

Liberal Arts Council Meeting

Flowers 230

2:00 p.m. 8 December 2021

Presiding: Dean Mary Brennan

Present: Manda Anderson, Natalie Ceballos, Christina Conlee, Ken Grasso, Craig Hanks, Lucy Harney, Paul Hart, Jeff Helgeson, Yongmei Lu, John Mckiernan-Gonzalez, Gloria Martinez, Aimee Roundtree (recording), Vicki Smith, Toni Watt

Guests: no one

Absent: Susan Day

Dr. Helgeson moved to amend the minutes regarding the process for getting new flyers.

Dr. Grasso moved to approve the minutes. Dr. Helgeson seconded. It was accepted with unanimous approval.

University Policy Committee

Dr. Harney distributed handouts from the task force to review college policy and procedure statements. She reviewed the charge of the task force. Their focus is to improve external access to departmental and college policies, particularly the annual faculty evaluation policy and the merit policy. Policies should also undergo an established review process. Policies should include the date of the last review.

LAC can build consensus about how to make policies accessible. Dean Brennan asked that LAC members bring suggestions to share during the January meeting. She asked that LAC to look at other department websites to review how they organize policies.

Overall, the initiative is meant to make key policies easier to find and access.

CAD Update

There is an initiative to revise personnel committee guidelines. The Council of Academic Chairs and CAD have concerns about them. They were returned to the Council of Chairs for review.

Registration decreased compared to this point in the semester last year. Another large graduating class (300 more students graduating than last year) will affect the overall numbers returning in the fall.

University Administration is concerned about what the decrease might mean for retention. Manda Anderson and Dean Brennan recommended sending reminder emails to returning students.

Several new master's students were admitted but have not registered. Outreach from The Graduate College and graduate coordinators was recommended. Remind students that Bobcat Cares is reopening on Jan. 18, but only registered students can apply.

There was a proposal to the Board of Regents (JCK) to eliminate out-of-state tuition for online programs. Consideration of the policy might not take place until after the governor's race. They will pilot programs (including in the College of Liberal Arts) to monitor the impact.

The Board of Regents might request a tuition increase. Budget reductions are not under discussion. Other line items would be eliminated if necessary.

Susan Morrison was named Regents Professor.

University Administration will monitor the Omicron situation. We will have the same options for starting in Spring as we did in Fall. Faculty will have some leeway on how to start. Unless there is a huge surge, business will proceed as usual. Curative will be here until Dec. 17th and return on Jan. 3.

Reminders

The Dean reminded the Council to answer their phones on energy conservation days. Units can transfer calls to Teams numbers to make sure that someone is answering their phone.

Before Thanksgiving, the University was open. Dec. 20 and 21 were energy conservation days, which require comp time to take off. The Council should mark the days are and plan accordingly.

The Dean stressed the importance of Bobcat Days. When prospective students attend with their parents, it increases their likelihood of enrolling. The Dean warned about leaving a bad impression if families come and no one is there to meet them. We had a good turnout at the Liberal Arts session (30-50 people). Please find substitutes if necessary to make sure that someone is at the table.

University Advancement is interested in partnering with the College to arrange paid internships in DC (virtual options a possibility) hosted by Texas State alumni for current students (UG and grad) who participated in Head Start. The Council should send names and questions about this opportunity to the Dean. The details are under development. Dr. Grasso recommended circulating a message about the opportunity.

The Dean reminded the Council to complete reporting on occupational licenses (HB1508).

All were invited to the Salon Series with Dr. Jennifer Devine.

Dr. Roundtree submitted part of the NEH proposal to ACLS.

Dr. Lu invited all to the student conference in Spring. Dean Brennan noted that these presentations might be repurposed for the college UG Research Expo.

The Dean discusses the anonymity and confidentiality of course evaluations. There were concerns that using Canvas would breach both. Both are kept until after grades are submitted and posted.

Dr. Lu alerted the Council that changing names of Canvas sites might delink electronic course evaluations from the site. She warned about deleting the department abbreviation. Departments might have manually link merged sections. Dr. Helgeson reported that the evaluation process is not user friendly. Dr. Harney reported student difficulties finding course evaluation notifications. Dean Brennan asked the Council to monitor participation in course evaluations for changes.

Dr. Grasso asked about temporary funding for the Spring. Dean Brennan answered that if courses are full, funding is available for instructors and IAs.

Dean Brennan told the Council to assume the same summer funding as last year.

Manda Anderson asked about the logistics of opening new sections. Dean Brennan shared that opening new sections is contingent on finding faculty to teach them and whether per-course faculty were available as a backup. These variables also depend on the course level and expertise.

Manda Anderson shared info about spring registration and transfers. Returning students and transfer students are delaying registration. Only 168 out of 400 students registered for courses. Also, 115 students still need advising. Advisors are telling students to register for what they can and check back in January.

Dr. Helgeson shared updates from the Council of Academic Chairs and Directors ad hoc meeting in December. They are waiting on ECF dispersals.