

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
November 10, 2022 – 2:30-4:25 PM
Magnolia Room, Morris University Center
Approved Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 2:32pm on Thursday, November 10, 2022 by Jingyi Jia.

Present: Igor Crk, Keith Hecht, Jingyi Jia, Adriana Martinez, Barb McCracken, Kamran Shavezipur, Michael Shaw, Duff Wrobbel, Jie Ying

Guests: Scott Belobrajdic, Denise Cobb, Chris Leopold

1. No public comments

2. Discussions

1) Dashboard issue:

Provost Cobb introduced the team of Chris Leopold, Jeffrey, Sally, and Scott who build models for enrollment and DWF rates. But there are concerns of fully disclosing data from the dashboard. The team wants to ask for suggestions on how to release data in a responsible way.

Provost asked the faculty senate to play a leadership role to address DWF rates without sacrificing course rigor. The focus is to support students.

The Dashboard information is available to deans and the Provost. Department chair needs to request the data. Failure in some of gateway courses means financial aid problem. Failure also makes first-generation college students feel vulnerable and it stops students from pursuing their career paths. University has tried different approaches (changing class size, Supplementary sessions, etc.) which are not working well.

Faculty and senate need to realize the importance and learn from colleagues and other institutions. Faculty should work on how to support student differently to help students.

Keith mentioned Geoffrey Edwards reached out to faculty senate for organizing a focus group discussing the retention rates.

The members of FSEC agree that sharing DWF Dashboard at the instructor level is complicated. Sharing the data with department chairs can help trace the effectiveness of the approaches, help design and redesign the best practice.

2) Supporting issues related to DWF rates

Michael Shaw: how to improve quality of instruction is important. But some other factors are also essential for student success (life and financial reasons). We need to find out the actual issues slowing the progress of students.

Provost: After faculty raises the flag, student success coach should get involved. Some students need to be connected to a social worker or counselling service. They need other support such as childcare assistance. Students have needs we cannot provide. Some faculties have provided a lot of mental issue support during the pandemic, not only academic support.

Igor: individual faculty had spent a lot of time to meet students individually during the pandemic. Obtaining the information is difficult. It is better to have an office which guides students in information jungles. It is hard to find the information on the university website.

Kamran: Is it possible to find a button to click in Blackboard to get the information to support students? Some similar program for first-generation students such as FAME and GAME? Some first-generation students think 30-40 hours' work is their family culture. The first priority is job, not studying. The different culture background means difference in terms of the attitude to education.

3) Learning community

Igor: In a lot of ways, FST has issues: Lacking shared responsibilities, engagement and the sense of mission. This is the reason why FAME and GAME work.

Provost: FST needs to be organized by theme. We need best faculties to teach it. It is critically important.

Provost: Our job is teaching them to appreciate the learning opportunities. We have to have more living-learning opportunities. University housing is helpful. Students can be well-integrated. Because honor students are more connected, and this connection help them perform better.

Kamran raised the issue of no direct entry for most programs. Provost answered that Scott is working with departments to have more direct entry students.

Igor: Honor students have a place to be together. Students need to have a community. Scott agreed that the sense of community is important. Some food court places are shut down. The sense of community is negatively affected.

Barb commented that the direct entry system can help build the community. Provost indicated that students with certain GPA can progressively do well. Getting students to a home earlier will build the identity earlier.

4) Course scheduling to meet students' needs

Michael Shaw: Scheduling courses according to student needs is important too. Provost agreed. Kamran suggested to ask undergraduate committee work on schedule to help students. Duff mentioned that foundation courses do not need happen all in one semester which makes the scheduling at the department level difficult.

5) Faculty mentoring

Kamran: faculty mentoring is important for helping first-generation college students.

Provost mentioned Cougar connect program. Students are learning to reach out to connectors and find mentors. Michael Shaw and Didi indicated that the university needs to make EUE funding available to support those explorations. Provost explained that there is no budget.

6) Communication is important

Igor indicated that administrators could not underestimate the value of going out to talk to people.

7) Faculty morale

Salary could not match the inflation increase. Jie and Igor suggested performance-based salary increase or merit-based salary increase. For example, if the university reaches a milestone of graduation rates or retention rates, the salary will increase accordingly.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 4:25 pm.

Submitted by Jingyi Jia