Minutes of CFW, November 16, 2012

The meeting began at 2:00. Present were John Cotton, Kerry Egdorf (guest), Rebecca Sanders, Richard Provinelli, and James Sankovitz.

The committee discussed the list of peer institutions that Marquette University uses for comparison. In an article, the Chronicle of Higher Education reported that most universities try to focus upward in choosing schools with which to compare. Marquette University however, has selected a group where it is at the mean on most measures. Members also thought it odd that four schools of the 14 were in the District of Columbia. It was discussed as to whether the committee should investigate what schools might be appropriate for comparison. However, the committee felt that other groups, including the strategic planning group, would be more appropriate for doing this.

Other potential issues for investigation were also discussed. On a positive note, the success of the wellness efforts to reduce the growth in health care costs was noted. In terms of problems, the members brought up the civility and bullying policies that were discussed last year, improving the development of department chairs, and the growth in number of administrators versus faculty. The committee also considered faculty involvement in online education and also institutional sustainability but that the topic of adjunct/part-time faculty status was deemed more important.

After considerable discussion the consensus of the members was that the committee should address concerns about the changes in the teaching culture at Marquette University due to the growing dependence on part-time instructors. It was also felt that as part of this inquiry the committee would address the welfare of these part-time faculty.

In the discussion the committee identified three groups of instructors: tenure-track faculty, full-time instructors/clinical/visiting faculty, and part-time instructors/clinical faculty. The last group did not include graduate students who teach as part of their program.

John Cotton agreed to contact the Department of Institutional Research to gather information on the percentages of part-time faculty across the university. Members of the committee were also asked to gather information as to what their college or department was doing in regards to part-time instructors. This information would then be distributed to the rest of the committee before the next meeting, probably sometime early in the spring semester.

The committee dismissed at 3:30.

Minutes taken by John Cotton.