



University Senate

Minutes of the Academic Policy Committee

11 November 2009

Present: Julie Klein (chair), Fayette Veverka, Farid Zamani, Lesley Perry, Nancy Sharts-Hopko, Lowell Gustafson, Emmet McLaughlin, Giorgi Japaridze, Tahir Qadeer, Bryan Kerns, Gil Morejon, Ron Hill, Mike Pagano, Ed Kresch, Jerry Jones, Bob Styer

NIA: Lindsey Waters, Chiji Akoma, Mark Sullivan,...

The meeting opened at 1:35pm. The minutes were distributed. Nancy Sharts-Hopko motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Emmet McLaughlin, and approved with one abstention.

Discussion of the Emergency Final Exam Policy:

While everyone agreed that there is no good solution to an emergency closing during finals week, the following concerns were expressed:

1. The student members said that it would be very hard to prepare for a final exam in August. So Option (A2) is not viable from the perspective of most students. They questioned what happens if a professor chooses to veto Option (A1). In such a case, it is quite possible that the professor would not be willing to work out other alternatives so that the only "choice" left to students would be Option (A2), an option unfair to students who cannot study over the summer.
2. What about students who plan to transfer or the approximately 200 students who choose Study Abroad (either in the fall so they could not take the makeup exam, or who are on Study Abroad in the summer so they could not prepare for an exam)? What about students who want to take a course over the summer that has the incomplete spring course as a prerequisite?
3. What about the faculty members who are not available in the fall (or spring) due to sabbaticals, an adjunct or visiting or otherwise non-tenured professor who is not hired for the following semester, or a faculty member who is incapacitated due to the epidemic, etc.?
4. Overall, many think that moving the finals from December to January is much less problematic than moving the finals from May to August.

After some discussion, a motion was moved by Lowell Gustafson and seconded by Ron Hill:

The Academic Policy Committee advises the VPAA to formally consult the Student Government Association for more feedback on this proposed policy.

Approved unanimously.

The chair Julie Klein motioned and Emmet McLaughlin seconded the following:

The Academic Policy Committee approves this policy for the Fall 2009 semester only.

Approved with one abstention.

The chair said she would communicate to Dr. Johannes that we are holding off on any final approval of this policy until the SGA and others are satisfied that this policy is the best way to handle such admittedly difficult circumstances. She will put the item back on the agenda at a future meeting.

Chief Academic Officer Search:

Julie Klein handed out the job description of the current VPAA. The group then summarized the President's remarks at a recent forum. The President is leaning towards a provost title, specifically underlining the central role of academics in the University. He is committed to a thorough search for the proper person, and probably will need to appoint an interim VPAA while the search is continuing.

Several faculty members agreed that a provost title is much better in that it symbolizes the primacy of intellectual concerns over the perceived financial bias that is evident in many current decisions. The provost should make academic goals preeminent, not financial considerations. Some members felt the VP for Finance should be under the provost, while others pointed out that the President explicitly said the VP for Finance and for Development are almost always a direct line report to the President. Someone also pointed out that the President wants to stay engaged in the daily life of the University, not merely becoming a figurehead fund-raising president.

The new provost must be able to articulate clearly a new academic vision, leading to a richer academic culture, where Villanova is a center of intellectual life where students imbibe a love of learning. The new provost will not focus on bean-counting evaluative measures, but will support the contemplative, speculative, open-ended nature of long term research projects that should define scholarly life, a culture willing to take intellectual risks. Qualitative evaluation is as important as quantitative measures of productivity.

To function as an effective leader over more areas of the University, the new provost will likely need an expanded office with associate and assistant provosts.

Some members raised concerns that service projects seem to demand more time and energy of students than academic concerns. Possibly this affects female students disproportionately and so their academic studies suffer more due to service. The new provost needs to emphasize the academic and intellectual aspects of service rather than to allow service to be in competition to academic life.

The new provost should have top academic credentials, someone who will help Villanova gain a national recognition in scholarship. The provost will recognize the importance of research support in terms of release time, travel funds, etc.

Villanova needs a provost who will orient Villanova to a new future; the many new faculty members at Villanova are ready to move forward. Villanova tends to be a comfortable place, with complacent inertia that inhibits needed change. The new provost will not be satisfied with the current Villanova, but will "shake things up." S/he will bring accountability for intellectual life.

The provost will use the graduate programs to build intellectual vitality, and bring a higher profile for graduate education. Graduate studies have no central advocate, but are run independently in each college.

The provost should be a public intellectual with broad intellectual interests.

Despite our claims of community unitas, Villanova does not have a culture of interdisciplinary scholarship.

The new provost needs to be strong to create a cohesive community among the deans, without each college fighting for resources and recognition. S/he needs to articulate a common vision that has the colleges working together, drawing together disparate activities so the sum can be more than the parts.

The provost needs to develop a bigger view of research, including pedagogical research. Student learning and new ways to effectively deliver learning to students should be viewed favorably by R&T.

The provost will recognize the central role of faculty in driving the enterprise forward.

The provost will support accountability of senior administrators to the community.

Everyone agreed that it would take a superman or superwoman to fulfill all of these characteristics, but we think that it is time for some major changes; we should take our time, not hurry the process, and strive for a truly outstanding provost and not hurry the process.

The chair said she would circulate our minutes to the faculty for further input, and put the CAO discussion on the agenda for the next meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday December 8 at 2pm.