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Consultative Committee Minutes for November 10, 2010

Present: James Barbour, Nick Bergantine, Nancy Carpenter, Jane Kill, Nic McPhee, Paula O'Loughlin, Mark Privratsky, Laura Thielke, Sharon Van Eps, Naomi Wente, Zak Forde, and Jen Zych Herrmann

For this meeting, Consultative Committee was visited Chair of the Division of Humanities, Janet Erickson. Janet Erickson was able to provide an additional perspective to the concerns raised by students in the music division.

Below are highlights from the conversation that was held.

I. Concerns:

1. Resources- time available to use facilities, instruments (the trap set in particular), space
2. Lack of opportunities- such as students not getting enough time to play at different events; the selection/election of the student rep was also a concern

II. Challenges addressed:

1. Shifting of leadership/faculty in the music department (note: this is not a policy concern, it was just a point brought up)
2. Who has first priority? Student organizations or students enrolled in classes? Janet explained that enrolled students receive first priority. She stressed that student organizations are fine, but they are independent and need to find some of their own resources (stands, trap sets, instruments, etc).
3. Loss of equipment: the faculty and administration has tracked the use of the equipment, but somehow there is still damage and loss that is unaccounted for. Janet said that this was another reason that faculty need to be sure that they know who is using what when.
4. Disconnect: this was brought up in discussion, the idea of "us" vs. "them." Janet discussed how the administration and faculty within the discipline have tried to keep communication open by posting and distributing policies. The topic of senior recitals was brought forth. Janet commented that there have not been any changes per se, but rather a rubric has been produced, so that the senior music students are on the same page and graded fairly and with some sort of know standard. She said that before this decision was finalized, it was sent out, revised, discussed at the fall meeting, and is now being used. She said that the act of putting this into writing may have "freaked out" some of the students, which has caused a bit of vocalization.
5. Opportunities for students to perform: Under Jim Carlson, students were just contracted freely to go play at any event. Students were not supervised and were paid under the counter. This is an UMM policy problem; and there are new policies in place for this challenge now. Students now need to be contracted through Joe. There is also a separation between official jazz bands and student orgs. Either way, Joe needs to be contacted. Joe, according to Janet, thinks that

- the students should be playing in settings with a more “academic” background. Janet also mentioned that there is only so much Joe to go around.
6. Key issue/room use: The subject of room availability has been a policy struggle. There used to be a key in a locker that students could use to access rooms. However, this was a problem due to the expensive instruments that are in some of the rooms. Janet and others are working on monitoring or moving the instruments and then coming up with a room access system. Perhaps a key card could be a solution (this was brought forth by a consultative comm. member).
 7. Music rep: Janet will look into how the student representative is chosen (selection vs. election). This is an important issue that is likely to be solved soon.
 - a. The issue of students confiding in the student rep was brought forth. Janet said that overall, sometimes students should be “afraid”, as sometimes full time faculty can make decisions with out students.
 - b. Evaluations for faculty are extremely high, so this presents a more complicated problem, as Janet questions if there are many or a few students truly upset- or if the few students are more vocal than the content majority? She pointed out that there are two sides to this challenge.

III. Other points brought up:

1. Music division has separated into distinct, different (sometimes at odds) bodies, and now there is a push to bring the department more together—this can cause “growing pain”
2. We are a Liberal Arts College, and in the past the music department was all performance, but now students have more options in the music department (senior paper, non-major ensembles, etc)
3. First year student was told that they would not be able to study abroad in the four years they attend UMM by an advisor.
4. Janet commented that most students are happy, the music program is good, there are many good comments, and teacher evaluations are high.

IV. Further actions:

1. Need for making sure that policies are clearly defined and used
2. Continuing to encourage students to talk with their student rep (there are discipline meetings every Thursday at 9 am)
3. The possibility of a group being assembled to look at policies and review/disseminate. This could help in the long term.
4. Main policies to address: key(safety of instruments in rooms), use of instruments, division rep selection/election, resources (room space).

Respectfully submitted by Naomi Wentz