Committee on Academic Policies and Issues
Year-End Report, 2009-2010

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CAPI had a successful year, if success is measured in terms of learning. We learned a great deal, particularly about the issue of part-time and participating faculty at MU and the ways that this issue is related to the budget. We hope that we can build on this knowledge in future years, while encouraging the entire University to monitor its use of part-time and participating faculty more closely.

CAPI continues to work on the year’s mandate to address the role(s) of part-time faculty members at Marquette. We conducted extensive research into the national situation, as outlined by the AAUP, and we also investigated the situation at Marquette.

Ed de St. Aubin sent the following questions to all Chairs: 1) What is your experience with contingent faculty in your department? 2) Has your department identified problems and issues related to contingent faculty employment, and if so, how have you addressed them? 3) How can the University best support your efforts to use contingent faculty in an equitable and effective manner?

While the responses to these questions varied, one concern that was raised repeatedly in various forms involved the way that part-time faculty are compensated. The trouble is not that they are paid too little per se, but rather that decisions about their compensation are made (or seem to be made) with little input from the departments involved.

These survey results led us to investigate the university’s budget process, which in turn led us to issue a report including the following recommendations:

1. Fully fund permanent teaching needs (those that recur year after year) with permanent money.
2. Tie budgets more closely to instructional needs; in other words, link revenues and expenses.
3. If the University moves towards a multi-year budget and planning system, or as the current system is refined, include faculty input and
make the details of the process transparent.
4. To close the feedback loop, CAPI should re-visit the question of participating faculty in 4-5 years. Data should in the meantime be effectively collected and organized by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, so that more meaningful and specific recommendations can be developed.

Clearly, the question of how part-time faculty are hired, retained, and compensated should be a critical part of Marquette’s planning and vision.

In addition, the Committee crafted a finals-week policy for weather-related disruptions, which will be discussed at the next UAS meeting:

Faculty should include, in their syllabi, a weather-cancellation policy for the final exam. They should specify one of the following two options, in case of inclement weather: 1) the final will be administered in a mode (such as online) that does not require students to be on campus; or 2) the final will be cancelled and grades calculated on the basis of what has been done so far.

In sum, CAPI had an instructive and productive year.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Sorby
Chair