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## Consultative minutes 04/06/2012

Consultative Committee

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Consultative Committee  
Prairie Lounge  
April 6, 2012

Present: Co-chairs Jen Zych Herrmann and Nic McPhee, Jim Barbour, LeAnn Dean, Troy Goodnough, Manjari Govada, Holly Gruntner, Nancy Helsper, Brook Miller, Dennis Stewart, Bonnie Tipcke, Zac Van Cleve

Guests: Sandy Olson Loy, Brenda Boever

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Sandy Olson-Loy (SOL), vice chancellor for student affairs, joined us to talk about UMM's transition without an assistant dean position from her point of view. She was asked to give an overview of some of the areas or types of issues that required her coordination with the assistant dean. SOL said a primary area was for providing support when students needed to withdraw from some of their courses after the 9<sup>th</sup> week and before the end of the semester, due to extenuating circumstances, such as

- serious illness (physical health, mental health) or pregnancy/birth of a child, car accidents or other injury;
- challenging family situations, terminal illness/death of a parent, sibling, child;
- students impacted by death of another UMM student or friend from home;
- alcohol or drug treatment programs;
- sexual assault and relationship violence

When asked how these issues come to her attention, SOL said that some instances students contact her office early but in some instances people don't reach out for assistance until things get bad; on other cases the seek out supports due to court mandate. Generally, when we had an assistant dean, students would be referred to her, Jeff Ratliff-Crain, or Henry Fulda. From there, they would connect and consult with each other as to how to carry forth, but the goal was to help students in a holistic, one-stop kind of way. Support might be needed only once or over multiple semesters. Problems don't always present in a linear and timely way due to stress of the situations, reluctance to seek help, etc. There is contact with families and others with need to know who support students during difficult times. There has to be an understanding of FERPA and our ability to connect with families. We can contact families if there is a health or safety emergency. Offices that are often involved include Financial Aid, Residential Life, Business Office, Registrar, and Food Service.

SOL said this process evolved with the introduction of the position of assistant dean and with our growing experience and understanding of issues and processes. It has also evolved with the growing complexity of our systems, including changing and new financial aid requirements regarding paying back aid when students leave school at various times for various reasons. She reviews and acts on any tuition refund appeals and needs to coordinate with different offices and processes.

Q. Now that the assistant dean position no longer exists, do you (SOL) feel like you have clarity on who your new counterparts are for such matters? More importantly, do you think that the individuals that need to coordinate with you know to do so?

SOL said she thinks it is working ok, although it is challenging with all the changes. She hopes we are entering a period of stability even as the system continues to evolve. Primarily, she works with Jen Zych Herrmann who has taken on a number of the assistant dean duties as well as Dean Bart Finzel and Clare Dingley. Bonnie Gulbrandson and Marie Hagen also work behind the scenes. She thinks it will be helpful when we can link the upcoming Master Advisor program into this work.

Q. Do you think students are clear about who they consult with, and in what situations, now that there is no longer a single go-to individual? Do you think the greater campus community (faculty, staff, advisors, etc.) knows when and if to seek out your advice or assistance?

SOL doesn't think it was ever widely clear and that there probably never was a single go-to person. She said that this is something we are trying to change. There is a good website for students in crisis that UMM could use as a model as we try to move toward a single integrated site for students to find information. She hopes there will be something in place by fall 2012. McPhee noted a communication problem where students either wouldn't read an e-mail telling them about an online website or, if they aren't in crisis at the moment, they won't read it. Van Cleve suggested that MCSA could help promote the website as they are concerned about this issue, too. SOL said CA's and others are also good support and, perhaps, they could be offered more training. We want to be able to offer more comprehensive support than one band-aid at a time.

SOL said there needs to be more AFSCME staff support built in to help with making the system work, marketing and communication, data analysis, reports, follow-up, etc. This support was cut earlier and was never restored.

McPhee summarized saying that it sounds like things are going ok, but communication to the campus about who to talk to for specific problems still needs some work. SOL agreed that, due to the turnover among all groups, regular education is required. McPhee suggested that as the campus looks at how to acculturate new people into the community, perhaps some of this information could be included there.

Brenda Boever (BB), academic advising coordinator, joined us to talk about how the assistant dean transition has affected her area. She said things are working pretty well overall, but it does take time to transition. She is doing quite a bit more work with students in situations of academic difficulty than she had previously. One of her new responsibilities is meeting with students who have issues needing exceptions to academic policies/requirements and helping them write petitions to the Scholastic Committee. McPhee asked how students know to go to her. BB said that Judy Korn and Clare Dingley direct students to her, but it probably is not known broadly enough on campus that she is the person to go to. Dorothy DeJager in the Registrar's Office was the person that did this before. It was acknowledged that it takes a lot of time talking with faculty, researching whether an issue can even be petitioned, listing precedents, etc. Zych Herrmann noted that the volume of petitions has probably gone down over the years, because policies have been created that take care of many issues. However, this leaves the tough ones. BB said she has done about 6 this year and has 4 or 5 in the works. She said her support staff position has been restored to full-time, and that does help, but it can't help with the number of hours required to meet with students.

Q. Beside petitions and talking with students, what else has changed? BB said those are the main things, but the volume of students in the last 6 weeks has grown a lot, which could be just the time of the semester and the fact that UMM has more students enrolled. Zych Herrmann added that the academic alert system helps to get students identified earlier also.

Q. Is it clear to you about where to direct students? BB said her relationships on campus help her, but it could be challenging for someone coming in new. It is a work in progress, but there are good relationships among everyone involved and they all try to keep a student's running here and there to a minimum.

Q. Where do you think the Master Advisor Program fits in? In some cases, would an advisor first go to a Master Advisor who would then decide where to send a student, or does that just add an extra layer? BB said this, too, is still in progress, but she thinks that would be a logical first step. Zych Herrmann said the hope is that the Master Advisors would also be linked into the academic alert system and the supporting Alert Team.

BB noted one area where there is still a void. Jeff Ratliff-Crain was involved with the development of the IC course, and he would deal with issues that came up, after the fact, regarding IC. What happens now when a student fails or drops IC when there is no substitution and it is a requirement?

McPhee said it is clear that work still needs to be done on the capacity front, but he asked if Boever's current workload is sustainable. BB responded with a hesitant yes and added that it is an overload because she still has to do her other work.

Sandy Olson-Loy will be our guest next week on another topic.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Tipcke