Academic Planning Council

Meeting Minutes--October 28, 1999--320 Brigham Hall

Members present: Teresa Burns (for Mittle Nimocks), Ken Buttry, Carol Sue Butts, Stephanie Branson, Howard Brooks (for Mark Shelstrom), Marie Erdman, Robert Fidrych, Barbara Parsons, Jason Styles, Kathleen Tigerman, David Van Buren (for Raymond Spoto).

Visitors: Laura Anderson, Connie Beuthin, Caroline Bloede, Peter Hadom, Patrick Hagen, Mike Momot, Anne Olson, Mike Penn, Agnes Reis, Phil Sealy, Mark Swenson, Rich Shultz, Thomas Waters.

Ken Buttry, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:05.

Item 1 Minutes from the 9/9/99 meeting. Fidrych moved to approve with correction provided by Parsons regarding the amount granted to Horticulture by the USDA. The amount was reported in the minutes as being "about $9000"; it was in fact about $59,000. Tigerman seconded the motion, which was passed.

Item 2 Parsons moved to approve the minutes of the 9/23/99 meeting with one correction. The penultimate sentence of Item 6 should read: "Ag reps: Update from University Budget Commission requires resource reallocation to be made from within the College of BILSA." Branson seconded; motion carried.

Item 3 Program/department audits. Buttry will notify departments that they need to provide a date (or will be assigned one) for reporting to the APC. A schedule will be set up by the APC. Burns noted that Foreign Languages is being reviewed as a unit for purposes of review; it is seen as separate languages elsewhere, which is inconsistent.

Item 4 Master's of Engineering New Program Proposal: First Reading. Momot provided a brief overview of the proposal, noting that the program stems from a connection with industry, and will be on-line in order to provide flexibility for working engineers, etc. who wish to get an advanced degree. It is a general engineering degree, but will allow for students to choose an area of specialization. Branson asked if class size limits had been placed on the courses proposed, given their description as on-line writing-intensive courses. Penn responded that no such limits had been proposed, but noted that 20 was the usual limit. Van Buren mentioned that in order for on-line courses to be
held at UW-P, at least 20 students must be enrolled. Parsons asked about
start-up costs, especially in view of a similar program (at WGU) described in
the proposal with very large start-up costs. Shultz responded that UW-
Learning Innovations was provided some monies (particularly for course
design and faculty training), and that there was a grant for distance education
of $250,000. Shultz stressed that the new program would not adversely
affect the undergraduate programs in engineering, either fiscally or otherwise.
The undergraduate programs had priority. Penn noted that WGU is a large
consortium of colleges, with high administrative costs. Start-up costs here
would be much lower. Parsons asked about tuition. Butts responded (with
Van Buren) that this was set by System at $460 a credit in-state, and $611
out-of-state. Parsons asked about the capital budget expenditures mentioned
on page 17 of the proposal. What kind of computers would be required, and
what would be the additional cost? Shultz responded that the computing
needs were no greater for faculty teaching the on-line courses than for faculty
teaching on-site courses. No GPR funds would be devoted to the new
program. Parsons asked about outreach issues--what was the distance
education center referred to in the document? Shultz noted that UW-Centers
(now Colleges) already had a full 2-year program on-line through the center.
He agreed that there was some danger of losing on-site students, and
regretted that trend. UW-P prohibits students in residence from taking on-
line versions of courses offered on site. Burns commented that one of the
courses listed was proposed by her; Shultz said she would be invited to teach
it if the proposal was passed. Fidrych asked about the array of electives listed
'the of EMS. Why/how were they chosen? Penn responded that they
outside were chosen as a result of survey responses about the needs of potential
students. Fidrych mentioned that the prerequisite listed for one of the
Business Ed. courses was superfluous; Penn responded that it was left in the
document by mistake, and would be removed. Brooks asked if there would
be an opportunity for students to write a thesis, even if this was not required.
Penn responded that students had the opportunity to do individual research,
as an elective, but that the in-depth research involved in a thesis could not be
supported on-line. Shultz said that many projects related to students' work in
industry could be the basis of individual research for elective credit. Parsons
asked what the graduate writing requirement was; Shultz said that it with 30
credits at the Master's level, "a significant writing component" was required
in each course. Parsons moved to receive the proposal, and pass it on to
UBC (not necessary to send it to UUCC). Branson seconded. Motion
carried.
Item 5 Chancellor’s Plan Guidelines. Buttry and Branson put together a draft of guidelines to be given to the Chancellor. Van Buren made some suggestions about wording, etc. Erdman asked what the purpose of the guidelines were. Buttry responded that it was one of the duties of the APC to review short- and long-term academic directions proposed by the administration, but that for some time Chancellors had not submitted a plan.
to be reviewed. Bums asked that a phrase be added in Section 3, which now reads: "The Council would like specific information on long-term directions in academic staffing and academic capital expenditures (i.e. ratio of academic staff to tenure-line faculty, increased investment of human resources in particular areas, etc.)." Van Buren moved to approve the draft with corrections and this addition. Parsons seconded. Motion carried.

Item 6 Academic Directions Taskforce Report. Butts provided an overview of the report received by the APC. There was a long discussion of the desire on the part of the administration to weigh the benefits of increasing the number of tenure-track positions against a need for flexibility regarding staffing. Butts outlined the formula put in practice by the administration which would require some academic staff in all areas, and gave reasons why not all positions would be converted: enrollments fluctuate, and if fewer students enroll, fewer instructors are needed; some academic staff offer special expertise in areas which can not be covered by permanent faculty; late-occurring vacancies prohibit national searches, and can be temporarily filled by academic staff; declining programs or majors can be serviced by academic staff whose position is temporary. Butts mentioned that the faculty at UW-P stays here for their entire career, and this limits flexibility in staffing. Butts mentioned that three programs are being looked at this year: Communication Technology Management, Speech, and Software Engineering. Graphics may also be reviewed, since it is taught in more than one college. Butts stressed that before any decisions would be made about cutting programs, the APC would be consulted. It is her desire to retain programs at the heart of the university, even if the number of majors or enrollment is down. Parsons addressed the formula of keeping a academic staff which would not allow a conversion of the German position to tenure track by quoting Plato who said that "Laws are inherently defective."--indiscriminate application of rules or laws leads to abuses. Specifically, she pointed to majors or courses at the heart of the university which could be exceptions to the rule. Several people noted that lower division enrollments, etc. were not included in the report, and that these statistics are essential for providing a clear picture. Butts said that she had tried to get that data, but that Peoplesoft does not allow access to that information. The numbers will be generated by hand. Burns noted that the 'job market is changing, and that faculty may have the option to move. In any case, retraining foreign language faculty for international programs would be simple, if necessary. Van Buren noted that forecasting trends in enrollment, etc. is more important for vocational fields like Criminal Justice, but that German offers general education instruction related to the culture of Wisconsin. He felt that German was at the heart of the university here. Erdman and Branson suggested that German could be considered part of foreign languages for purposes of the formula. Hadorn remarked that faculty
from many different disciplines supported German. Beuthin and Reis mentioned that 160 students had signed a petition in support of the German program. Butts appreciated their support, but pointed out that there had
been no suggestion to cut German. Parsons moved to accept the report with
the addition of a request for a tenure-track position in Foreign Languages.
Tigerman seconded. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Stephanie Branson