drop and go on to enroll in another course.

D. Richards: There should be a way to make a reasonable estimate.

J. Conant: We should be able to get some data from 991 numbers, people who transfer, at least a ball park estimate.

L. Maule: Two things affect summer enrollments, students have to think about expenses and there's (T. Mulkey agrees) no financial aid during the summer.

L. Maule: On-line courses are more affordable for students.

J. Conant: But offering more on-line pulls students out of face to face courses.

D. Richards: Can we suggest a procedure? Can we look at some data from Linda, the Registrar? Can Mark get us some data on the summer budget for instruction?

M. Green: Summer spans two fiscal year budgets. Summer budget has been reallocated b/c it's not being used.

D. Richards: I will investigate w/Registrar how students re-enroll after a course cancelled.

L. Maule: Suggests that D. Richards contact Tess Avelis and ask for data on which classes were dropped, which weren't.

N. Corey: May be able to look at each college, how each does and doesn't use its summer budget. Mark may be able to get that data by college. If money is not being used, how can we best use it?

D. Richards: Asks for suggestions on how to proceed.

N. Corey: Charge #6 re: work load alternatives, a volume of material is still available from committee that studied the issue in depth a few years ago.

D. Richards: What are the issues?

N. Corey: Faculty members' time allocations re: service, research, teaching.

L. Maule: Actually different from faculty workload. The issues are more complex, should staff be able to work 4 days instead of 5 in the summer? Again, a better use of university resources. FEBC has a subcommittee in place to study flexible work alternatives.

D. Richards: We will then wait for the subcommittee's report.

T. Mulkey: Perhaps we should implement an 8-4 work schedule, use it as a hammer.

L. Maule: Initiates brief discussion on summer school tuition remission for faculty/staff dependents. Why does the University wait until Summer II to credit the dependent's account? Credit should be given during the session in which the dependent is enrolled.

J. Conant: The problem is solved if ISU defines 6 hours as full-time enrollment/summer session.

L. Maule: I will e-mail data on summer school courses by next week.

D. Richards: We will talk about VEEBA, Charge #4, at our next meeting.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:35

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Phillips