Faculty Meeting Minutes November 30th, 2006

Bevilacqua, E; Chatterjee, S.; Dibble, T.; Ellis, J.; Francis, R.; Hall, M.; Lautz, L.; Liu, S.; Luzadis, V.; Maynard, C.; Meisner, M.; Mitchell, M.; Moran, S.; Nakatsugawa, T.; Powell, W.; Raynal, D.; Ringler, N.; Schultz, K.; Senecah, S.; Smardon, R.; Smart, L.; Spuches, C.; Tiss, K.; White, E.; Yanai, R.; Formoso, N.; Quick, C.; Barber, M.; Bennett, M.; Schuster, R.;

1. Call meeting to order 3:34pm
    a. Bill Shields
2. Approval of minutes of previous meeting
    a. Minutes approved
3. Report of the Executive Committee or Chair: Bill Shields
    a. Bylaw election results: 36 against (NO) and 20 for (yes).
    b. The proposal to change faculty governance was not approved. Faculty Governance will not be modified.
    c. Peter Black and Lee Harrington have volunteered to update the language in the Bylaws. They will only be making grammatical changes and not content changes.
4. Reports of standing and Ad Hoc Committees
    a. Committee On Instruction: Advising and Assessment Instrument: Larry Smart
        i. Summary of actions taken by the COI this semester
        ii. Provided an overview of undergraduate advising survey
            1. On average satisfaction scores for undergraduate students indicates that ESF students are less satisfied with advising than students in the SUNY system and nationally.
            2. In response a survey will be distributed to students to gain feedback
            3. A copy of the survey is attached
            4. Discussion about the specific survey
                a. Comment that additional space is necessary on the document for students to provide written comments
                b. Suggestion to add questions that address the behavior of the student and not focus exclusively on the advisor as being responsible.
                    i. The response was that this survey is based on a customer satisfaction model.
                c. Further comment that it is necessary to have information about the student to validate the data that is being collected.
                d. Comment that GPA can be collected and is an indicator of student behavior.

    e. Comment that GPA is not necessarily the appropriate indicator. Additional thought is necessary to identify the best indicator.

    f. Comment from Bruce Bongarten: the point is to keep this as simple as possible and not be as concerned about the details. The point is to use the instrument to identify where additional investigation/information is necessary. The survey should be implemented on a two year trial basis and reevaluated.

    g. Where will the data be going and/or used?
        i. Bruce Bongarten responded that the data will go to administration. If there is a problem the administration and Faculty Chair, will be charged with further investigation.

    h. Comment: the problem with advising is that students do not come to advising prepared. There should be at least one question that asks the student if they came to advising prepared. Friendly amendment to add a question.

    i. Should students be asked if they go to faculty other than their advisor for advising?
        i. Response: no

    j. Comment that The Provost stated that the instrument will be used as an evaluation tool of faculty members.
        i. Response is that this will be one piece of the evaluation process, not the only tool.

    k. Question called to add a question that addresses if the student came to their advising session prepared and that the question will be first on the survey.
        i. Motion to amend was approved.

    l. Comment that students might be less likely to complete survey on-line for fear of being identified.
        i. Response: responses will be anominous, the general perception is that students will not see a problem.

    m. Motion approved

b. Committee on Research: Bill Powell
    i. Mcintire Stennis proposals are being reviewed and should be awarded early enough to recruit new students.

c. Committee on Outreach: Paul Otteson reporting
    i. New website for Committee on Outreach for sharing documents with the public is up

      ii. The Committee on Public Service & Outreach will be the recipient for names of nominees for the Chancelor Professional and Faculty Excellence Awards. Please nominate people as soon as possible. Criteria are now listed on the Faculty Governance Website.
          1. Nominees for Excellence on teaching should be sent to Larry Smart
          2. Librarianship nominees should be sent to Bill Shields
   d. Nominations can be made by anybody on campus including students. The information to nominate individuals must be made available across campus.

5. Discussion of Environmental Science Faculty/Program: Bill Shields
   a. Comments by Bill Shields: I have been amazed that ESF does not have an environmental science faculty. The reason is that hiring and firing is done at the faculty/department level. Each department provides some kind of environmental sciences. Do we need a program or a department?
   b. Susan Senecah: The review of the GEPS was done in the last months of Bill Tully's tenure as Provost. The review was done without the knowledge of the ES faculty. After the review was completed the ES faculty sent two memos asking that the review process be halted until a new Provost was in place. The response was that the review would stand.
   c. Charlie Hall indicated that he has been involved in the review process and that input was sought from all faculty during the process.
   d. Comment: currently, most GPES program concentration faculty groups only meet one time a year or not at all. It is time to have a formal department.
   e. Rick Smardon: Environmental Studies and GEPS should be kept separate at this time. If they are considered collectively a larger and more formal process is necessary.
   f. Question: Can we have a more clear definition of environmental science and the divisions?
   g. Bruce Bongarten: The Divisions are complicated. Environmental Science was created to fill a need at the time. The issue now is to define how it is going to be managed from this point forward. In response to the committee comment from earlier; the committee was never empowered to make a decision. The committee only provided information. We are still in the process of gathering information before a decision is made. The whole College is involved in environmental science. The idea of crating a faculty of ES leaves us asking what everybody else is doing. What the college needs is a way of handling trans-disciplinary capabilities. There are already grassroots collaborations addressing this issue on campus. This represents our strengths. There should be specific groups that have defined tasks to address. Examples include determining if a specific curriculum is necessary or identifying opportunities for research in the specific areas. I am looking for a campus-wide solution to the issue of addressing trans-disciplinary studies and identify opportunities to expand faculty and work

groups. The issue is not GPES, the issue is how this campus wants to address the issue of trans-disciplinary study and research.

h. In regard to hiring new faculty members in a trans-disciplinary studies program; what would happen to faculty who can cross the borders of multiple programs but might not fit in any specific department?

   i. Response from Bruce Bongarten: that new person would have to identify with a specific department that most closely fits. This is a problem that we will have to address and it is tricky.

i. How do you decide what faculty position to hire?

   i. Most likely new positions would be defined by the Empire Innovation Program and the final decision would be made by the Academic Council.

j. Comment: There is practical reason to create a department. There is a demand for environmental sciences. How do you develop a lab course in a program that does not have a formal structure?

k. Comment: There is a committee at Syracuse University debating the same issues. We are not the only people dealing with this issue. We need to move forward with the process.

l. Comment: How do we make a program such as this sustainable in the long term? It is one thing to create a program it is another to sustain it and grow.

m. Comment: (Charlie Hall) there is a history at ESF of trans-disciplinary programs failing and/or not being sustainable. It is necessary for the success of an ES program that it has a physical location and a title. If a formal department is not created I will go home and cry.

n. Comment: The most difficult question is where to locate the program.

o. Suggestion to use Jim Hassett's Environmental Engineering program as a central location for the ES program

p. Rick Smardon: The advantage of a college-wide ES program is that it can change and move into specific issues. The question now is to determine the structure to have a trans-disciplinary program that can adapt.

q. Bill Shields: the discussion will continue at a later date. The meeting has reached the appointed closing time.

6. Meeting adjourned: 4:45