University Board of Undergraduate Studies

Meeting Minutes

October 2, 2013

Present: Noel Adams, Edward Blumenthal, Marcus Braga-Alves, Sandra Cleveland, Ellen Eckman, Sarah Feldner, M. Behnam Ghasemzadeh, Alex Lahr, Gary Meyer, Debra Oswald, Stephanie Quade, James Richie, Christine Shaw, John Su.

Meeting called to order at 1:04pm.

Reflection was given by Behnam Ghasemzadeh.

The minutes of the previous meeting (Sept. 4) were approved as submitted with a minor correction.

Discussion and Actions

1. Gary Meyer gave an overview of the HLC visit that ended this morning and thanked everyone who had participated in preparations and in meetings with the team. His sense was that the visit went well overall and that informal feedback from the team had been positive.

2. UBUS participation in the program review process.

There was a general discussion that recognized that this committee has historically been quite involved in program review, with two members sitting on the review committee, and there was general agreement that UBUS should remain involved in some capacity. Concerns were raised about the burden of a three-year commitment of a faculty member to serve on the review council. Several members also voiced concern about the low level of faculty representation (2 members) on the review council. Gary Meyer indicated that he would raise the issue of an additional faculty representative, possibly from the UBGS, with Linda Salchenberger. Gary also offered further insight and clarification as to the overall goals of the review process, which is meant to be focused on only 2-3 strategic issues for each unit, to be better coordinated with external accreditation visits, and to be coupled more explicitly to the budgetary and planning process. Finally, Gary suggested that the initial term of any UBUS member on the review council could be only one year, in order to gauge how large of a time commitment the position would be.

The following specific questions were then addressed:

a. Should there be a UBUS representative on the program review council?

There was agreement, with no stated reservations, that there should be a UBUS representative on the council. The possibility was raised that it could be a former member of UBUS instead of a sitting member.

b. Should UBUS have a larger role in the review process?

There was a consensus that the UBUS should be made aware of any trends or general issues that arise during the review process that would impact on the areas of interest to UBUS. However, there was also a recognition that a formal role for UBUS could present problems with the confidentiality of the review
process. The ultimate sense of the board was that if there is a member of UBUS on the review council, that member will be able to keep the board informed about issues pertinent to our mission. Jim Richie, as liaison to the UAS, will convey this sense to the senate when they discuss program review.

c. Who should represent UBUS on the review council?

Noel Adams tentatively volunteered for one-year service on the council, pending consultation with his department.

3. Discussion of possible agenda items for UBUS this year.

a. ARSC 1020/1021 broad science course. Some concern had been raised by faculty regarding the rigor and appropriateness of these courses as the only exposure to science for non-science majors. After discussion, it seemed like this would be a potential issue for discussion at a future meeting once we get more information about the courses. John Su pointed out that the Science area is currently being reviewed by the CCRC.

b. Student credit load. There was some concern raised that students are taking increased credit loads in order to fulfill the requirements of multiple majors or to graduate more quickly. This brought up the larger issue of whether the 128 credit requirement for graduation should be re-examined by UBUS, as several units are already discussing this issue. It was agreed that this issue should be on the agenda for this semester. Gary Meyer promised to send us comparative information on credit requirements from other schools.

c. Classroom space/furniture. There was general agreement that physical classroom space is a serious concern (i.e. chairs bolted to the floor, screens covering whiteboards, etc). There was discussion about whether this was an appropriate issue for UBUS, as opposed to the Committee on Teaching. Sarah Feldner indicated that she would consult with the CoT chair about which committee should address this issue and report back next meeting.

d. Advising. There was agreement that we should discuss campus-wide issues regarding undergraduate advising this semester.

e. Overall core requirements. Is the overall number of courses/credits required for completion of the UCCS appropriate? This will be discussed as part of the larger issue of the 128 credit graduation requirement.

f. New programs. Gary Meyer indicated that there are program additions/modifications under review from the English Department that he will be bringing to UBUS this semester.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:29pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Edward Blumenthal