

University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well
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Academic Support Services Committee

Campus Governance

11-14-2011

ASSC minutes 11/14/2011

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MINUTES
11/14/2011 Academic Support Services Committee Meeting
McGinnis Room, Briggs Library

Present: Tracy Otten, Lisa Harris, Ellis Valentiner, Joseph Beaver, Roger Boleman, LeAnn Dean, Jim Hall, Sylke Boyd, Zak Forde, Rose Murphy

Guest: Manjari Govada

Meeting called to order at 4:04 PM by Tracy Otten

Review of minutes from 10/31/2011 meeting:

Roger Boleman noted some small revisions to elements 2, 3, and 5 of his report re. Instructional and Media Technologies; these had already been brought to the attention of LeAnn Dean, who brought copies of the minutes with the revisions made.

In response to a question from Rose Murphy, Roger Boleman explained some of the details of UMTC charging for video conferencing done from here.

Jim hall requested a change for clarity in element 3 of his report re. Computing Services.

In response to a question from Rose Murphy, Jim Hall repeated that the planned summer network work will not affect summer term students.

Minutes approved as revised unanimously.

Tech Fee Report (Zak Forde):

Copies of the campus tech-fee carry-forward policy, tech-fee guidelines, and tech-fee request form were distributed.

The request form has been only slightly changed to improve the consultation list. The form overall remains a work in progress; will consult with Matt Zaske about getting the online form to function as it needs to.

MCSA Tech Fee committee is developing timeline for proposal review meetings.

UMN-wide policy change re. academic fees (what tech fee counts as) occurred last Spring, simplifying such fees by consolidating them into a single Campus fee. Thus, UMM no longer technically has Tech Fee, but rather has a "tech fee" component of our Campus Fee.

Jim Hall clarified that the \$7.50 addition to the Campus Fee (relative to last year's Tech Fee) will go directly to tech infrastructure and is under the purview of Computing Services, not MCSA. Nonetheless, Computing Services will consult with MCSA regarding usage of those funds.

There had been communication issues between MCSA and the administration which had led to some confusion regarding the provenance and thus control of the fee increase.

MCSA had previously used a backward-looking process of allocating Tech Fee funds collected the year prior to the allocation. MCSA will now use a forward-looking allocation based on the Finance Committee's enrollment projection. MCSA will make allocations in the Spring for the following year, though this raises potential cash-flow issues as the fees are collected at the beginning of each semester. The surplus left by the previous system's backward-looking approach covers this need. The new carry-forward policy is designed to ensure that this surplus

will always be sufficient.

Manjari Govada passed around a flowchart showing the process to aid in understanding the system.

A “handbook” for future MCSA tech fee administrators is being developed.

MCSA will work on outreach to appropriate parts of campus to make sure all programs are aware of their eligibility to submit tech fee proposals, starting by contacting division chairs. Tracy Otten asked if there would be informational meetings or such. Zak Forde replied that it will depend on what division chairs and such want, but he is willing to conduct such meetings. Outreach will also be undertaken to non-academic campus offices, such as disability services. There have been problems in the past in terms of not all programs being aware that they are eligible to apply for tech fee funds.

Jim Hall inquired about use of funds across Fiscal Year boundaries. Zak Forde clarified that while there have historically been exceptions made, the general rule is that unused funds are lost to the recipient, and return to MCSA. Jim Hall recommended making this more clear in the tech-fee guidelines. Zak Forde noted that the guidelines do include this information, but that it is not as obvious as it could be.

Jim Hall further inquired as to whether recipients can make changes in how they use their allocation. Zak Forde answered that there is some wiggle room in the usage. Also, where a program has made multiple requests that are only partially approved, the program can use the allocation for any of its requests, even those not explicitly funded, unless MCSA has specifically set the allocation for that request to zero, meaning that it can't be funded. In general, however, programs are not required to spend the allocation on the exact models or such that were specified in the funding request, but may not purchase items they did not ask for.

Lisa Harris noted that the people doing the actual accounting cannot always tell if the purchase is appropriate since the name (model, etc.) that they receive may not indicate what it actually is. Zak Forde noted that MCSA may try to develop a system that would not require re-approval (by MCSA) for minor changes, but would require re-approval for more notable changes. Jim Hall suggested that such exception/change requests should be documented, so that subsequent requests from the same unit would have a paper trail that MCSA could use to ensure that such requests were not made solely to fill holes left by changes made to previous allocations.

Ellis Valentiner inquired as to the accuracy of the Finance Committee's enrollment projection, and thus the safety of using it to make tech-fee allocations. Zak Forde answered that the number is inherently conservative and thus consistently below actual enrollments.

Roger Boleman raised the issue of the tech-fee guidelines being more explicit about the need for any ongoing costs and related administrative issues for tech-fee purchases to be arranged ahead of time. When tech-fee acquisitions occur at the “wrong” administrative level (e.g., disciplines get equipment that their division doesn't know about), there are frequently problems with ongoing associated costs. Roger suggested adding an EFS budget string to tech-fee proposals to tie them to a specific unit and thus presumably requiring endorsement by the appropriate division chair, unit head, or vice chancellor?

The appropriateness of the choice of individuals that tech-fee applicants consult in the process of developing proposals was raised. The list of appropriate consultants does not ensure that the individuals consulted have the proper expertise. Lisa Harris and Roger Boleman suggested making certain consultations mandatory depending on the category of the proposed purchase.

Jim Hall noted he like the language in the tech-fee guidelines that larger/higher cost

proposals need extra consultation, and added that he hopes it is also true the other way around, so that the consultants are not overburdened with consulting re. small-scale tech-fee proposals.

LeAnn Dean noted there are different consultations, such as “how should this work in terms of integrating with existing systems?” and “what models should be chosen?” Zak Forde added a third type of consultation: whether the proposal is a good idea at all or if there is a better way to do accomplish the goal.

Administrative Wrap-Up:

Tracy Otten suggested that we start with LeAnn Dean at our next meeting, since there was insufficient time for her to bring things to the committee at this meeting.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:00.