University Board of Undergraduate Studies

Meeting Minutes

January 15, 2014

Present: Noel Adams, Ed Blumenthal, Marcus Braga-Alves, Sarah Feldner, Behnam Ghasemzadeh, Alex Lahr, Gary Meyer, Stephanie Quade, Jim Richie, Christine Shaw, Mary Anne Siderits, John Su, Joan Whipp

Meeting was called to order at 1:05 by Sarah Felder.

Reflection was provided by Jim Richie.

The minutes of December 11, 2013 were unanimously approved as submitted. Moved to approve by Jim Richie and was seconded by Ed Blumenthal.

Gary Meyer discussed termination of the interdisciplinary minor in catholic studies. The main reason is lack of sufficient student interest. At present, there is one student enrolled in the minor. There have been either one or two students in the minor during the past five years. There are no budgetary concerns about termination of the minor. He added that presently there are about 40 minors at Marquette with less than 10 students enrolled in each of them. It was suggested that UBUS needs to review these programs and discuss their academic status.

The proposal was moved to approve by Christine Shaw and second by Joel Whip. Noel Adams abstained from voting. The rest of the committee members approved. The proposal will be presented and discussed at the academic senate.

Graduation Credit Requirements

The graduation credit requirement was discussed at the last UBUS meeting. It was suggested to reduce the requirement from 128 to 120 credit hours. At present, most University programs have more than 120 credits requirement for graduation. In contrast, most peer universities have about 120 credits requirement. It was mentioned that University should recommend to individual programs to reduce credit hours from 128 to 120. However, this proposal will not be mandatory and will be left at the discretion of individual programs or departments. It was suggested that University should state a minimum required number of credit hours for graduation.

Ed Blumenthal mentioned that the college of arts and sciences strategic plan includes discussion about reducing of the graduation credit requirements.

Roby Blust, Dean of Admissions, attended the meeting at 1:45 pm. He discussed issues related to reducing credit hour requirements and answered questions.

Issues mentioned by Mr. Blust:
Very few High School students ask about graduation requirements or credits at the time of application or campus visit. However, they do ask about number of courses they have to take at MU. They often compare time to graduation between Marquette and other Universities.

The reduced graduation credit can affect MU if it changes the rates of student graduation at 4 yrs and 6 yrs. Currently, these rates are 59% and 79%, respectively. It may also affect the way students can combine majors, minors, or study abroad programs. It will also affect the likelihood of students transferring to Marquette.

The reduction in graduation requirements will not likely affect the number of applicants or freshman enrollment in the short term but will most likely affect the University in the long term.

Joel Whip asked if reducing graduation credits would affect Marquette in Newsweek and World Report’s ranking of schools. Mr. Blust responded that it probably will not affect the students and families final choice of a school.

Mr. Blust emphasized that reducing the graduation credit requirements will enable the University to say that a student enrolled in a 4-year program will actually be able to finish and graduate in 4 years.

Christine Shaw asked if families or students ask about the core of common studies? Mr. Blust responded that only a few ask about the core. However, they usually ask about the type of courses offered at the University.

Gary Meyer asked about other individuals at the University that need to be consulted about reducing credit hours? Mr. Blust suggested Mrs. Anne Deahl in office of the provost, office of finance, and financial aid office.

Mr. Blust left the meeting at 2:18.

John Su suggested/asked the question: Is it possible to achieve the educational values/goals that we hold dear at Marquette with a 120 credit hours curriculum? For example, University mission, goals of core of common studies, intellectual maturity/outcome, in-depth engagement in studies/education, achieving cumulative effects of education/time/learning by students.

Stephanie Quade followed by asking: are there any unanticipated consequences to reducing credit hours?

Gary Meyer mentioned that he will ask University officials if 128 graduation credit requirement is an official University decision?

Meeting was adjourned at 2:30.
Respectfully Submitted by Behnam Ghasemzadeh