Minutes
CAPI Meeting
November 3, 2010

Members Attending: Acord, Aguilú de Murphy, Byers, Class, Courtright, Fitzgibbons, Meissner

Members Excused: Niyonsaba, Walker-Dalhouse

Guests: Dean Roby Blust and Professor Chris Shaw

Meeting Called to Order: 4:05 p.m.

Review of Minutes: Accepted with minor revisions.

Review of Charge to CAPI for AY 2010-2011 from UAS

Status of Financial Aid Committee:

- Roby Blust mentioned that, historically, we had 3 types of major scholarships: (a) “Ignatian,” which is tiered and based on high school academic achievement but no longer strictly linked to academic performance at MU; (b) “Competition,” which are college/school based; and (c) and a host of other scholarships that range from full-tuition and stipend (e.g., the Burke Scholarship) to minor money helps (e.g., $250). The MU philosophy of “scholarships” based on merit has changed in the last ten years as the financial landscape for higher education has changed. Now, like other universities, MU tends to give much more “financial aid” than merit-based scholarships. Chris Shaw supplied the history and background regarding the present situation in which UAS has a Financial Aid Committee which had, until 2 or 3 years ago, three charges: (a) the ability to make policy changes and exceptions regarding withdrawal or reinstatement of scholarships to students; (b) the awarding of “Book Scholarships”; (c) service as an “appeals committee” for lost scholarships due to extenuating circumstances.
In the conversation, all came to agree that financial aid has overshadowed merit-based scholarships because of larger, national issues. Thus, the University’s policies regarding financial aid have changed. The former provost and the Office of Financial Aid in 2007-2008 decided to make all scholarships and financial aid renewable with a GPA of 2.0. This decision coupled with a nationally experienced need to emphasize ongoing financial aid over merit-based scholarships leaves the Financial Aid Committee without cases to review or appeals to hear. Indeed, the Office of Financial Aid has adopted a statistically based financial aid award system called the Maguire Model.

To the question, “Are there groups receiving financial aid that may need an appeal process and don’t have one?” the answer was, “No.”

To the question, “How could this turn of events come to be and not be more thoroughly examined by concerned faculty?” the answer was that when the decision was made to eliminate the 3.0 GPA criterion for retaining a scholarship, that effectively moved most merit-based scholarships into the realm of financial aid and became a way to retain qualified, good but not necessarily scholastically high performing students. In addition, the Office of Financial Aid was moved from the Provost’s Office to fit under the umbrella of the Senior Vice President; this happened in 2008.

While there was considerable consternation among CAPI members why this process came to be and why faculty no longer have a more active voice in supporting student scholarships, it was unanimously agreed among the members of CAPI present (guests had left the meeting) that the Statutes of the UAS should be amended to reflect that at present the Financial Aid Committee has no functions. It was also suggested that a larger and more effective role for faculty in supporting merit-based scholarships might be within the college/school-awarded scholarships. Furthermore, it was suggested that when the national financial landscape improves and merit-based scholarships are more feasible, CAPI could recommend and guide policies for merit-based scholarships and, thus, have a stronger voice in rewarding student academic achievement at MU.

Two Recommendations were made regarding the UAS Financial Aid Committee and moving into the future with issues of student scholarships and student financial aid as they affect shared governance:
1. That, since there is no discernable reason or the Financial Aid Committee to continue to meet, it should be dissolved and the Statutes of the University Academic Senate should reflect this dissolution.

2. That, whereas in the interest of advancing the model of shared governance, be it resolved that the Provost will bring issues and proposals for academic policy changes to CAPI for review, advice, and referral to the University Academic Senate, where applicable. [See Statutes of the UAS, section 9.01, Financial Aid Committee]

Follow-up of UAS action to support CAPI’s recommendation on the use of contingent (participating) faculty.

- All members of CAPI agreed that we would like to meet with Ms. Suzanne Abler, Assistant Provost for Division Operations, at our next meeting to discuss legacy commitments and budgetary shortfalls in the operations of the Division of Academic Affairs. There is a profound desire to be better informed regarding the University’s budgetary process and, where possible, to have a voice in that process.

Next meeting: Monday, December 6, 2010, 4-6 p.m. in Clark Hall.

Meeting adjourned: 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by John P. Fitzgibbons, S.J.