University Board of Undergraduate Studies
Meeting Minutes
February 6, 2013

Present: Blumenthal, Cleveland, Ghasemzadeh, Harrison, Lahr, Meyer, Quade, Richie (Chair), Shaw, Siderits, Su, Toumanoff, Wallace, Whipp, Wolburg

The meeting began at or shortly after 1:00 p.m. The opening reflection was offered by Joyce Wolburg.

The minutes of the previous meeting were amended with the deletion of a duplicate “also” in the sentence under item #4. (The first of the duplicate words was the one deleted.) Otherwise, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Announcements
Peter Toumanoff announced that the Academic Integrity Steering Committee had been established.

Discussion
Two items of business occupied the attention of the committee:

1. Description of UBUS- These were a number of comments on the respective items of the existing description of UBUS functions:

   It was suggested that the sequence of items in the description be rearranged to reflect the degree of involvement by UBUS. In that vein the opinion emerged that existing item numbers 5 and 3 be placed higher in the listing and that consideration of number four, including its wording, be deferred until more information on any revision of review procedures was available. In the course of the discussion of UBUS the opinion was expressed that it was crucial to develop greater interaction on the horizontal level, thereby promoting greater integration of the work of UBUS with that of other committees having a stake in issues of mutual interest (e.g., advising). The possibility of co-hosting meetings on issues of university-wide importance was proposed.

   The chair offered to prepare a brief piece on this discussion for transmission to the Academic Senate after circulation and further comment by UBUS members.

2. Prior to the meeting UBUS members had been asked to examine and give feedback on Chapter 3 of the self-study draft. Meyer pointed out that the University was asked to respond specifically to certain criteria, providing compelling evidence that those standards were being met or exceeded. However, he stressed that there should also be honest and critical reflection on shortcomings. In that light he pointed out that the “back ends” of the respective chapters of the draft identified both strengths and challenges.

   The ensuing discussion focused on a variety of matters, among which were freshman preview and orientation (including the new convocation activities); making a better case for the distinctiveness of rhetoric as a knowledge area; updating and expanding the material on our undergraduate research programs, in the interest of accuracy and breadth; (re 3C1) considering
the possibility of using an “external benchmark chart,” permitting comparison at the national level; more helpful categorization of various types of faculty, in view of the difficulty of using only head count, the fact that some high profile people may not be on the tenure track, etc.; what it would take to restore the University’s previous rating as a research institution; and the policy on office hours. Those who had participated vocally in the foregoing discussion agreed to detail their comments in communications to Meyer.

In closing, Meyer informed the committee that the open margins in the self-study draft would eventually include images and sidebars related to the text, and that two consultants, members of the Higher Learning Commission Corps, would be coming in April to read and give feedback on the self-study. Finally, he noted that an electronic resource room related to the self-study was being developed.

Committee members and their colleagues throughout the University were again invited to submit their comments on the self-study before February 22nd either (with the possibility of anonymity) online (where it had been available since Monday of the preceding week), or at any of the scheduled feedback sessions (2/11, 2/12, 2/14, 2/20, and 2/21). In view of what one UBUS member had characterized as an almost “overwhelming” amount of material in the draft, it was suggested that readers might wish to concentrate their attention and commentary on whatever was of particular interest to them.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Anne Siderits
Recorder pro tem