

University of Denver
Faculty Senate
Minutes
January 30, 2009
Craig Hall, Community Room

Senators (or proxies) present: Bill Anderson, Don Bacon, Rick Barbour, Rodney Buxton, Victor Castellani, Frederique Chevillot, Bonnie Clark, Sandy Dixon, Sylvia Hall-Ellis, Michele Hanna, John Hill (Executive Secretary), Jennifer Hoffman, Peggy Keeran, Ray Kireilis, Brian Kiteley, Maciej Kumosa, Frank Laird, Rick Leaman, Scott Leutenegger, Michael Levine-Clark (President), Mario Lopez, Chris Malloy, Don McCubbrey, Keith Miller, Mia Mulvey, Rahul Nair, Kim Newman, Paul Novak, Maik Nwosu, Scott Phillips, Tom Quinn, Charles Reichardt, Nancy Sampson, George Straface, Paul Sutton, Linda Tate, Matt Taylor, Nancy Wadsworth, and Wilfried Wilms.

Call to Order

Michael Levine-Clark, Faculty Senate President, called the meeting to order at noon and welcomed everyone present. A motion to approve the minutes from November 21, 2009 was seconded and approved.

Provost's Report

The Provost reported the following:

Construction Projects

A gift-funded addition (along the south wall) to Ben Cherrington is underway. The Renaissance Room restoration will be delayed from the end of February 2009 until no sooner than the end of March 2009. The changes will be dramatic; it is being returned to original condition as closely as possible. This project has been funded with gainshare. The soccer stadium project comprises three elements: the stadium itself; a weight room under the stadium seats; and an art annex on the south side near the Shwayder Art Building. This project is gift funded. The site for the Morgridge College of Education has been cleared; ground breaking is expected within about two weeks.

Searches

Dean, College of Education—A professional search firm is assisting this search. The committee is in the process of three days of meetings with several candidates. On campus interviews are expected in about three weeks. The goal is a July 1, 2009 start for the new dean.

Associate Provost for Graduate Studies (chaired by Peter Buirski) and Associate Provost for Research (chaired by James Herbert Williams)—The search committees have been selected and are in the initial stages of their work. These are internal searches; a search firm will not be used.

Budget

We received “many many” more applications for the severance offer than were expected: 106 applications were filed, representing 91.93 FTEs. The numbers reported in the Clarion and elsewhere were incorrect. Virtually all applications were approved. The package provides six months’ salary, but no benefits. In addition, approximately 80 vacant positions were frozen in October. Thus, there is a significant reduction in staff salary costs.

Budget development involves 47 units. We are trying to be strategic in the allocation of staff; the current vacancies are not distributed randomly. There is excellent and thoughtful cooperation and coordination among Vice Chancellors, Deans, and Directors. We are trying also to create a significant reserve fund. We are about 70% complete with these meetings.

There will be no new funding for programs. There will be extractions; these will not be formulaic. Gainshare and expenses will be taken into account on a unit-by-unit basis. There will be expense cuts in each unit; the Provost will review and approve each such cut. We do not want negative impacts on our core teaching and research mission.

We are in extraordinarily good financial shape in comparison with other universities, primarily because our operating budget is not dependent on endowment income. However, a few parts of the university, such as Daniels, are much more dependent on endowment income for their operating budget and some of their endowments are under water. Our financial situation is strong enough that we can deal with such situations.

All of our indicators are strong. Winter returning students, at 97%, are higher than almost all recent years. Business and law students are also returning at rates higher than the past few years. Tuition payments are coming in faster than they were at this time last year. Applications for fall are at 10,544, much higher than the 8,118 at this time last year, or 6,122 two years ago. Yields are significantly down from the previous year so we are increasing our acceptance rate. This is the largest group of high school graduates for the next 12 years. They and their parents are very savvy about costs and financial aid; they are seeking the best possible deal. Parents are also seeking lower cost options. This will likely put increased pressure on state and community colleges. Hence, many typical DU applicants will likely land at high quality public institutions. We are working to obtain as many applications as possible, trying to be competitive on financial aid, and increasing campus visitation. Students who visit DU are far more likely to come here. We will increase financial aid by \$3 million, mostly merit aid. Thus far the fall class looks strong academically. Test scores and GPAs are slightly higher than for last year’s entering class. We do not expect to get a lift from the stimulus package. We are concerned about, and monitoring, the ability of families to get loans. Our goals remain 1145 new students, and 220 transfer students.

We will be fine if the students arrive in September. Just in case, our contingency plans include a reserve pool, and the units are modeling potential shortfalls of 5%, 10%, 15% and 20%. We have the lowest tuition increase in 10 years. We are lowering our costs, and building a reserve pool. If all goes well, we will be able to invest this money in faculty and programs, and financial aid.

In response to questions the Provost added:

We do not need to over admit. We have a large wait list to draw from. Over admission of 100 students would stress faculty and classroom space.

Things are a bit stressful at the budget offices across campus. All universities are performing similar budget evacuations and enacting cost-reducing measures.

We don't know whether the fall class will be the only class affected by the recession so we will not spend all of the reserve pool immediately.

We will not provide a retention bonus for staff; however, we did provide a 3.5% merit pool.

There will be significant restructuring of several units including Advancement, Athletics, and Events and Conferencing. Reorganization of academic units is not contemplated.

Assessment and Institutional Research--Janette Benson and Katie DeBoer

Janette Benson:

Last January the combined offices of Academic Assessment and Institutional Research were reorganized. Janette Benson is the Director of Academic Assessment, and Katie DeBoer is Director of Institutional Research. There is some overlap and the offices coordinate closely.

The Academic Assessment office is focused primarily on assessment of student learning. Some of the key activities include:

Assessment of department assessments—Some of the department assessments are not working particularly well any longer. These reports should help the department. How do we know if assessments are effective? We will migrate to a two year cycle rather than annual so there is time to collect and evaluate data, and make improvements. This two year cycle will be phased in.

Faculty development funds—provided funds last year for assessment. Obtained funds last year for a conference on graduate and professional student learning. This summer's efforts will be focused on helping departments with assessment.

Helping with preparations for the HLC visit November 8-10, 2010.

Katie DeBoer:

Institutional Research activities include:

Compilation of instructor evaluations and reporting of the aggregated data.

Preparation of external reports including federal education report, U.S. News and World Reports, College Board reports.

Preparation of internal reports such as Profiles, enrollment reports, persistence reports, year-over-year retention, graduation rate, student success, course grades, student surveys, and alumni surveys.

Tobacco-Free Campus

President Levine-Clark stated two documents regarding this topic were distributed prior to today's meeting, and that we will discuss them further today and vote on the issue at our next meeting.

Many senators expressed concerns about the enforceability and fairness of such a rule, even though they are not smokers and do not want to be exposed to second hand smoke. Concerns were expressed about the potential impacts on neighbors, and how visitors to campus would be handled. It was also pointed out that an informal survey of students showed that even non-tobacco using students were concerned about the administration imposing such a rule. The rule would place a disproportionate burden on those who are farthest from off campus areas. Robust tobacco cessation help was advocated. Some questioned the merits of "criminalizing" possession of a legal product.

President Levine-Clark asked senators to consult with their departments and be prepared to vote at our next meeting.

Committee Reports

Academic Planning, Brian Kiteley—Discussions about grade inflation are underway, please contact Brian if you have suggestions or comments. There were slightly fewer FRF grants than normal this fall, so some extra funds are available this spring. Grant applications are due at the end of February.

Personnel, Don McCubrey—Sabbatical reviews have been completed. The promotion and tenure document may need to be revised to reflect the public good policy. The committee is discussing a better process for promotions for non-tenure track faculty. The faculty grievance process is "still on the merry-go-round." The committee is working on the administrator evaluations. They are considering specific instruments for each administrative level. They are also seeking means to increase participation. Nominations for faculty awards are encouraged. They are due in early February. The committee is seeking to increase in the number of nominations. The faculty research website project is advancing slowly; it is being piloted at NSM.

Student Relations, Bonnie Clark—All faculty should look carefully at the multicultural excellence documents. Students would like to see these considered in faculty evaluations. The committee is discussing whether changes to the APT documents might be needed.

President Levine-Clark stated the PROF review committees this year would be smaller, with membership coming from past PROF awardees. The area review committees will not have members from all departments but are being selected to broadly represent the disciplines. A final review committee will consist of the President of the Faculty Senate, the Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Research, and the chairs of the area review committees.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was introduced, seconded, and passed. President Levine-Clark adjourned the meeting at 1:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

John Hill
Faculty Senate Executive Secretary