Provost’s Council
Minutes, January 14, 2009


Minutes: Approved last meeting minutes of November 19 2008.

Old Business:

2. 344th Commencement [Westbrooks]: The spring graduation ceremony will be at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 21, 2009 in the Jones Convocation Center. All deans are to make sure all of the units reporting to them know the date and time, and are aware of the policy change for participation. As previously shared last fall, we will no longer allow students with six or fewer hours left on their degree to participate because we will have two ceremonies each year. All coursework for the degree must be completed to participate. The exception would be if a student still needs to take courses for completing a second degree, a certificate or minor as long as the primary degree has been completed. The unit dean must make this decision and recommendation.

New Business:

3. Faculty Senate Recommendation on H.S. and CSU Foreign Language Requirement [Benny]: Benny reported that the General Education Committee’s recommendation to the Faculty Senate to accept two years of the same foreign language earned in high school is sufficient to waive the 6 credit hour requirement. The Department of Foreign Languages and Literature (FLL) objected to this recommendation and does not think high school language proficiency is sufficient. The Faculty Senate rejected the recommendation and offered an alternative, which was passed. It states that the FLL will offer incoming students the opportunity to take proficiency exams at no cost to them beginning in the fall 2009. They called for a transparent, well publicized testing procedure, which includes structure with study guides, etc., as we do for the other exams such as math. The intention is for incoming students to be able to demonstrate proficiency (oral and written) in a language the same as our current students. Senate discussion included no cost to the students, determining how credit is awarded, listing languages available, handling languages not offered or native speakers with a second or third language.

The Provost Council discussed making use of CSU employees to cover various languages. Dr. Miari offered to do Arabic and Hebrew. The competiveness of the University was questioned by Dr. Balogun and others asked about what happens at other institutions. The Senate reported on this, indicating Western and Eastern Illinois universities accept credit for one year of a language, Northeastern and UIC were also discussed. Others have proficiency exams, advance placement options or the requirement is only by college or program. Dr. Lindsey questioned whether or not high school preparation, expectations and standards can be used to demonstrate the level of proficiency we need because high school and college level courses are different. No one disagreed. Ms. Benny continued her report by stating how senators discussed the option that other Illinois universities have a range of requirements determined by departments or colleges, but it was ultimately rejected.

Dr. Westbrooks expects each dean to discuss this with their chairs (and faculty members) and report back next week. She will present a recommendation from the Provost’s Council to the President. She asked that this be in the context of the 10 expectations. The chairs in the College of Arts and Sciences have already sent a signed petition, which they sent to the Senate and to Dr. Westbrooks rejecting the change (2 years of high school for CSU credit).

Dr. McCrank asked that the FLL become more connected with the library because it can provide additional support and service in culture and literature. It also can design multidimensional learning opportunities beyond the textbook and classroom. Currently, our emphasis, Dr. Lindsey stated, is on culture, which meets the general education requirements.
4. Sabbatical Leave Requests [Balogun]: Dr. Balogun questioned the need for greater control and input into the acceptance of a sabbatical leave report. He had an experience in which the faculty member did not complete the activities indicated in the sabbatical proposal and then failed to submit one after Human Resources wrote three letters requesting submission. Finally, a letter of sanction was issued and the individual was barred from future PAI and Faculty Excellence awards. She submitted one consisting of only 11 lines. He rejected the report. This year, the individual was asked to serve on the Faculty Excellence Award Committee. Dr. Jefferson explained the limitations of the contract, how members are appointed and offered a resolution for the future, which involves changing the application and report forms. Currently, the letters and promissory note carry a statement indicating failure to complete activities and/or the report may result in the University reclaiming the funds expended on the faculty member. This has not been part of the promissory note in the past. Dr. Westbrooks said that prior to appointing faculty members to serve on committees, such as the UBC, Research Cues, and Faculty Excellence, which are nominated by UPI and the Senate, the deans will have an opportunity to see the names prior to submitting them to the President.

5. Research Cues and Approval Process [Balogun]: This was a continuation of the issues raised by Dr. Balogun on sabbatical leave reports. The deans were reminded that they sign the sabbatical, administrative educational and retraining leaves, and if there were issues, then they should not sign “approved.” The form for both the application and the report, Dr. Jefferson said, require the chair and dean signatures. She will look at revising both forms so that it is clear that the administration approval is needed in the recommendation and that the UPI contract is not violated.

6. Honors Convocation [Milo]: The program will be at 6 p.m. on Thursday, April 16. The place will be determined; but generally, it has been in JDC. Dr. Milo will send chairs, directors, deans and others a PDF version of the application. He seeks to eliminate a few steps and make it clear and easy on how to apply and to whom. A deadline will be included, it is March 1. Dr. Bernie Rowan is the co-chair and he will work on the honor societies. Last year’s committee will be asked to continue and/or make recommendations for new members.

Each department or college can announce internal and external awards. We should include graduate assistantships, fellowships, grants, etc. Each dean should let Dr. Milo know about all awards, fellowships, etc. The CSU Foundation should continue to have a member on the committee, but it should also be asked about getting donors notified and to participate. Clarification also should be made about whether or not they can participate and give out the awards themselves. All deans were reminded that they can have a college convocation or program such as the Health Science pinning and Education’s awards; however, there will be only one Honors Convocation. It also was queried about whether or not faculty and graduate and other student recognition should be at the University’s Spring Convocation.

7. Retention Status Report [Miari]: Dr. Miari also shared information that indicated six-year graduation rates (12.8%) and retention summary (55.4%) by a five-year trend by university and department. Dr. Balogun asked about whether we should begin considering differential admission criteria into the University based upon major.

Earlier, Dr. Westbrooks said she would look into a report indicating a high number of students using the advising center were on probation. The students dropped or not returning to the University need to be analyzed before information is shared. Until official reports are ready next month, this information is confidential.

8. Other Matters

a. Academic Affairs Priorities –Dr. Westbrooks requested each Council Member to provide her with their number one priority for their respective units. She will compile the list so it can be discussed at Provost’s Council on Wednesday. Each dean or unit head is to identify only one priority. After we’ve discussed all, she will submit her recommendations (in priority order) to the President for consideration. We are to keep in mind the 10 Expectations.
b. **DFI Grants [Ward]:** Funding is available for minority graduate students interested in teaching at the university or college level, this is the IBHE Diversifying Higher Education Faculty in Illinois Program. Copies of the applications were distributed and general announcements will be sent to the colleges. Applications are due by February 20 and students must respond to each question/statement in the professional goal statement to get through the screening. Up to $20,000 in funding is available for each graduate student.

c. **Announcement:** April 27 – 28 is the program for “Continuing the Journey” on the Black Male Initiatives best practices conference. It will conclude with a program at CSU on those dates.

Submitted by

Debrah Jefferson

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