University Board of Undergraduate Studies
Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2013

Present: Noel Adams, Ed Blumenthal, Marcus Braga-Alves, Sandra Cleveland, Sarah Feldner, Behnam Ghasemzadeh, Mary Anne Siderits, James Richie, Christine Shaw, John Su, Alex Lahr

Meeting was called to order at 1:04 pm by Sarah Feldner.

Reflection was provided by Mary Anne Siderits.

The minutes of the November 6, 2013 were unanimously approved as submitted. Richie moved to approve and a second by Blumenthal.

Discussion of Graduation Credit Hour Requirements

Context of discussion and process – It was suggested that since more detail was needed, UBUS would address the discussion questions provided, beginning a list of information needed and begin process in earnest in January 2014.

What other information is needed? UBUS discussed what additional information was needed, which resulted in a list of questions and action items. It was noted that the credit hour chart provided for this meeting had some inaccuracies. The discussion also referenced information on the second chart which outlined other college’s degree requirements (credit hours to graduate and core credit hours) which resulted in questions on the history of credit hours needed to graduate? 130, 128, 120? It was noted that many Jesuit peer schools require 120 credit hours to graduate. Additional information needed is noted below.

1. MU Colleges need to confirm:
   - **Action**: Each college and program confirm credits to graduate, based upon the categories provided in the chart; account for dual credit such as PSYC 1001 for the core and major.
   - **Action**: Each college confirm whether students could graduate in four years by totaling credit hours for the major, core and if a minor is required, the minor. Further discussion on changing from 128 credits minimum (except for the College of Professional Studies 126 credits) to 120 credits. Concerns from both Engineering (ABET accreditation requirements) and Communication (accrediting body want a rounded education; therefore cannot have over a certain percentage of courses in one area) were mentioned.
   - **Action**: Each college to check whether or not requirements for a discipline can be completed within 120 credits.

2. Additional Data Needed –
   - What number of credits do students complete at MU? Separate out AP credits, and other transfer credits.
At what credit total, is the point at which a student fulfilled all graduation requirements and could have graduated? Compare most efficient way to graduate with the number of credits completed upon graduation.

If a student completed all graduation requirements, can they stay for an extra semester? Ask Financial Aid.

Percent of students that take 15 credits in a semester? Committee members noted that any discussion of 120 credit hours required to graduate should be connected to the total number of credits a student could take in a semester. If our goal is to serve academic intellect of our students, we need consider the impact of taking more than 15 credits in a semester which may allow the circumstance to graduate in less than 4 years.

Determine if students are more interested in trying to complete in less than 4 years, possibly taking more summer courses. (Some universities have three year graduation tracks.)

What is the 4 year graduation rate of our students? 60% of MU students graduate in 4 years. In comparison of other schools. 80% of our students graduate in 6 years. Bring to 120 credits may not impact to decrease time to graduation, but rather will increase the percentage of graduating in 4 years.

What contributes to MU’s higher than norm percentage of students graduating in four years? Pay attention to students, advising, admissions would say we pick the right students for MU.

Identify persistence to graduation by college.

What would the impact of professional programs be? Where would colleges change or reduce credits to accomplish decreased credit hours to graduate?

Confirm debt load. MU is one of the colleges and university with the highest debt load - $35,000. Compare debt load to income upon graduation. Determine if calculation includes all students or only those with a debt? Should students without a debt be included in the calculation? What percent of students have debt?

If go to 120, will colleges start changing degree requirements? This may be answered once the exact number of credits to graduate is determined.

Role of the core.

Who do we want to consult in this process and what do we want to ask them?

- Financial Aid – Sarah will connect with Susan Teerink.
- Finance (Noel Stoiber) - What impact would changing credit hours required to graduate have on budget? Revenues?
- Committee on Academic Procedures – Sarah and or Gary to go to them to ask them who we need to talk to?
- Glean the OIRA database for specific information
- Dean’s Council – talk with later after more information is gathered and able to answer questions they may present. In the interim, there should be an informational announcement to keep Dean’s Council informed. Suggested that this announcement be at senate. It was suggested that
the announcement be framed around the challenges for students today and considering the impact of 128 credits vs. possibly 120 credits.

- Admissions (Connie Bennett) – Impact of change relevant to transfer students. If competition requires 120 credits to graduate, do students compare and decide to go elsewhere.

- Student Affairs perspective – How many hours of work, on average, do most students perform while enrolled in school? What would the change in credit hours to graduate do for our students and their experience with their education? Does this topic bleed into the academic honesty issues because of time, work, school and the distress of trying to balance? What is driving all of this?

- Look at what peer institutions are doing. Discussion on the cost of an MU education possibly being misinterpreted as wanting to rush students out of the institution rather than the intended goal of providing balance.

**Timeline?** – It was discussed and determined that determining a timeline is premature at this point because of the amount of data necessary to consider and review.

Assignment to committee members –

Go to those majors for which you are most familiar and answer (in most efficient form) the following questions.

- What is the minimum number of credits to graduate? Minimum number of credits minus the elective courses. Absolute required courses accounting for the dual application courses. Provide that information to Sarah Feldner.

- Any additional comments or items come to mind, please share with Sarah.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Cleveland