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Consultative Committee

Prairie Lounge
September 25, 2012
10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Committee members present: Co-chairs Brook Miller and LeAnn Dean, Jim Barbour, Chad Braegelmann, Joey Daniewicz, Nancy Helsper, Ray Schultz, Bonnie Tipcke, Zach Van Cleve, Heather Waye

Guest: Bart Finzel

Update on Academic Affairs with Bart Finzel, Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs:

Miller welcomed Finzel and asked him for an update on what his office is doing this year. Finzel said much of what he is doing this year was started last year.

Endowment Funds: One of the smaller initiatives that is taking more time than expected is related to endowment funds. The David C. Johnson International Scholarship is one. Another is the Founders Scholar initiative, money which was given to UMM on its 40th anniversary and has never been spent. Decisions need to be made about a selection committee. Right now the Dean and Division Chairs are making the selection, but we need an ongoing structure to allow this to go forward. The funding allows faculty to do research in the summer when they are on sabbatical. There is a sizable amount of funding associated with this initiative. There should be a call every fall.

The Visiting Distinguished Professor of the Liberal Arts is a fund that has been used once. It also is a sizable fund. Last fall each division was asked to nominate possible visiting scholars. The visitor would join us for two weeks to a full semester and would then, presumably, lift UMM's profile when they return to their normal activity and talk about their experience at Morris. The first Visiting Distinguished Professor was in the Humanities. The next should go to Science and Math, then Education, Social Sciences, and back to Humanities. Lots of effort must be put forth on campus to determine which person will be invited and, if that person then declines the invitation, the work is for naught. This time we had Science and Math generate four names, and other divisions came up with names as well. The time frame was opened up to the next two to three years for the visit to happen. The Science and Math nominees did not accept the invitation, but one from Education did: Gloria Ladson-Billings for fall 2013. She will be on campus for 7-10 working days and may split the time into two visits of 3-4 days each. A planning group is being put together that will determine how to best capitalize on her visit. Ken Emo is heading up the steering committee to figure out her schedule. We are also working on other Science and Math names that we have not yet been able to reach. We have money to do two visiting professors per year (one per semester).

Rebuild Tenure-track Faculty: Finzel discussed his effort to rebuild the base of tenured and tenure-track faculty and solidify positions. Because of budget cuts, UMM had paused on hiring of some permanent positions. Now it is time to go forward with the hiring of tenure-track faculty. Ten new tenure-track faculty were hired last year. That is three times the number of hires in recent years and the most since 1989. We had great success in finding good faculty to fill these positions. There will be seven more tenure-track positions open for next year.

We have lost five to six tenure-track people each year. We need to hire six to seven tenure-track faculty each year to attain the goal of a 15 to 1 student/faculty ratio. Also, 85% of the full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty count should belong to tenured and tenure-track faculty. Someone, perhaps the Planning Committee, should give the "stamp of approval" on those goals. Five years ago, 110 of our 130 faculty

were tenured or tenure-track. We dipped to the low 90s or high 80s with 102 tenured/tenure-track out of 120 faculty. Right now we have 96 tenured/tenure-track faculty. The number of tenure-track faculty had dropped because we were reluctant to commit to long-term hiring for a while.

Orientation Plan for New Faculty: Related to the additional hiring of faculty is the need for an orientation program for the new faculty. Last year the Consultative Committee prepared a report on this topic. Finzel has been able to implement a bit of the recommendations. There should be an orientation program for all staff, not just faculty. Right now the questions revolve around funding of these initiatives. Who pays for what? Who does what?

This fall the new faculty are meeting with various service providers over lunch. The service providers are explaining what they do and how that interfaces with faculty responsibilities.

Sarah Mattson is doing something for all new employees. The Consultative Committee could push the administration to work on this project together. We could speed up the mentorship program where senior and junior faculty come together for professional development. April seems too late in the year; we should do the pairing early in the year. Modest financial support is provided (\$500). There is a real need for mentoring and professional development for all staff, but who will fund it?

Curriculum Developments: On the curriculum side, we have started a review of the General Education program. We need to reaffirm or else revise the General Education Requirements. The Curriculum Committee is moving forward on changes to the writing requirement. We need to do a more thorough assessment of general education. How do we move forward on this? The process merits a task force or a subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee (with additional outside members). The chair of this subcommittee should have released time and the expected timeline would be an 18-month cycle, starting this January through the end of spring semester 2014. Who should be involved? What structure makes sense? UMM needs to report back to the NCA accrediting agency by 2015. We aren't required to change the Gen Ed, but we do need to show that we have assessed the program. Finzel would like to have this process teed up for the new Dean. He would like to appoint someone in January or February to be responsible for this effort.

Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) Grant: The HHMI grant provides funding for 20 undergraduates each summer. Among the various programs (UROP, MAPS, etc.) we will have about 50 student scholars working each summer. We are in the process of hiring a support person, funded 50% by the grant and supplemented to 80% by the Dean's Office. This staff support will be year 'round and will also support other grants. We still need to hire a coordinator, in addition. This would be similar to the Honors Program oversight. The coordinator would work with the staff person and would probably be a faculty member with released time, but could be P&A. These positions would have a relationship with ACE, the Honors Program, and other current programs. This requires campus discussion and input. Finzel is working on a plan to bring back to the Consultative Committee. HHMI will involve the STEM group (S&M majors plus psychology). Some of the usual summer MAPs and maybe UROPS, too, could be redirected because those students are now funded by HHMI. The coordinator would not necessarily have to come from Science and Math. The coordinator needs to have a vision and network to pair faculty with students. We may have summer events for the community of scholars. Chemistry and Biology faculty have STEP and LSAMP students (5-10) each summer, and along with UROP and MAP we could build a cohort.

Questions: Finzel was asked about the current situation with summer class offerings. Finzel said the summer offerings are stable. There are fewer classes than what we used to have, but the classes offered have better enrollments. He doesn't expect to expand the list of offerings. Online offerings might grow

during the summer, as that is a national trend. For the summer research students, we might want to add a couple more classes.

Finzel was asked how he thought UMM was getting along without the assistant dean position. Finzel said things are working reasonably well. Occasionally, a matter arises that used to be handled by the assistant dean, but for the most part, the change has been good. Not hiring in that position has allowed more resources to be moved to Advising and Retention, Academic Success, etc. He is anxious to hear if there are areas that have fallen through the cracks. Do we need an assistant or associate dean? It may be that the campus should have this position; it could be assigned responsibilities for general education, for instance. The vice chancellor has time to keep the wheels rolling, but not to build new track. He is not sure if the use of resources for such a position would be worth it. Instead of hiring a permanent assistant dean, we could fund temporary positions to lead specific efforts.

To recap, Finzel said he would like to have advice from the Consultative Committee on the general education review. Should we have a task force or a joint Curriculum Committee/Assessment of Student Learning Committee subcommittee and defer resources to this project for the chair? Also, he will prepare a proposal about the HHMI program for the Consultative Committee to respond to.

Finzel was thanked for his update and he left the meeting.

Next week's meeting will include discussion of the Consultative Committee website and the five points that could be listed on that website, approval of minutes, and advice on the general education initiative.

We might also want to follow up on the orientation program. A suggestion was made to invite Sarah Mattson to a meeting to update us on her efforts in this area.

Dean said she had also received an email with a concern about the wellness points and difficulties associated with this whole program. Rules are changed midstream, the website doesn't work, and points are not credited in a timely manner. We will talk about this next week. What would be the proper channels?

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Submitted by
Nancy Helsper