

ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
APPROVED MINUTES
December 14, 2005

Members Present

Mary K. Bolin
Barbara Couture
Craig J. Eckhardt
M. Susan Hallbeck
F. Edwin Harvey

Jeffrey K. Keown
Richard M Kettler
Nancy Mitchell
William J. Nunez
Steven S. Waller

Nathan M. Walters
Megan E. Weil
Ellen M. Weissinger

Members Absent

Giacomo M Oliva

John Owens

Prem Paul

Mitchell called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

Announcements

Mitchell introduced two new APC members, Ellen Weissinger, representing the Graduate Council, and Megan Weil, representing undergraduate students.

Mitchell noted that this will be Craig Eckhardt's last meeting. He will spend next semester in Italy. The APC expressed their appreciation to Eckhardt for his three terms of service.

Minutes

Approval of the Minutes from November 2 and November 30 was moved by Hallbeck and seconded by Eckhardt. Minutes were approved without dissent.

Scheduling the Annual Meeting

Mitchell reminded the members of the problem of attaining a quorum at the May, 2005 meeting when there were a number of proposals that required action. She asked whether the members preferred to have the last meeting of this academic year on April 19, 2006, and to cancel the May 3 meeting.

Couture said there should not be a repeat of the large number of proposals presented at the last APC meeting of the year. In past years there has been a misconception among deans and department heads that proposals approved by APC in May would be ready to present to the Board of Regents in June. Academic Affairs has developed a new description of the program proposal process which shows the approval steps and average time to process each step; proposals submitted to APC in May generally cannot complete the process of system and chancellor review before the June regents meeting. System-wide requirements for submission of proposals may be changing as well, and these changes need to be communicated. Couture will bring the new program approval process timeline to APC in January. Keown asked whether deans would be notified that proposals have to be submitted to APC in April to be on the Regents' June agenda. The deans have been apprised of these process requirements, Couture noted.

Mitchell asked when APC would get the next round of POE proposals. Couture said Academic Affairs plans to call for proposals in January so they will be ready for APC consideration in March [N.B. This timeline has been amended; proposals will be ready for APC review in February.]

IANR Faculty Letter About Budget Reductions

Keown called the members' attention to a memo distributed at the previous meeting and posted for APC on Blackboard [attached to the permanent record]. It was addressed to IANR Department Heads from IANR Academic Senators and concerned the Vice Chancellor's request that departments submit scenarios for 2 percent, 4 percent and 8 percent budget cuts. Keown introduced the following resolution.

The Academic Planning Committee expects all budget reductions, reductions in force and vertical budget cuts to follow the guidelines as outlined in the 1993 document, "Procedures to be Invoked for Significant Budget Reallocations and Reductions," approved by the Academic Senate and ASUN under the authority of Regents Policy 1.10.3 and UNL Bylaw 1.9.8 which outlines the role of the APC in reviewing and proposing change or elimination of programs.

Eckhardt seconded the motion to approve the resolution. Discussion followed.

Keown said the resolution was directed to the specific case of the IANR budget cuts. Eckhardt thought it should be a more general reminder to the administration that APC needs to be involved in vertical budget cuts.

Waller said department heads in IANR had voted to make vertical cuts because the 1.6 percent cut mentioned by the Chancellor would not cover the shortfall. The department heads are trying to consolidate planning for this cut and one that is expected next year. Eckhardt said in that case the cuts should be presented in two stages, each as a 2 percent and a 4 percent cut. Waller said he took exception to the faculty's feeling that they needed APC's help so early in the process.

Weil asked why "Procedures to be Invoked for Significant Budget Reallocations and Reductions" had not been revised since 2003. Keown said the procedures had been developed through a year-long process and 2003 was not that long ago. Weissinger added that the Procedures were general, not specific to a time or situation.

A vote was taken and the motion was approved without dissent.

Long-Range Planning Subcommittee Recommendation for Strategic Planning

Eckhardt said the charge from the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs to assist in strategic planning contained two charges and an oral charge to "dream a bit." The subcommittee's response was distributed at the last meeting and posted on Blackboard [and attached to the permanent record]. The subcommittee met with Couture recently and presented their white paper.

The subcommittee recommended retention of the present mechanisms for coalescing and assessing interdisciplinary activities and for reviewing interdisciplinary proposals. In addition they suggested a new entity to prepare the soil for collaborations.

While reviewing the units' strategic plans, the subcommittee concluded that many units wanted interdisciplinary projects but did not know how to get them started. The subcommittee proposed a University College centered on undergraduate interdisciplinary projects. Participation in projects of the University College possibly could fulfill General Education requirements. It would be a hands-on experience with another discipline and might serve as a capstone experience. Evaluation might include presenting at seminars, to a jury or through portfolios. Faculty involvement in the University College could be for the duration of a single project or for a longer term.

Motion

Eckhardt moved that "University College" in the document be changed to "University Academy" to avoid confusing it with a formal college structure. Halbeck seconded the motion. APC voted without dissent to accept the new name.

Couture said she appreciated the work the subcommittee had done. She agreed with the "Academy" name because the focus is on bringing students and faculty together, a current goal. She said the concept would be presented to the General Education Committee. It was presented to the Chancellor's Senior Administrative Team and was received with interest.

There are some existing processes for sustaining ongoing interdisciplinary projects, but forums are needed to initiate interdisciplinary work. UCARE is a current undergraduate research initiative. Harvey suggested a chat room for those interested in multidisciplinary projects and Eckhardt supported that idea.

Eckhardt said the University Academy needs more structure and a refined charge before it would be ready to interact with other organizations. Couture recommended that the APC flesh out the document, and said she would bring the document back for review by the SAT (Senior Administrative Team) after it was fleshed out. She said that defining a reporting structure, the role of an academy director, and defining how it could fit into existing structures will determine its success. Eckhardt suggested a board of governors. Mitchell said the backing of the Senior Vice Chancellor would help assure that the proposed academy was taken seriously.

Hallbeck said the subcommittee didn't have enough information on people's expertise to know who needs to get together to make the Academy work. Hallbeck said the Vice Chancellors for Research and IANR have retreats to encourage cooperative research. Couture said tracking interdisciplinary projects and creating lists of people to contact would keep people involved.

Weil said the Academy sounded exciting. She wondered whether it would add to the hours required for graduation. Couture said she imagined interdisciplinary projects that would be organized by the Academy could fit into the General Education requirements. Eckhardt said Walter was concerned about the Academy's increasing the load on teaching assistants. Couture said she hopes the new structure, if adopted, would be able to build upon structures already in place, although it might need some funding to become sustainable. Eckhardt said Oliva had some ideas about that but he wanted the concept to be approved before going into details.

Motion

Eckhardt and Hallbeck moved and seconded a motion to forward the report as an APC document to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. There was unanimous approval.

Issues from the Vice Chancellors

Couture handed out the University's new definition of "Multi-Departmental Academic Centers for Research, Teaching and/or Service" and a list of centers approved by the Chief Academic Officers of the University. [Documents are attached to the permanent record.] The definition requires all of the following:

1. Interdisciplinary breadth encompassing commitment of funding and faculty time from more than one department.
2. An identifiable budget.
3. Evidence that the multi-departmental center will more effectively achieve stated academic objectives than traditional departmental, school or college structures.

Regents-approved centers and campus-approved centers will have different review processes. At their January meeting the Regents want a list of centers (marked with "Yes") that will undergo campus review. Couture requested that APC accept the list of centers—grandfather them in—even though there is no record of APC action on them. Whether they were approved by APC is unknown because APC records are incomplete. The Chancellor and the Senior Vice Chancellor agreed that there was no need for APC to reconsider long-standing centers. All had been approved by UNL's Chancellor and/or Vice Chancellors at some point, indicating the centers had gone through the approval process at the time. The deans reviewed the list for accuracy.

There was discussion at length about APC's past actions regarding centers. Kettler asked about centers (indicated by "No" on the list) that do not meet the new definition. Couture said they are all active centers. Because some centers do not have as formal a structure as departments and colleges and are not continuous users of University resources, they may not require regular campus reviews. Likewise, University-approved centers with a "No" after them do not have a research or academic function and will not be reviewed by the Regents.

Motion

Keown moved to approve the list. Harvey seconded. There was further discussion.

Waller said what is lacking is a campus review process. Couture said any center that has an academic function should be reviewed, either as part of a department or by itself. At the present time the only centers reviewed by the campus are those included in a college accreditation or as part of another program that is reviewed. It may be that other centers are reviewed by their deans or in some other way. Hallbeck asked whether APC could wait to approve the list until after the Regents acted on them. Couture said the Regents would approve the list in January [N.B. This was scheduled for January, but will now occur in March]. Formulation of the campus review process would come later. She advised looking at center reviews after the Academic Program Review Guidelines are revised.

Waller said he wasn't sure whether people in IANR had seen the list in its current form. Couture said all the deans and directors on City Campus had been consulted. She wasn't sure about the IANR process, but understood that IANR had reviewed the list. The Chancellor recommends not backtracking on previously approved centers. Centers formed in the future will have to be endorsed by APC.

Waller said he was on APC when the guidelines for "Center Establishment" were written, and asked why they were not being used. Kramer said the most recent revision of the "APC Guidelines for Submission of Proposals for New or Modified Academic Programs" included guidelines for centers and replaced the earlier document. Couture said she believes that the Regents' primary concern is not academic review of centers but fiscal responsibility for centers' use of state resources.

Mitchell reminded those present that a motion was on the table. Eckhardt suggested the motion be amended to say that APC retains its right to review campus centers that don't undergo Regents' reviews. Kettler and Eckhardt said issues come before APC without adequate time to review them and APC is put in the role of a rubber stamp. Couture suggested the motion be worded, "The APC accepts the report from the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs expressing the campus's intention to recommend campus-approved centers that meet the Board of Regents definition of centers. The report will be forwarded for Board of Regents approval, recognizing that all future centers that fit the Regents' guidelines must be reviewed and endorsed by the Academic Planning Committee before being submitted to the Chancellor for approval and forwarding to the Regents."

Keown and Eckhardt accepted the wording as a friendly amendment. The motion was approved without dissent.

Other Business

Mitchell said the Long-Range Planning Subcommittee can consider center guidelines in the future. The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lona Kramer
APC Coordinator