Department Chair Minutes

February 1, 2016

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

Dr. Freddie Avant (Social Work)
Dr. Leslie Cecil (Anthropology, Geography, Sociology)
Dr. Ken Collier (Government)
Dr. Steve Cooper (Multidisciplinary Programs)
Dr. Marc Guidry (Associate Dean)
Dr. John Hendricks (Mass Communication)
Dr. Scott Hutchens (Psychology)
Dr. Brian Murphy (Dean)
Dr. Mark Sanders (English)

Dean Brian Murphy reviewed recent enrollment data. While the College experienced a decrease for several years, the last three semesters reveal an increase in enrollment that defies national trends and overall university results. Dean Murphy cited several proactive steps the College has taken that account for the uptick in student numbers: Pre-Law Academy, College Day, and Global Citizenship Conferences. Additionally, the College will be launching three new initiatives to continue the growth pattern: three degrees at Lone Star College, a social media internship, and strengthening connections with community colleges under Associate Dean Marc Guidry.

Interim-Provost Steve Bullard addressed the university’s strategic planning processes and objectives. He fielded questions from the chairs about budget reallocations and salary increases. John Calahan, Space Scheduling and Utilization Coordinator, provided an update on the Platinum Analytics software the university purchased. Two sessions will be held later in the month that will discuss the results of the latest analysis on room utilization. Mr. Calahan advised chairs to continue using HEF monies to improve classrooms despite the university’s long-term goal of centralizing classroom upkeep responsibility.

Dean Murphy provided an update on a range of upcoming activities.

• Next year’s College Day is firmly scheduled for November 1, 2016.
• Capital HEF requests are due February 15.
• Departments should consider proposing a special item request for university consideration.
• The deadline for receiving student travel applications for the current semester has lapsed and a committee will soon meet to determine allocations.
• Chairs should meet with their faculty to identify departmental “metrics of excellence” in terms of student, faculty, and program performance. Dean Murphy will meet with chairs separately beginning in about two weeks to review the results.
• The university’s revised web design is scheduled for a phased-in introduction beginning in August, 2016.
• The annual Honors Banquet is scheduled for early May. No change in format is contemplated.
• The Teaching Excellence deadline to submit nominations is February 15. The process was explained to ensure no problems occur.

The meeting concluded with a review of upcoming deadlines and adjourned at 4:25pm.