Minutes
Liberal Arts Council
29 October 2014, 2:00 pm, FH 230

Presiding: Dean Michael Hennessy
Recording: Associate Dean Lucy Harney

Council Members: Bill Kelemen, Dennis Dunn, Mary Brennan, Beth Erhart, Bob Fischer, Rich Dixon (for Alberto Giordano), Peter Hutcheson (for Craig Hanks), Craig Hanks, Susan Day, Dan Lochman, Ken Grasso, Associate Dean Britt Bousman, and Associate Dean Nancy Grayson

Guests: Chad Smith, John McBride, Marsha Moore, Jeff Lund, LynnAnn Brewer, and Michelle Moritz

1. Human Resources presentation:

John McBride, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources, gave an overview of upcoming changes to yearly staff evaluation procedures. He also noted that documentation for sick leave requests will now be submitted directly to HR.

Associate Director Michelle Moritz reviewed ongoing efforts to achieve compliance with health care benefits mandated by the Affordable Care Act. Council members discussed possible implications for some GRAs, as well as for those working on grant-funded contracts.

Manager Jeff Lund reported on the new Texas State System policy for addressing staff grievances. Chairs should contact Jeff for guidance with concerns involving employee matters.

Manager LynnAnn Brewer reported on the upgrade, currently in progress, to the People Admin (EASY) system for hiring staff. Chairs and admins are encouraged to export requisition histories to local drives for access and storage, since this information will not be included when the new system takes effect (target date: June 2015).

Director Marsha Moore announced a new SAP feature that will allow unit directors to view staff members’ development activities when preparing performance appraisals. She also reported on the success of Texas State’s recent wellness fair (with 600+ employees participating). Faculty and staff are currently being surveyed regarding a comprehensive wellness program to be piloted in January, which will include such services as exercise and nutrition programs, personal screening, and stress management. A successful pilot may lead to permanent funding for these services.

EEO and Title IX training will begin immediately for all faculty and staff. Compliance expectations are forthcoming.
2. **Chair candidate for Sociology:**

   Council members interviewed Dr. Chad Smith, internal candidate for the position of Chair of the Department of Sociology.

3. **Tracking research donations:**

   Britt Bousman will consult with chairs as he works with Jessica Schneider, LA Research Coordinator, to create a new system for tracking research expenditures (excluding OSP grants and contracts) within the College.

4. **Terminal degree policy:**

   By November 30, each department should update its policy on employment of faculty without a terminal degree. Dean Hennessy distributed copies of current policies, illustrating how (and how not) to revise these documents. Areas of emphasis include degrees of current faculty, requirements for GTAs who are instructors of record, and credentials for graduate faculty. Major changes should undergo PC review.

5. **English program proposals:**

   Dan Lochman reviewed proposals to add course options to the major/minor in English and the minor in Media Studies. Council members unanimously approved the proposals.

6. **Jones Professorship in Southwest Studies:**

   Dean Hennessy distributed and reviewed proposed alterations to LA PPS 6.05 addressing eligibility requirements for the Jones Professorship of Southwestern Studies. If approved, the changes will broaden access to the position among Liberal Arts and other faculty working in the humanities, and thereby expand possibilities for interdisciplinary collaboration related to the Center for the Study of the Southwest. The revision was suggested by Center director, Frank de la Teja.

7. **CAD update:**

   Dean Hennessy briefed Council members on the CAD meeting of 10/28:

   - VP Van Wyatt reported on the annual computer refresh cycle (now in progress) and on recent personnel changes in the division of Information Technology. Chairs should contact Dr. Wyatt for assistance with technology resources.

   - Chairs may contact Dean Hennessy with questions regarding senior and alumni surveys.
• Spring 2015 undergraduate enrollments project an increase of 3% over last year. Spring graduate enrollments have strengthened compared with earlier indications. Dean Golato is grateful to chairs for encouraging timely registration of graduate students. She will be working with graduate programs whose enrollments are declining.

• Departments should review their strategic plans and inform Dean Hennessy by the end of the semester of any major changes. The Council will discuss revisions to the College plan in January.

• LAC will meet in January to review and rank proposals for student computing resources. Chairs should contact Chad Smith, Liberal Arts representative to the ACC, to consult on proposal preparation.

• The College has funds available from the computer refresh program for new printing equipment. Requests for new printers should go to Jamie Donaldson.

• Faculty should be encouraged to contact chairs before sharing student information with parents or relatives. Chairs can assist faculty in verifying whether a student has an appropriate waiver of confidentiality on file.

8. Other business:

Lucy Harney confirmed that the University Curriculum Committee requires “measurable” goals and outcomes (as indicated in Bloom’s Taxonomy) on course proposal forms.

Audits to the fall learning outcomes reports for academic programs are complete. The General Education Council is currently conducting the audits for courses in the core curriculum. All audits may be viewed on the Outcomes Assessment web site (https://tim.txstate.edu/sacsoutcomes/Home/tabid/1865/ctl/Login/Default.aspx?return url=%2fsacsoutcomes%2fHome.aspx).

Council members discussed the nomination and selection process for the designation of University Distinguished Professor. Dean Hennessy confirmed that Liberal Arts will name one member to the selection committee. Council members noted that the PPS for this process is not fully informative.

Dean Hennessy clarified that departments may allow faculty to conduct departmental student evaluations in an online format. Sociology piloted this method and found that, though the number of responses declined, the response distribution was comparable to that of the paper process. (State-mandated student evaluations must continue to be administered in class.

Council members continued to discuss the process for assigning teaching theaters and noted that there is no convenient way to search for available classrooms.
Around the table:

Britt Bousman reminded Council members that ITAC is now encrypting all new University-owned computers.

Dennis Dunn asked about progress on the AVP International Affairs position.

Mary Brennan requested advice about a door security concern in Taylor-Murphy. A building renovation form will be submitted to rectify the problem.

Britt confirmed that chairs will soon receive notification of faculty scheduled for computer refresh.

The meeting was adjourned.