INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Student Affairs Committee

SAC 16/17-04 Approved: 12/5/16

11/14/16, 9:00 a.m.

NB 416

Present: Dan Coovert, Steve Hardin, Sandra Kohler, Nancy Nichols-Pethick, Mary Howard Hamilton, Bassou El Mansour

Absent:

Ex-Officio: Robert Guell (Faculty Senate), Rich Toomey (Admissions), Joel Robson (HMSU), Jennifer Lawson (Registration and Records)

Guests:

1. Call to order
   1. Chair N. Nichols-Pethick called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.
2. Announcements and introductions
   1. N. Nichols-Pethick announced that Della Thacker is a new incoming member, a former alternate. She cannot meet at this time. She said S. Hardin will send out a Doodle poll for spring semester availability.
3. Revision of agenda if necessary
   1. None needed.
4. Approval of minutes of the previous meeting
   1. J. Robson said a question was improperly attributed to him in 5.5.4. S. Kohler said she asked the question. The minutes will so reflect.
   2. D. Coovert moved, and B. El Mansour seconded, approval of the minutes as amended. The motion carried 5-0-1.
5. Old Business
   1. Action Items Reviewed
6. New Business
   1. SAC Charges
      1. Charge 1: Submit recommendations from the Advising Task Force – finalize report from last year
         1. R. Guell said he understands there was no formal document produced by SAC last year. He chaired FAC last year; Cheryl Blevens chaired SAC and Rusty Gonser was on the advising task force. R. Guell recommended putting the issue in the Executive Committee’s hands. He added that the biggest impediment to a resolution is that there is no consensus among the departments involved. Should advising be considered part of teaching? Not all teaching is alike. R. Toomey asked if there is an accepted University definition of “teaching.” R. Guell said the University Handbook has a definition which has been debated. D. Coovert asked how advising would be assessed. R. Guell noted that student evaluations are problematic because in small groups it’s possible to determine the identity of the student submitting an evaluation. S. Kohler said advising should be under service. She added the evaluation of advising shouldn’t be done by students. The chair can assess whether student was advised properly. R. Toomey asked if there is a commonly-accepted definition of “advising.” R. Guell doubts one exists. N. Nichols-Pethick observed advising is quite diverse. The report from last year suggested much of it occurs in other contexts. R. Toomey noted the implications of apparently elementary advising procedures can be huge. R. Guell stated the report began with general concepts and evolved to be more specific in terms of costs and change of workload. If this committee wants to have an actual impact, it should know the President was unimpressed with the direction the conversation was taking. It’s a good idea to have a discussion of the definition first. Also, this committee won’t say anything so revolutionary that it hasn’t already been considered. Each position has champions who’ve been unable to persuade the champions of other positions. N. Nichols-Pethick noted the University has advisors in Foundational Studies and in departments as well as professional advisors; while it’s good in theory to have them available, it increases the number of advisors for each student and that may not be smart. The fewer advisors per student the better. D. Coovert said that having only one advisor requires the advisor to be an expert in all the different programs. Is that possible? N. Nichols-Pethick said the structure is unwieldy and hard for students to navigate. R. Guell said there is a balance: University College advisors deal mostly with first-year students; as the student progresses, advisees need to be handed off to people with more specific knowledge. He thinks there’s considerable support for only one handoff. Last year’s document argued for the 3rd layer. He agreed with N. Nichols-Pethick that there should be only one handoff. N. Nichols-Pethick said the opportunity for inconsistency grows with more advisors. R. Toomey asked how often undergraduates change their major. How many have double majors or can’t enter the program of their choice? If students are doing minors, how is the information about the minor to be conveyed? N. Nichols-Pethick asked if there is some way we can keep advising tidy and still deal with that issue. Could University College hang on to undecided students a little longer? S. Kohler said the problem with University College is that students are often advised against taking courses that are not practical, e.g., business students are advised not to take too many history courses not germane to their majors. But that may not be good advice for undecided students. She’d prefer that students be hooked up immediately with a “minor” advisor in their desired department in addition to the advisor in University College.
         2. N. Nichols-Pethick said that in the interest of moving on, she will come up with a list of suggestions – things we’ve been talking about. M. Howard-Hamilton noted the need for consistency seems to be the dominant thread in the discussion.
      2. Charge 2: Review history of Student Success initiatives and assess effectiveness (with AAC)
      3. Charge 3: Identify a faculty member to serve as representative to SGA Senate meetings
         1. Update - D. Coovert said there were four students at the SGA meeting he attended who were excited and said they’d be here. But they’re not here today. He gave them the dates of the last two meetings this semester, and hopes they turn up. N. Nichols-Pethick volunteered to remind them too.
      4. Charge 4: Monitor international student enrollment
         1. N. Nichols-Pethick said she thinks the Committee agreed that there ought to be a more vigorous relationship between the president and specific groups of internationals. But Chris McGrew, who visited last time, said the numbers are good. B. El Mansour said there’s not a lot of recruitment going on. R. Toomey said that to date no University resources have been committed to international recruitment because it hasn’t been made a high priority. We’ve relied on word of mouth which has brought us students in the past. Some of the rules are changing on us, especially with the changes in politics in the United States. Our bread and butter has been the Middle East; that can change due to forces outside our control. S. Kohler noted international students require extra resources that domestic students don’t require, such as handling visa questions. R. Toomey said ISU has only six Designated Student Officials (DSOs), persons dedicated to assisting enrolled international students; we’ve chosen to limit our number of DSOs. S. Kohler pointed out they could be overwhelmed if we get a lot of international students. R. Guell said ISU has no name recognition outside the United States, barely outside the Midwest. If you’re going to advertise, to create recognition from nothing, it would take lots of money and time with no assurance of payoff. In the case of our Saudi students, we had a Saudi grad who worked his way up to a major position in the Saudi Cultural Ministry; we got a lot of students without working to get them. But the rules have changed so that we’ll get nearly none of them after the current students move through the pipeline. What we need to do resembles lobbying more than advertising. We’re having conversations with an official who can influence students’ decisions to come. D. Coovert said the lobbying approach is better than putting lots of items out on Facebook, etc. R. Guell said the wisest thing we could do would be to identify the 10 positions in the world which we could use to leverage student applications. R. Toomey asked if our current template works with international students and foreign embassies. D. Coovert stated it should be a dual-pronged approach, at the top levels as well as the grass roots levels. R. Guell added we need to be agile in reacting to international political situations that we can exploit. The Saudi students came here because of a Saudi scholarship and the placement of that official. A lot resulted from the Arab Spring. There’s no way we can control things like that. R. Toomey asked as we see precipitous drops in various international groups, how do we compensate for them? B. El Mansour noted one of the conditions on some awards is that they be used for recruitment. Sometimes there’s no follow-up. R. Toomey said it comes down to how we set the expectations that we’re looking for in international trips and outreach. We need relationships with the countries and embassies. S. Kohler questioned whether ISU really wants them. Is the atmosphere at the university as a whole focused on international students?
         2. N. Nichols-Pethick said she would type up the committee’s comments on Chris McGrew’s report and international student enrollment.
      5. Charge 5: Review admission/scholarship standards and retention statistics; consider making recommendations regarding adjustment to admission and/or retention standards.
      6. Charge 6: Review and assess effectiveness of current student evaluation model (with FAC)
         1. N. Nichols-Pethick said she met with Susan Powers to see her perspective on student evaluation. The number of evaluations being returned is increasing but we are still getting a low response rate in some sections. Notification is an issue: faculty get updated at the same time as the students in terms of these reminders. Motivation is a big issue. Students can print out an anonymous receipt when they’ve done the evaluation; some faculty are giving extra credit for it. Another issue is convincing students that these evaluations really are anonymous and not available to instructors until after final grades are posted. N. Nichols-Pethick sent all this to FAC Chair Lindsey Eberman.
      7. Charge 7: Administer the Faculty Scholarship
      8. Charge 8: Produce and submit an annual report in time for the final Senate meeting of 2016-17.
7. Adjournment
   1. D. Coovert moved adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 9:51 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Hardin

Secretary