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## Consultative minutes 03/23/2012

Consultative Committee

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## Consultative Committee Notes

March 23, 2012

Present: Jennifer Herrmann, Nic McPhee, Nancy Helsper, Troy Goodnough, Zack Van Cleve, Jim Barbour, Bonnie Tipcke, Brook Miller, Dennis Stewart, LeAnn Dean, Manjari Govada

### **Conversation with Michelle Page (Scholastic Committee Chair)**

#### **Questions for Michelle Page (MP):**

1) Our hope is to get a sense of the some of the administrative and policy implications resulting from this reorganization. We understand that Scholastic Committee spent quite a bit of time in Fall 2011 reworking policies and procedures to account for the absence of an assistant dean. Could you give us a summary of some of the main areas that were impacted by the absence of this position?

2) In a world without an assistant dean does your committee have the capacity and power and support/resources/procedures in place to successfully continue the committee's work?

3) Do you think the work, integrity or outcomes of the committee have changed with the absence of an assistant dean? In the past you had one person involved but now there are multiple players interpreting and enforcing policy. Is this working well or are there any concerns?

4) Do you have any data or even anecdotal information that indicates that students are well informed about their options and what processes to follow? (Perhaps volume of petitions, nature of questions, etc, would provide some indication).

#### **Michelle's responses to above questions:**

- abolition of executive secretary has had the biggest impact on Scholastic Committee (SC)
- Assistant Dean (AD) for past two years helped with some of these duties
- The biggest impacts without AD: academic integrity, final appeals, benefits of having n academic affairs liaison
- we have new position: academic integrity liaison, which Jeff R-C is filling; each year the present liaison will renew his/her term or a new liaison will need to be sought
- Other impacts: communication among units, AD played a role in coordinating communication between the student standing scholastic committee (SSSC), the Scholastic Committee, Admissions, Registrar, and Academic Advising
- It is hard for SC chair to try to communicate with all of these different offices
- Also, consistency of messaging was also important with AD, for students dealing with probation, suspension. AD was one-stop stop along with the Retention office for students seeking advice about academic issues including dropping courses, withdrawing, and academic options when extenuating circumstances impact enrollment.
- AD was able to direct people to right place to get help
- AD helped people cancel out of classes past deadlines

#### **JB : How might a one stop shop work?**

MP: Person needs breadth of knowledge, not depth, and does not have to "solve" the problem. Would have to be able to explain: petition goes talk to X, registration is with X, to talk to X...basically a traffic cop.

JZ- needs both depth and breadth...

MP- Traffic cop role is important, get right information at one stop or at least know where to go to get the right information

**JZ- How might master advisors help with this role?**

MP- It would be good if the master advisor program could do this. Most advisors are not familiar with all of the policy and procedure “ins and outs”—if Master Advisors have this information or training, they could help advisors and students know how to get the help they need.

**2nd question: Do you feel new structure is working?**

MP: for the most part OK, transition takes time and there will be some challenges

Two big challenges: loss of the Scholastic Committee’s Executive Secretary (ES) and AD. Also, recent retirement of executive staff (Dorothy DeJager) is a challenge as she had immense memory and resources related to Scholastic.

MP: One loss with ES: loss of data collection and analysis..relying on the “kindness of strangers” to provide data and analysis to SC. We don’t have someone with responsibility to do this now. Sometimes people can’t get data from various offices, so when ES existed, she compiled data for academic alert. Right now, it is working because partners are sharing data. Our current success is reliant on collaboration with partners. Chair is a faculty member and faculty do not work with the administrative and technological systems that staff do (PeopleSoft, EMS, etc.) and so the Chair may not have the skill or access to collect data even if she/he had the time.

MP: ES Leslie Meek also helped students to construct a petition, and later Dorothy, as support staff to the Scholastic Committee could step in as well. Now we are in transition and though people are doing well and doing the best work they can, there is a discomfort with the process as new staff proceed through the “learning curve.” This will get better with time but has been challenging for the staff members doing it as well as for the committee.

**NM: It seems like communication responsibilities have fallen to the Scholastic Chair by default, is this a concern (that we could end up with problems)?**

MP: Yes. It is a time issue. Scholastic is a complicated committee- policy and procedure behind the scenes. Learning curve is giant. Scholastic is a lot of work. And has a big impact on students lives. So, it is important and we don’t want to make mistakes. Language is important and how things are phrased. You need a chair that is committed to following through, so a bit of redundancy is important, with vice-chair and AD. ES Meek also gave consistency. Historical memory is important.

**LD: Should we change constitution for SC chair in training?**

MP: It has been discussed, but it is not recorded or written. A policy statement – a chair in succession plan- may be a good idea. Other committees may also benefit from this change. This is built into the steering committee.

**3rd question: Has work/outcomes changed with absence of AD?**

MP: Yes, it is working. Could it work better...yes, with more help. The world is not falling apart, integrity of committee is intact, but support would help. Longevity helps someone understand what the committee needs, in terms of understanding policies and procedures.

**JZ: Are students well informed of these processes?**

MP: Not a lot of petitions this year. But overall communication and information sharing with students and the campus is a big concern. Without AD and exec secretary as information hubs, it is harder to know where to direct people. Michelle is not sending as many updates to campus regarding academic integrity issues...maybe it’s a problem, maybe it’s not. Nobody is doing it systematically now.

**Conversation with Leslie Meek (former Scholastic Committee Secretary, Academic Affairs representative for readmission (Admissions) and readmission after suspension (SSSC))**

**Questions for Leslie Meek (LM):**

Questions for Leslie Meek (Academic Affairs representative for readmission (Admissions) and readmission after suspension (SSSC)):

- 1) You have recently taken on the role of representing the academic affairs perspective with students seeking readmission to UMM. Can you give us an overview of the responsibilities you assumed?
  
- 2) Do you have clarity about your responsibilities and what they entail? Do you have the capacity and power and support/resources to get this done?
  
- 3) Do you feel like you are being fully utilized in your new capacity? Do you think the greater campus community (faculty, staff, advisers, etc.) know that you are now doing this work and seek out your advice or assistance?

**Leslie's responses to above questions:**

**1st question: academic affairs perspective for students seeking readmission**

LM: 4 main areas

**1) Readmission of students**

- process includes input from admissions, financial aid, business office, student affairs, academic affairs
- the student's name gets sent around to individuals for each of the offices listed above, who then weigh in on issues that may prevent their enrollment (unpaid bills, poor standing with UMM, etc.)
- as the academic affairs representative Leslie looks for evidence of the student's ability to succeed upon their return to UMM. In some cases success at another institution of higher ed can be useful evidence

**2) Student Standing Scholastic Committee**

- this group reviews readmission applications for students that have been suspended and are wanting to return to UMM to complete their degree
- as there are not frequent applications, and they often are received early and late in a semester we have only had one meeting since January. Summer is also a popular time for such reviews.

**3) Serves on a small committee that reviews and makes decisions on complicated applications for admission (new students)**

- this information is complex, and often confidential as students reviewed in this group may have criminal backgrounds, mental health issues, or other extenuating circumstances
- as a group they review each case individually and come to a consensus, usually meeting once every other week

**4) Admission appeals – students that have asked to come back, have been denied, and are appealing the original decision, in the hopes of still being able to come back**

LM has enjoys the work and she would gladly take on a bigger role in this area.

**NM- Is this a formal role (that LM is working in) with defined areas...should there be a defined role?**

LM- Yes, there should be a Secretary of the Scholastic Committee. You can't just step into this... you need experience and time to dedicate to this work. In the past the secretary position was a 40% appointment.

**TG- How do we deal with criminal backgrounds and what disclosure is required?**

LM- We do not do criminal background checks. Students are asked to disclose criminal activity voluntarily. They are asked about extenuating circumstances, too.

**BM- How has growth of international students impacted the number of difficult admissions cases?**

LM- Not really.

**2nd question: around clarity and capacity.**

LM: Yes, I have the information and capacity to do my work effectively

**Do you feel fully utilized?**

LM: I don't think my role needs to be visible and the people that need to know about me are aware and utilize me. My role doesn't need to be public, as it doesn't have widespread impact on students or faculty.

**TG- Do we build a case history and rely on precedent when making these complex decisions?**

LM- No, each case is highly individual, making this challenging. Although we could find this data we do not keep separate records or rely on them when making future decisions.