College of Arts and Sciences Policy Committee Minutes
December 7, 2015

Present: Dale McFadden (chair), Stuart Davis, Julia Fox, Peter Guardino, Scott Michaels, Kevin Pilgrim, Julie Van Voorhis, Nick Williams

The meeting was called to order at 4:00. The minutes from 16 and November 30 were approved.

The meeting began with an extended discussion of the College budget in light of the College Fiscal Sustainability Task Force comprised of members of the College administration, administration from other campus units, and college faculty.

Executive Dean Larry Singell joined the meeting at 5:00, and the CPC continued its discussion of how it should serve as the budgetary affairs committee of the College, as well as the related issue of the activities of the budgetary task force mentioned above.

Dean Singell provided some background for the formation of the task force. The Dean said that the College anticipated well in advance that it was likely to experience a budget shortfall as a primary result of the continued decline in the number of student credit hours. Dean Singell discussed the budget situation with the Provost, and she offered to form a Fiscal Sustainability Task Force for the College, which has been used in the past for other schools. The task force was comprised of budget experts from central campus and other schools, administrators from the College, and 3 College chairs. The task force was charged with discussing the causes of the budget circumstances of the College and presenting the College with a set of alternative strategies to consider in addressing the potential deficit. Members of the task force from outside the College presented different ways that other units have used to address comparable budget problems. Dean Singell indicated that the College will be given the opportunity to consider these recommendations and decide which ones are most appropriate for the College. It was noted by CPC members that the CPC should have been given representation on the task force. Dean Singell noted that in retrospect this would have been a good idea. He reiterated that the CPC would have the opportunity to assess the options suggested by the task force, and the results of the task force would also be submitted to chairs and directors for their input.

Discussion turned more generally to changes in the budget cycle and how they relate to the CPC’s role as budgetary affairs committee. The CPC requested more information about hiring authorizations, budget requests from departments, and other data. Dean Singell was agreeable to additional information being shared with the CPC, including departmental budget request documents. According to Dean Singell, some information is contingent on whether the state legislature has a long session or short session; in long sessions, information usually not forthcoming until June, but this information is released earlier in short sessions.
Dean Singell also stated that he would like to be more strategic in the budget process and consider longer trends, at least five years out. According to the Dean, hiring allocations will be based on four principles: research, teaching, enrollment demand, and harmony. He noted that the CPC could be involved in this planning and that it was an excellent time to think about the committee’s role in the process. The Dean and the committee agreed that this conversation will continue in the spring semester.

Dean Singell left the meeting at 5:30, after which it adjourned.

Julie Van Voorhis, recorder