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USM Council of Chairs

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**Council of Chairs
September 9, 2012**

Minutes

Members Present: Chuck Tardy, Phyllis Jestice, Michael Miles, Leisa Flynn, David Duhon, Wayne Kelly, Tom O'Brien, Thelma Roberson, Steve Cloud, Tim Rehner, Glen Shearer, Clifton Dixon, Sabine Heinhorst, Tisha Zelner

Members Absent: Joe Olmi, Rick Green, Melanie Gilmore

Guests: Denis Wiesenburg, Bill Powell, Karen Reidenbach, Jeff Hinton

1. Call to Order – Micheal Miles, chair
2. Election of Secretary – Duhon nominated Roberson; Rehner seconded; Roberson elected by unanimous vote.
3. Approval of Agenda – Jestice made motion, seconded by Zelner; unanimous vote.
4. Approval of Minutes – Jestice made motion, seconded by Duhon; unanimous vote. Dixon requested updates on item 6.2 Gulf Coast Guidelines. Miles suggested the council ask Dr. Wiesenburg.
5. Guest Speaker – Provost Wiesenburg. Expressed his belief that department chairs are have the most important jobs as they are responsible for academics. Everything above the chairs level is for support. He outlined his five priorities:
 - a) Faculty mentoring and development: Asked deans to appoint a mentor for each new faculty member and to appoint a representative to serve on a task force, chaired by Jestice, to make recommendations on faculty development issues. Commended History Department for their well defined Promotion and Tenure documents and mentoring.
 - b) Salary Compression – Acknowledged that salary for a few faculty are above CUPA averages, but most are below. The decision to hire new faculty at CUPA average was strategic and forces the issue of salary compression. Has \$400,000 to apply to toward salary compression. Rather than giving 400 faculty a \$1,000 raise, he has asked each college to prioritize and provide him with a “top 10 list” and a 2nd list of 10 for further consideration for salary increases. VP for Finance, Estes, and Interim President Lucas are supportive of this effort. Plan for salary should include faculty productivity, not just discrepancy between salary and CUPA average. Goal is that salary increases would appear in October pay.
 - c) Gulf Coast / Hattiesburg relations: GC has a complex structure. He believes the way to “make things work better” is to work through the chairs. Chairs are responsible for academics within their departments regardless of location; have to give chairs the authority to make it work. He said there is no requirement for chairs to be on the Hattiesburg campus and could be on the Gulf Coast. The focus should be on making “it” work form the department level.

d) IVN – The Provost’s Office has \$130,000 form Carry Forward funds; He wants to add IVN rooms, but wants feedback from chairs on the most efficient use of these funds. The Gulf Coast recently upgraded systems. Joseph Green Hall has one IVN room with an upgraded system. He suggested perhaps adding one large room, one small room and using remaining funds for a server for streaming video.

e) Provosts Initiative-

1. Retention - Wants all faculty to recognize their responsibility to help students succeed. Gave example from a Provost at another institution where students who are struggling with a course such as MAT 101 or College Algebra were allowed “do-overs,” i.e., allowed to retake exams after a 2-week period. He also mentioned STARFISH, a system (used at University of Texas, El Paso) that would interface with SOAR and send automated messages once grades on assignments were posted, e.g., students scoring 90 or above would get a message that they did a great job; middle and low performing students would get different messages that were prescribed by the instructor. The focus should shift from “retention” to helping students succeed.

2. Faculty Development – he wants to see a more robust faculty development program related to P& T and teaching. He envisions a menu of courses/workshops designed for faculty which are driven, not be LEC, but by the Provost’s Office and Deans. Chairs could prescribe a set of number of workshops for faculty to attend each year. Most other university have an office of faculty development in the Provost’s Office. We have LEC. He commended Tom O’Brien and David Wells for their excellent presentations during new faculty orientation.

3. Research engagement; Dr. Gordon Cannon is providing more resources. He encouraged more involvement of students, especially undergraduates; Commended efforts to host the UG Research Symposium.

4. Faculty Hiring Process. Wants to update hiring processes and provide what he envisions as a “roadmap” or “playbook” for the hiring process. Would include draft letters from rejection to offer letters. This would make the process easier for chairs and create a set of expectations for the process.

Question and Answer Session

Chairs discussed concerns with Graduate School: Problems with Admissions Pro. Breakdown in communications regarding processes; letters being sent to students who had previously been dismissed without going through the chairs. Paperwork sent to the GS is routinely lost. Departments can’t see applicants’ materials when they have incomplete application packets. Miles offered to continue this conversation on the listserv to vet concerns. Wiesenburg suggested inviting the Graduate Dean to a meet with COC.

Chairs discussed the fact that some deans were not evaluated by chairs/faculty, e.g., Library, Honors, Graduate School and suggested there was no real accountability. Suggested this created a hole in the system. Powell suggested brining this to the faculty senate. Wiesenburg stated that the Graduate Dean was under his preview and that he evaluated feedback he received from chairs.

Wiesenburg mentioned there would be cuts to journals subscriptions in the library, but has not yet seen the plan. He has concerns regarding the operations of the library and is

bringing in an outside team of library deans to make recommendations. This group will likely want to meet with COC to solicit input.

Chair discussed the Salary Determination for Chairs handout. Concerns were expressed that the next to the last paragraph may disincentiveize chairs from writing grants and from teaching in the summer. Wiesenburg explained that the idea was to create some standardized fashion for dealing with chair supplements. Chairs who wanted to buy-out their summers could do so and this draft outlined the process. Chairs were encouraged to submit their own plan if this one was not sufficient. Wiesenburg noted that whether you are paid 9 or 12 months, you were chair for 12 months. He conceptualized buy-outs for research as being spread over 12 months, not taking off the entire summer to do research.

Chairs discussed a former salary policy where chairs could retain 10% of salary when they went back to faculty. Wiesenburg supports that idea, but the next president will have to decide. He indicated that the 22% supplement included summer pay and should be considered as a “floor” - chairs could still negotiate for higher supplements.

Reidenbach reported that the CEP (computer exchange program) went better this year and 75 new faculty members had received computers this year; Was concerned that some faculty members were buying a second computer with start-up funds. She also solicited feedback from chairs on CEP. Wiesenburg indicated that start-up funds are for faculty to buy what they need. Faculty were not being micromanaged on how funds were spent; but, faculty would be held accountable through third year review.

Agenda Items 6-10: No Committee reports

11. Evaluation of Teaching Performance – O’Brien. Committee has met and will meet again in October.

12. Standards for Classroom Conduct Committee – O’Brien. Policy now available on Provost’s website; taught in Eng 101 and 102 with guest speakers from Dr. Eddie Holloway’s office.

13. Old Business – none

14. New Business

a) Election of Member to the Space Utilization and Allocation Committee – Miles recommended Duhon noting that he was already serving on this committee. COC approved Duhon as COC representative on this committee by acclamation.

b) CoC Listserv – the correct address is coc@usm.edu . Miles will use this for discussions and generation of agenda items. Hopefully, this will limit time spent discussing issues during meetings which will be limited to 1:30.

c) Presidential Search – no updates.

d) Eagle on-line policies – Miles will distribute; please share with all chairs. LEC created the document to represent “best practices” – we need to review it carefully. Powell noted the word “policy” is included, so there is an implication to “implement”

these practices. O'Brien shared that COEP had reviewed the document and forwarded concerns to Sheri Rawls (LEC); one main concern is that there was no faculty input. Powell indicated there were faculty reps on the committee that worked on the policies. Miles asked for feedback on the policy asap – the Academic Leadership Council meets Monday and will discuss these policies. (The ALC is an expanded Dean's Cabinet that includes chairs and faculty. Miles is our CoC representative.)

e) Suggestions for Future Speakers: Linda Rasmussen (O'Brien); Gordon Cannon (Roberson); Corrie Marsh (Roberson); Carole Kiehl (Miles). Tardy made a motion to add a second meeting each month; one meeting for speakers and the other for business. O'Brien amended the motion to include an "as needed" clause. (Miles confirmed this was not in conflict with bylaws.) Tardy seconded. Motion passed with unanimous vote.

Adjourned.