Provost Council Meeting
Minutes, October 1, 2008


1. Minutes for last meeting approved.

2. Ms. Lowe gave enrollment update for the fall semester specifying that those registered but not yet validated are still included in headcount. We are up 41 first-time freshmen, nine away from the working goal, an increase of 50 freshmen per year. The official fall 2008 report, prepared by the Office of Institutional Research and Evaluation, will include an enrollment analysis of each college and academic program.

3. Concerns about getting extension students into system are brought up. How do we capture students who are admitted but not yet entered in the system in the headcounts? Dr. Jefferson proposed that the Registrar, the Bursar, and Ronnie Barnes meet to establish processes to ensure that the university hasn’t underreported its extension class enrollment. Dr. Gist asked if the students in the Grow-Your-Own Program, whose tuition has been paid by the organization on time but not yet entered, are captured in the enrollment report. Dr. Bowie pointed out that three cohorts haven’t been counted because their contracts have not been fully executed. Dr. Westbrooks suggested that Ronnie Barnes, Emma Johnson, Creola Rigsby, Cedilia Bowie, and Romi Lowe meet to discuss processes for getting all extension students counted.

4. A brief discussion commenced about when commencement should be. The council recommends May 21st. Dr. Lindsey will take care of the selection of an honorary degree recipient. Council members agreed that the selection of an honorary degree recipient should be the responsibility of a faculty committee that should be convened now with a charge to review the criteria for selection and to put forth recommendations by the end of the semester. Dr. Jefferson suggested that a commencement speaker should be booked by December; highly sought ones have already been booked. Dr. Lindsey offered that a high priority should be celebrating diversity (this year’s theme, emphasized by Dr. Pogue), and this should be kept in mind when selecting a guest/keynote speaker. Next year’s theme should be picked right after commencement. Dr. Milo addressed the need to fine tune plans for the Honors Convocation, which he will spearhead. A survey will be distributed to students to gather their thoughts before formally recommending May 21st for commencement.

5. Distribution of Data to Support On-line Courses: Dr. Osika’s survey of Student Interest in Online Course was distributed. It’s important to note that caution should be taken when interpreting the figures reported as the survey was taken online and thus, it could be argued, more available to students who own a computer with internet access. Overall, survey respondents were positive about online courses. Two main reasons for not taking online courses at CSU were the lack of online courses and lack of communication between instructors and students respectively.
6. Dr. Lindsey reported anxiety about the pending Blackboard move and requested clarification of timelines and proposals to switch to Moodle. Dr. Milo assured council members that plans to get Moodle are underway. Dr. McCrank said that Blackboard will not be eradicated abruptly. However, contracts are harder to negotiate, and costs are up 5%. One year is needed to pilot a new system and then switch. The university needs money from on-line courses, but Blackboard is used for many non-tuition generating purposes, which is not cost-effective. Blackboard’s main server failed over the weekend and grade books and courses were lost. Blackboard is attempting to restore lost materials. Dr. Westbrooks pointed out the need to address costs associated with non-instructional uses of Blackboard. On October 15th City Colleges of Chicago will deliver a presentation on managing on-line courses, 4th Fl. Acad. Library.

7. Dr. Westbrooks distributed the 21st Century Academic Planning Committee’s work on meeting Dr. Pogue’s expectation four and encouraged all to share the draft plan with chairs and faculty. Ms. Lowe requested a timeline for 21st Century committees and asked if there is a recruitment and enrollment committee. There is a Recruitment and Enrollment committee, but the university is waiting for the new Vice President of Student Affairs to arrive on campus and chair the committee. Dr. Westbrooks informed the group that all 21st Century Committees must begin to implement their plans by Dec.

8. Concerns were raised about CSU requirements for community college students with Associate’s degrees and those without. Concerns were expressed that confusion has arisen about who is bound by what requirements. For example, if a student has an associates’ degree, but is in a major that requires a chemistry course with passing the math proficiency examination as a prerequisite, does the student need to take the proficiency examination? Because faculty and not the administration determine expectations for courses and majors, setting prerequisites is a faculty responsibility. Therefore, in the example above, the student would be required to take and abide by the math proficiency examination results. Dr. Westbrooks wants to make clear in next chairs’ meeting whether and when faculty can waive exams within their department. Articulation agreements must acknowledge the reality that not all program requirements reside in a particular program or department, so all departments involved must be consulted. The concern is that CSU policies often are frustrating for transfer students and seem to place obstacles in the way of graduation. More flexibility may be needed. Dr. Ward suggested that articulation agreements specify which courses should be taken at community colleges to avoid exams at CSU.

Dr. Conteh mentioned that at most schools, international students are charged an extra application fee which is used to defray the costs of recruitment. In many institutions, application fees support the cost of recruitment. At CSU, these fees go into the general funds. Provost Council members want an accounting from the Budget Committee of where dollars generated by application fees go. A further concern was raised about the difficulty of recruiting students without the ability to offer scholarships as a recruiting tool. Without funding, programs’ efforts to recruit and retain students are hindered.
9. A brief discussion about program elimination processes ensued. It was recalled that at one time, programs with fewer than nineteen majors were slated for elimination. Dr. Miari asked how the relative costs of individual programs affect program elimination decisions. Dr. Westbrooks asked if everyone understands the cost-discipline analysis provided by Institutional Research and the criteria used to generate it. Dr. McCrank observed that there are no uniform criteria for calculating all program costs. Costs are only considered within colleges and do not include library costs. Dr. Miari explained that the IBHE has general criteria for figuring these data, but provides institutions with some flexibility in how the criteria are applied. Dr. Lindsey pointed out how important it is for there to be budgeting plan, which is followed. A clear budgeting plan and process would assist Academic Affairs in reviewing budgetary implications for eliminating old and/or adding new programs.

10. Announcements:
   • Dr. Milo reported an addition of twenty new students in the Honors College. This year’s induction was the best yet. One hundred students, parents, faculty and administrators were in attendance and the sense of community is growing.
   • The Women’s golf team won CSU’s 1st ever golf tournament.
   • The Alumni Picnic went very well, and alumni were excited to see the new additions to the campus.
   • Admissions will host an Open House for students interested in coming to CSU on Saturday, October 4.
   • TANIF is offering financial support to low income students working on their 1st Bachelors with a minimum GPA of 2.5. They must have children and be economically challenged.
   • Dr. Lipscomb notifies the council that academic warnings have returned to paper because electronic system is not working.
   • Dr. Conteh distributed materials prepared for Ghana. Illustrations were done in Ghana so that images in the books would be familiar to the students using them. She announced that teachers in Ghana had been trained to use the new materials and asked Dr. Gist to go to Ghana to do an assessment.
   • Dr. Westbrooks will begin going from building to building as of today to determine the number and location of labs and needs for equipment upgrades.
   • Dr. Lindsey announced an upcoming event at the Center for Alternative Energy.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:40 p.m.