Minutes of Arts & Sciences Faculty Council Meeting
Wednesday, November 2, 2016, 3:30pm || Suite 1600 Student Union

Minutes

1. Chair Finchum called the meeting to order at 3:32pm.

2. Roll Call

   Attendance
   ASFC Present: Isabel Alvarez-Sancho (FLL), Leticia Barchini (MATH), Lee Brasuell (TH), Babu Fathepure (MICR), Allen Finchum (GEOG), John Gelder (CHEM), Emily Graham (HIST), Jay Gregg (GEOL), Doug Heisterkamp (CS), Apple Igrek (PHIL), Heather McLaughlin (SOC), Lynn Lewis (ENGL), Jeffrey Loeffert (MUSI), David Meinke (PBEE), Lori McKinnon (SMSC), Stephen Nemeth (POL), Peter Rightsmeier (CDIS), Jennifer Shaw (IBIO), Mark Sisson (ART), Gil Summy (PHYS), Carla Goad (STAT)

   ASFC Absent: Ed Burkley (PSYC),

   Administration Present: Renee Tefertiller

3. Approval of the September Minutes
   a. Motion to approve made by Richtsmeier and second by McKinnon; Minutes approved.

4. Approval of the Agenda
   a. Motion to approve made by Meinke, and second by Brasuell; Agenda approved.

5. Standing Committee Reports
   d. Scholarship – David Meinke.
      i. Meinke: the Committee met, deliberated and voted on the President’s Fellows Award.

6. Old Business.
   a. Issues Concerning Future Budget (Cut), special ad hoc Committee led by Jeff Loeffert
      i. Loeffert: distributed the revised draft budget efficiency plan, and explained again what the Committee was charged with (e.g., to reach the overall goal of 2.2 million dollar reduction, that is, 52% of the total possible reduction, not including open faculty lines). Loeffert explained guiding principles suggested by the Committee, which include, for example, to avoid cutting staff if possible; to give departments sufficient leeway to meet the cuts; to minimize reduction plans that stifle potential growth for departments; to retain current full-time faculty; to consider the impact that budget reduction might have on student learning, development and graduation rates; to encourage the Dean’s Office to consider cuts that individual departments made during the previous year (for details, see the draft budget efficiency plan)
ii. Loeffert: went over a list of untenable reductions, discussed specific concerns shared by the Committee, and suggested alternatives, including (1) hiring more adjuncts in lieu of VAPs (concerns: this is not a sustainable practice in Stillwater due to a lack of expertise & hiring more adjuncts could be more expensive); (2) deleting ASR+1, travel, DIGs (concerns: this might impact most on untenured faculty, contrary to college goal to nurture them); (3) establish minimum course enrollments (concerns: there are legitimate pedagogical reasons for small-size classes; increasing class size may decrease student learning); (4) increase class sizes & reduce number of sections (concerns: save as (3)); (5) increase teaching load for faculty with low research (concern: some research (e.g., writing a book, lab experiments) take long time to be fruitful; the alternative is to increase teaching load for faculty with inactive research (for details, see the draft budget efficiency plan);

iii. Loeffert: discussed several priority considerations as true budget efficiencies and shared associated concerns, including (1) reducing the number of telephones (concerns: phones are needed in some cases); (2) sharing copies across departments (concerns: logistic issues need to be figured out such as access to building after regular hours); (3) voluntary staff FTA reduction to nine-month contracts (concerns: not sure how the saving would add up to $75K, and departments need leeway for implementation); (for details, see the draft budget efficiency plan)

iv. Gregg: how did we come up with this $75K estimate? It’s difficult to estimate this saving compared to the previous items. Loeffert/Finchum/McKinnon: we don’t know. All estimate saving numbers are provided by the Dean’s Office. Meinke: we were not provided enough raw information/numbers to learn how the costs were calculated; I would caution against over-interpreting recommendations; Tefertiller (on behalf of the Dean): to be honest, we don’t have the necessary information for the estimates either. Barchini: Then how did we come up with these estimates? Tefertiller: we considered how many staff we have, estimated how many would be willing to do this, and calculated benefits associated with reduced contract. We did not ask staff about their thoughts on going less than 12 months. Meinke: do we have more confidence on some of the estimates than others? Tefertiller: estimates on travel incentives would be so; if the numbers depend on other people making decisions, then it is more uncertain; on sharing copiers, we don’t know how it can get us to $50K; Fathepure: the numbers could vary year by year. Tefertiller: it could. We may consider to adopt this for future positions (e.g., position hiring advertisement indicating 9-month contract);

v. Loeffert: on priority considerations, (4) consolidate labs (computer & teaching) (concerns: some labs have specialized equipment and/or software that students need; make access available to students logistically); (5) replace administrative course releases with IDC/travel incentives (concerns: as a voluntary measure, it would be “efficiency”; otherwise, it would be a “cut”). Gregg: how much saving with efficiencies? Loeffert: $410K. This is not all, only the priority considerations.

vi. Loeffert: for the proposed budget cut items, due to variations across departments, we really need your input. (1) to reduce/eliminate “traditional” honors sections and replace with add-ons. This is already adopted and ongoing. Gregg: since it is ongoing, can it be included in the projected savings? Loeffert/McKinnon: Yes. Meinke: asked about how it would save money. Finchum: we shift students from the honors sections to larger classes with honor students taking the 1-hour add-on. Faculty only get paid $1,800 credit for professional development.

vii. Loeffert: budget cut item, (2) reduce face to face summer courses taught by faculty (concerns: for pedagogical reasons; some faculties depend on summer teaching; its impact on students, e.g., graduation rates may be affected). Nevertheless, we are forced to go with
the business model and to think students as customers. A significant portion of students come from out of state, and don’t stay in STW during the summer. We need to offer online courses (or hybrid courses). Departments should have leeway in reducing/cutting summer face-to-face courses, as long as they can be self-sufficient. Meinke/Gregg: some faculties voluntarily do no summer teaching, and focus on research and grant writing; Loeffert: other faculties do rely on summer teaching salary. However, we should recommend departments to offer more online-courses to offset face-to-face courses financially. Gelder: some graduate students depend on summer support via teaching; Loeffert: it would be helpful to compile how this might impact each department. Please email me specific instances of such impacts so that I can provide to the Dean’s Office.

viii. Loeffert: budget cut item, (3) standardize GTA teaching load to 2/2 or equivalent (concerns: it is uncertain how many TAs would be cut; it might shrink graduate programs and negatively affect recruitment of potential graduate students). Meinke: there might be some federal guidelines with regard to teaching (e.g., no more than 50%) and heavy teaching may reduce research productivity by graduate students; Loeffert: to ask graduate students to take on a 2/2 load without prerequisite knowledge may end up with mediocre teaching; Gregg: reduced research productivity could mean losing money (in grants), more than what could be saved; Meinke: one possible response from the Dean’s Office would be to put graduate students on grants, which is not a simple solution while they have other things to do; Gregg: to use our model as an example, graduate students take on teaching in year 1, and carry less teaching in year 2 and work on grants. Nevertheless, teaching is part of graduate students’ educational experience and they need to teach; Alvarez-Sancho/Barchini: asked more about the federal guidelines (e.g., how is it going to affect international students who can work for not more than 20 hours/week?); Meinke: not sure about the details; it is a message from a colleague, and will check.

ix. Loeffert: budget cut item, (4) standardize full time temp (VAP) teaching load to 4/4 or equivalent (concerns: it may increase class sizes, which will affect students learning adversely; some departments may not be able to go with 4/4); Lewis: English as an example, ENG 1113 is obligated to be offer to every incoming students. English cut VAPs extensively from last round, and a 4/4 load is not doable to some because of spousal hire contracts or existing 3-year contracts. It may affect our ability to hire good faculty as well. Sisson: what’s the difference between VAPs and Adjuncts? Loeffert: with regard to cost-savings, it comes from classes taught by adjuncts and VAPs instead of regular faculty (e.g., benefits).

x. Loeffert: budget cut item, (5) equalize enrollment across semesters for high demand introduction courses, & (6) move interdisciplinary humanities course to team taught large sections. McKinnon: on requirement of laptops of majors, in the School of Media & Strategic Communications, some classes need labs (e.g., graphics). It was suggested that student use laptops. However, some software could be expensive, and agreements need to be worked out; we do have laptop carts (each with 40 laptops) but they are more feasible for courses in which only basic software (e.g., word) is required.

xi. Loeffert: read the last paragraph (titled “final considerations to meet our target amount”) (see the draft budget efficiency plan), and emphasized that the Committee was instructed not to consider it an option “not to hire new tenure-track faculty”. However, for some departments, it might be in their best interest to not make some of the cuts (instead of hiring new faculty).

xii. Brasuell: these numbers are just estimates, and with departmental discretion they would be lower. McKinnon/Meinke/Loeffert: the Committee recommended to the Dean’s Office that departmental discretion is necessary. Unlike last year, the Dean realizes that this is not going to be a single standardized, uniform cut across all departments. Given the variations
across departments, some of the proposed cuts may decimate some departments but not others. Igrek: this is one reason why cuts are just estimates, because we don’t know the exact numbers given the departmental discretion. Loeffert: the amount savings do impact our decision-making/recommendations. The Committee is to prioritize cuts that are liveable though we would like to see more specific costs associated with cuts.

xiii. Igrek: is there a way to get data on larger situations? For example, what responsibilities does the Dean’s Office bear? And called for greater transparency from the administration. Loeffert: to the defense of the Dean’s Office, the administration was absorbing some cuts from the previous year, but it is not clear in what ways. It is pointed out, and shared by the Committee, that there is glaring omission with regard to administrative cuts on this proposal (see the last paragraph of the draft document), especially compared to the proposed reduction/cut on low-paying staff. Nevertheless, the Committee is charged with prioritizing possible items, and this draft is only advisory. Ultimately, it is the Dean’s Office’s decision whether it is going to use this draft to guide its decisions. Igrek: speaking on behalf of Philosophy department, if the Dean’s Office bears responsibility and promotes transparency, it would reduce unnecessary hostility. Shared burden should be emphasized.

xiv. Brasuell: how are faculty lines being affected? Loeffert: there is $1.1 million frozen for faculty lines. Finchum: The Dean stated that he does not want to cut faculty lines (confirmed by Tefertiller). Meinke: there are departments who have vacancies but are not allowed/able to be filled. Tefertiller: there are many factors to be considered by the Dean’s Office. For example, for lines associated with the start-up money, we don’t have the money to fill these lines. These lines are frozen (freezing). When situation improves, they can be opened. Meinke: if the lines are repeatedly requested and denied, they are already lost.

xv. Gregg: How is the penny tax proposal going to affect this? Finchum: hopefully to solve most of these issues. Alvarez-Sancho: it was reported that if it is passed, the Budget Committee (at the University level) would discuss and recommend salary increase.

xvi. Barchini: mentioned the tuition wavier for children for OSU faculty, which was approved. Nevertheless, given the budget situation, what does it do? Finchum: it is for faculty recruitment purpose.

xvii. Meinke: what would the process from now after the Committee turns in the recommendations? Tefertiller: The Dean will discuss it with his group, make changes if necessary, and wait and see (e.g., the outcome of the penny tax proposal). Then the Dean will have conversations with the ASFC, departments and others. The Dean welcomes input from all faculty and staff.

xviii. Loeffert/Finchum: we need to present this to the Dean’s Office by the end of this week, and this is the last opportunity for discussion. This is a motion, and we need to vote on it.

xix. It was pointed out that in a chart handed out (titled “A&S Base Budge (Allocation & Fees)” in September, one bar indicated administration costs. Is there any reasonable percentage of the reduction (to the Administration) at all? Can we add it as one recommendation? Finchum: we may add one sentence in the draft document or we can ask for more information when the Dean’s Office knows more. Shaw: speaking on behalf of the department, since faculty are always evaluated, everyone (including the administration) should be evaluated as well. Is there a decline of administration budget? We heard that there is a $3 million downfall with fund-raising (from 5 to 2 million) but the Dean’s Office budget increased while departments’ decreased. If this is true, it seems unfair. Tefertiller: with regard to the sources of budget, there are various pots of money. The allocated funds, $38 million, are associated with the budget cuts, and the reductions are usually across the board. With regard to the foundation/fun-raising, I’m not sure if it went down or not. Finchum: the foundation money is not linear, and varies year by year, and it is not fair to
expect the amount to stay constant. Tefertiller: investment earnings of the foundation may be down, again not entirely sure. Finchum/Shaw/Barchini: have there been budget increases in College of Arts & Science? Tefertiller: I’m not aware of any. If we had higher instruction through the outreach, maybe. They changed our funding in a variety of ways in the last a few years. Instead of all allocations, we get fee money. With regard to administration of the Dean’s Office, there might be positions for recruitment/marketing being added on through soft-money (outreach). Maybe one, and need to check the details. Igrek: since there have been so many questions/concerns on administrative costs, can we make the last paragraph (of the draft recommendations) stronger, asking for more information/transparency from the Dean’s Office? Loeffert: We would be reluctant to want the language to come across as hostile. Rather, we want it to be collaborators, operating equally in the best interests of the College. We could simply ask the Dean with more clarification/conversation.

xx. Meinke: What’s important is to request more information after the election is done. As soon as more is known, we want more information and transparency. Tefertiller: with regard to the timeline, not sure how it looks like (could be January, or as late as the Spring). Shaw: it is impossible/difficult to vote with the uncertainty and without information. Finchum: can we give this document to the Dean as advisory? Lewis: this document integrated all voices and concerns collected by the Committee. Compared to other institutions, we appreciate how our Dean wants to hear our voices. Meinke: with the concerns/critiques, the Dean asked for input, and we provided the input as best as possible. We are ready to move on and I would recommend to approve this document. Fathepure: we should request this item to remain on the agenda for the next meeting. Finchum: we will list it as old business and the Dean will be here with us next time.

xxi. The majority voted to pass along to the Dean’s Office the draft document (by acclimation).

b. Issues Concerning College Allocation Policies: No discussion (saved for next time).

7. New Business
   a. New titles for Non-Tenure Line Faculty Positions:
      i. Finchum: at this point, no new non-tenure line faculty titles coming long. Those will be in place later in this academic year. The College Policy & Planning Committee will review the document and make recommendations.


10. Adjournment
    a. Motion to adjourn made by Barchini and second by McKinnon; meeting adjourned at 5:05pm.