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CWU Academic Affairs Committee Minutes - 02/ 21/08

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Notes
Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee
February 21, 2008

Present: Kim Bartel, Joe Brooks, Tim Dittmer, Sura Rath and Carolyn Wells.

Absent: Tim Englund, Dan Neighbors, Danielle Howard, Krystal Noga and Marla Wyatt

Guest(s): Jeff Snedeker, Faculty Senate Chair

Meeting was called to order at 3:18 p.m. by Chair Kim Bartel

Meeting minutes from February 14 were accepted as amended.

Unfinished Business:

A. AAC07-08.04 Committee Charge

Discuss AAC members' feedback from their respective departments as outlined in last meeting.

Based on previous ad hoc committee reports to the FS in 1994 and 1997-1998, consider the conclusions reached and examine how similar concerns have been addressed by other universities, especially in Washington and at peer institutions (from list compiled by CWU Office of Institutional Research). Please compare our current grading policy (Section 5-9.4.14) with those of other institutions to determine the impact of establishing a university-wide grading policy based on:

1. a specific GPA
2. the use numerical scores instead of letter grades
3. adding class rankings or class averages next to student letter grades

If there is time and the committee is so inclined, please feel free to examine additional conclusions reached in these reports, including but not limited to:

1. the effect of reducing or eliminating Withdrawals
2. the effect of reducing or eliminating Incompletes
3. the effect of sharing grade information/distributions among faculty by department/college (i.e., self-correction)

The EC requests a report by May 15, 2008, summarizing the committee's work and providing any recommendations that would effectively address grade inflation at CWU.

Kim did a national search on grade inflation. She e-mailed Mark and Carmen in IR and has not received a reply. Tracy Terrell is out until Monday. Jeff Snedeker came at the request of the committee regarding the above charge. Currently the committee is spinning their wheels. Carolyn has been a fabulous source of information. Most everyone agrees it does exist, but they don't agree that it occurs in their department. Tim Dittmer asked what the driving force behind this. Has the average grade GPA gone up over time or have the across campus grades varied widely and invoked competition amongst departments. Jeff indicated that the answer is yes. Primary driving force is that Senate has received complaints from faculty. What is happening one person says here is a situation and provides an antidote. Jeff said the committee should start

with the presumption that grade inflation exists. Self correction is the most desirable solution. We know there are universities that have GPAs that serve as a bench mark, others have colleges within the university with GPA benchmarks. Jeff asked whether the committee can address in some useful way without necessarily going into individual situations. Jeff asked that the committee look at the first three items on the charge and say if they are workable or not. List advantages and disadvantages of each. Certainly hope for more than that, but that would be a minimum. If there is something in policy that needed to be done then the committee could propose any additions or changes. Joe suggested that we look at the data 20 years back to see if grades have increased over the years.

Kim suggested that the committee break down these each take a part and meet next week with that information.

1. a specific GPA
2. the use numerical scores instead of letter grades
3. adding class rankings or class averages next to student letter grades
4. the effect of sharing grade information/distributions among faculty by department/college (i.e., self-correction)

Was decided by the committee to put the grade inflation charge on hold until they can get the data regarding grades over the past 20 years.

Would like to have Scott Carlson come and talk with committee. The committee would like to see standards and policies within each department.

Next week is the second to last week of the quarter. The committee will meet next week to discuss new charge and not meet the last two weeks of the quarter and not the first week of the spring quarter.

New Business: New charge regarding catalog survey.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Next meeting date February 28, Barge 410 (and telecon)