Department Chair Minutes

September 8, 2014

The meeting began at 2:30pm in room 273D of the Ferguson Building. People in attendance were the following:

Dr. Kwame Antwi-Boasiako (Government)
Dr. Mark Barringer (History)
Ms. Dixie Groll (Dean's Office)
Dr. Marc Guidry (Associate Dean)
Dr. John Hendricks (Mass Communication)
Dr. Scott Hutchens (Psychology)
Dr. Mike Martin (Multidisciplinary Programs)
LTC David Miller (Military Science)
Dr. Brian Murphy (Dean)
Dr. Lee Payne (College Council)
Dr. Mark Sanders (English)
Dr. Robert Szafran (Social & Cultural Analysis)
Dr. Jeana Paul-Urena (Languages, Cultures, & Communication)

Dean Brian Murphy opened the meeting by introducing Associate Provost Mary Nelle Brunson who discussed the re-launch of the Student Success Initiative software for advising. Dr. Brunson indicated that all advisors would be required to use the system in future advising sessions and would also be required to record notes into the system about each discussion with students. Additional training would be provided later in the month. Additionally, Dr. Brunson stated that advisors would be expected to meet with first-time, full-time freshmen three times during the Fall Semester.

Dean Murphy distributed the preliminary data on enrollment in the college’s programs. The college as a whole is down over 100 students but most of the deficit is accounted for in two departments. Dean Murphy will be meeting with faculty in these programs to discuss corrective measures to improve recruitment and retention in them.

Dean Murphy presented the recommendations from the recent Chair Retreat in four areas: unit goals, recruitment/retention, internships, and advising. He stated that the various recommendations would be discussed and approved at the next Chair Council. In the interim, chairs were requested to solicit faculty input on them.

Dean Murphy reminded the chairs that two-year schedules were due last May. Delinquent departments were asked to provide the updated schedules as soon as possible. Dean Murphy announced that an articulation agreement would be signed with the Lone Star College System in connection with the BAAS degree. Further, he noted that the Department of Social and Cultural Analysis will be changing its name to the Department of Anthropology, Geography, and Sociology once approved by the Board of Regents at its October meeting. Dean Murphy further reported that the college’s Center for a Livable World signed a contract with the city of Nacogdoches to conduct a livability study.

The chairs were queried if any questions existed about the upcoming Freshman Convocations scheduled for September 9. This year, the convocations would be held at the departmental level and each chair would receive $200 to apply toward the event. The Provost has supplied a cash prize of $300 that will be awarded in a drawing among attendees. The convocation should be used in an effort to bond incoming students to their academic major.

Dean Murphy reminded the chairs that Parents Weekend is set for September 20. Unlike the past, a single table will be set up to represent all units in the college in lieu of separate tables for each department. Associate Dean Marc Guidry will host the table and chairs were requested to forward any promotional information to him. Dean Murphy discussed the upcoming conference on Asia that will be held on October 9-10 in Sugar Land. The Student Government Association is providing a free bus to transport students and local high schools are being invited to attend. Thus the event represents a new opportunity to recruit students and departments were encouraged to consider participation.
Dr. Bob Szafran brought up the topic of college tenure and promotion procedures. The current policy establishes a uniform portfolio that applies to both tenure and promotion candidates. However, Dr. Szafran pointed to several requirements in the policy that do make sense in the context of promotion. Dean Murphy agreed with Dr. Sazafran but stated that the timing is not ripe to revise college policy while faculty are in the midst of submitting their portfolios. Moreover, the university is scheduled to revise the overall tenure policy during the current academic year. Dean Murphy suggested that making changes to the college’s policy on preparing tenure and promotion portfolios should be delayed until the university has completed updating its tenure policy. Additionally, Dean Murphy noted that a new post-tenure policy is being contemplated at the university level and the college may wish to adopt a separate policy of its own since there is nothing in place at this time.

Dean Murphy concluded the meeting by reminding chairs about the opportunity to nominate candidates for the Foundation Achievement Awards as well as about looming deadlines.

The meeting adjourned at 4:11pm and went into executive session.