12-5-2013

Council of Chairs Meeting, December 5, 2013

Marshall University

COUNCIL OF CHAIRS, 2013-14
Minutes of the Meeting on December 5, 2013, 3:30 p.m.
Drinko 402; GC 134; SOP Conference Room

1. Attendance:

32 Chairs/Division Heads: Mike Castellani (CHM), Harlan Smith (FIN/ECN/IB), Dan Holbrook (HST), Marty Laubach (SOC/ANT), Josh Hagen (GEO), Allyson Goodman (SOJMC), Richard Kravchak (Music & Theatre), Steve Mewaldt (Psych), John Schloss (SOP), Jane Hill (ENG), Margie McInerney (MGT/MKT/MIS), Allen Stern (AST), Asad Salem (ENGR), Penny Kroll (PT), Marybeth Beller (PSC), Burnis Morris (SOJMC), Kim Broedel-Zaugg (SOP), Monika Sawhney (PH), Jarrod Schenewark (Kinesiology), Denise Landry (SON), Alfred Akinsete (MTH), Kelli Williams (Dietetics), Paula Lucas (Curriculum & Instruction), Jeff Archambault (ACC/LE), Del Chrol (Classics), Brian Morgan (IST), David Mallory (BSC), Tracy Christofero (TM), Mike Cunningham (LS), Joyce Meikamp (Special Ed), Sandra Stroebel (School Psych), Eldon Larson (ENGR)

Deans/ADs: Chuck Somerville (COS), Deanna Mader (COB), Janet Dooley (SOJMC), Don Van Horn (CAM), Robert Bookwalter (COLA), Teresa Eagle (COEPD), Gary McIlvain (COHP), Ron Bieniek (Honors College), Michael Prewitt (COHP), Steve Hensley (Student Affairs), Monica Brooks (IT), David Pittenger (Graduate College)

AA: Gayle Ormiston (Provost), Mary Beth Reynolds (Director of Assessment & Program Review)

2. Mike Castellani called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m. and introduced Gayle Ormiston, who led the meeting.

3. Gayle provided the attendees with two handouts, both on the Academic Portfolio Review process: (1) A one-page summary of the process as of 12/4, combined with AA's 20/20 Posting #2 (11/26), which reports on the Deans Meeting of 11/13; (2) A two-page detailed presentation of the Academic Portfolio Review process, as amended on 12/5. Gayle used this second document to lead discussion on the undergraduate programs component of this process.

4. The end goal of the Review is each program's Niche Statement. The overall framework to be used to create this document is the by-now-familiar Mission/Market/Margin strategic-planning approach MU has adopted. The discussion driver will be, as Gayle pointed out, the "Margin" component of this framework – given the resource contraction we expect to experience over the coming decade (in terms of state support). The Academic Portfolio Review will take place at several levels: At the program level the Chairs will write Niche Statements for their units; each Dean will write a college-level Niche Statement; AA will compile these Niche Statements, and together with the President will use them in budgetary planning. The ultimate audience for these statements, as emphasized during some Q&A time at this point, is internal – the MU Community. We as a university will use these statements to help us understand and implement a new budget model.

5. Discussion turned to the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) to be used to benchmark each Niche Statement. MU does have an existing set of KPI's that apply to the institution as a whole, namely the HEPC Compact Indicators – as listed under Point 2 of the distributed document. Gayle noted that there may be other Indicators we should (or would want to) include in our finalized set of KPI's, and he emphasized that AA would

like input from the Deans and Chairs on this. Discussion then turned to a few of the Compact Indicators, specifically "Persistence" and "Degree Progress." Persistence means more than just Retention from Year 1 to Year 2: it's an indicator that tracks year-to-year retention as undergrads proceed through their programs, from Year 1 through Years 4, 5, and 6. Degree Progress tracks the % of students who have completed a certain # of hours by the end of their first full year of enrollment, a certain # of hours by the end of their second full year of enrollment, and so on. Attendees noted that although this indicator makes sense at the institution level, translating this indicator to the program level will be difficult. For example, many students don't declare, let alone enter, their major programs of study during their first semester – or even their first year. In many programs students enter one at a time, not in cohorts who then move through the program together. And, of course, students change majors and even colleges. How can we translate the Degree Progress Indicator to the program level so that it provides meaningful information? This remains an open question.

6. We then turned to Points 3 and 4 of the distributed document, which together lay out the anatomy of the Niche Statement. Point 3 presents the current thinking on the purpose and intent of developing the Niche Statement. At the unit (degree program) level, the idea is to provide informed perspective on the currency and impact of (1) the existing curriculum, and (2) the service courses supported by the degree program (e.g., those courses offered by the program that are required by other programs, and the courses taught by program faculty in the Gen Ed Curriculum - including those taught for FYS, WI, CT, International, and/or Multicultural credit). In addition to this "currency and impact" discussion, each degree program must also identify the distinctive characteristics of its program.

In Point 4 AA first explicitly recognizes the hard, time-consuming, work that units put into their 5-Year Program Reviews and into their annual Assessment activities and reports. AA wants to minimize the duplication of work that could arise during the Academic Portfolio Review. The Provost emphasized that a degree-program level Niche Statement should not simply be another Program Review or Assessment Report, but rather should utilize the results of previously-done reports and activities to support its currency-and-impact analysis and the identification of its distinctive characteristics. Chairs should feel free to use the Assessment Reports they've already done, and their most recent 5-Year Program Reviews, as much as possible while constructing their programs' Niche Statements.

Point 4 also extends and deepens the "purpose and intent" discussion in Point 3 to articulate more fully the goal, rationale, and content of the Niche Statement. Its primary goal should be to identify the role and place of the program within the college, the university, and the discipline. It should provide a rationale for sustaining the program over time and a plan for doing so in the face of expected reductions in resources. In sum, the Niche Statement should be a statement that highlights the function and mission of the program and makes use of data to support the value of the program. It should be a statement, in short, of "programmatic educational value."

7. During discussion a question arose concerning the tracking of double-majors. Many students carry several majors, and there should be no hierarchy of majors (i.e., the program that represents a student's "first (declared) major" should not be the only program that gets headcount credit for that major; all degree programs that a student is majoring in should receive headcount credit for that student). Mary Beth Reynolds pointed out that in the 5-Year Program Reviews double- and triple- majors are now being accounted for, so the issue of counting such multiple-major students properly, program by program, should not present any difficulties. A second question arose concerning how programs can track their graduates for program value

and impact purposes. Several Chairs noted the time-consuming nature of this work during the Program Review exercise, and want to know what's expected of us in this regard during the Academic Portfolio Review. Mary Beth Reynolds pointed out that MU is contracting with an external vendor to track our graduates via LinkedIn and possibly other social media. Career Services is involved in this project (Denise Hogsett can provide more information if we like). Mary Beth emphasized that double- and triple-majors can be tracked via this process.

8. We then turned to Point 5 of the distributed document, designed to unpack the anatomy of the "curriculum review" component of the Niche Statement by focusing our attention on three key questions: (1) What is the role and function of the department, and its degree programs, within the respective missions of the college and the university? (2) What is the set of curricular conditions that promote sustaining the program and preparing students for 21st-century work? (3) What are some emerging disciplinary developments that will require attention for future growth and development of the degree program?

8A: Discussion of Question (1).

> The Provost highlighted the need for Chairs to keep their 4-Year Course Rotation and Staffing Plans up to date in BERT, because these plans are provided to students through the Registrar's Office and are used in advising to help students plan out their programs.

8B: Discussion of Question (2).

> Clarification was requested as to the meaning of "preparing students for 21st-century work." The Provost replied that the goal is to look forward to the future, rather than back into the past, while doing the curriculum review. In practice this means making sure your curriculum is as current as it can be, within your discipline, and documenting this carefully.
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> As discussion proceeded, the Provost emphasized that the 120-hour graduation requirement is something each program must make a priority in its curriculum design – if it hasn't already. The Provost also asked each Chair to consider the mix of core and elective courses in each degree program, and what implications this mix holds for the allocation of faculty time and instructional responsibilities. This discussion then led to the current Catalog listings. The Provost urged Chairs and Deans to review their programs' portfolios of active, inactive, and deleted courses and update this portfolio through the standard curriculum processes in place. Each program's Catalog Listing Portfolio can be found as a BERT report: go to the link titled "Current Course Catalog" under the Miscellaneous header.
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> Conducting the curriculum review also involves examining the alignment of program offerings with the new MU Degree Profile Outcomes. Mary Beth Reynolds will meet with each department, this spring, to discuss the extent to which each program's PLO's (Program Learning Outcomes) align with the university-wide Learning Outcomes specified in our Degree Profile. Specifically, she will help each department do this alignment, and emphasized that the process would not be prescriptive.
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> A complete curriculum review also includes a Faculty Profile. Who makes up the program's permanent faculty (tenured and tenure-track)? What are their areas of teaching and research expertise – and how do these fit into program delivery? To what extent does the program depend on adjunct, fulltime temporary, and/or term faculty? What is the best use of faculty time when it comes to advising,

service, and program development needs? In particular, as advisors should faculty take on more of a mentoring role? If so, what implications does this hold for advising practice at the university, college, and program levels?

Finally, what about faculty productivity in terms of SCH-generation? How should we track SCH's? Do we incorporate start-of-semester and end-of-semester counts in order to highlight withdrawals and drop rates?

8C: Discussion of Question (3).

Looking at emerging developments involves considering student demand for programs and for courses within programs; the demand for faculty (and what types of faculty will need to be hired); and the need for space – classrooms and offices. Once again, the Niche Statement involves looking to the future as best we can.

9. In summing up the overall discussion of the Niche Statement, the Provost highlighted the following:

9A: The final document should be 5 – 8 pages in length. It should not be used to produce data, but rather should refer to data that supports the discussion. All necessary institutional data will be made available by Institutional Research.

9B: The Niche Statement will likely consist of 4 components: (1) The Program Mission; (2) A narrative description of the program – its role and function; (3) Current Conditions; (4) Emerging Conditions.

9C: By January 10 we must finalize the process we will follow to complete the Academic Portfolio Review, in terms of content and timeline. At the moment the timeline is not set, but it will likely start sometime in the spring.

9D: Eventually, we will have to confront the relationship between the 5-Year Program Review process and the Academic Portfolio Review – and attempt to fold them together as much as we can.

10. The Provost then turned the meeting over to the attendees, for general discussion.

Is the full slate of KPI's already established? No. And simply being able to obtain data for a particular indicator doesn't mean that the indicator will become a KPI. We want to support the Academic Portfolio Review with useful, relevant data – and we're still looking for what would make the best KPI's.

What would be the usefulness of tracking attrition rates within courses? If we want to do this, then we need lots of information on our students - including demographic data. And this data must be usable. We must also think of student attrition, and progress towards degree-completion, in terms of its connection with advising. Sometimes Chairs and advisors recommend at-risk students take lighter loads, and/or delay jumping into core courses. But this muddies the waters when it comes to the usefulness of the Degree Progress hour-completion indicator. In sum, before we start tracking withdrawals and drop rates, we need to get a better handle on our students' overall situations. And we need to know why we want these data and hence to what use we should put them.

What, in sum, is the Niche Statement for? Who will evaluate our Niche Statements? On what basis? To what end? The Provost noted that the end-goal of the entire Academic Portfolio Review effort is to find efficiencies and save money. And as we pursue this goal the data with respect to the KPI's will be paramount.

As the discussion on these points continued, the Provost noted that the goal of the Academic Portfolio Review is not to save money by sacrificing academic quality, but rather to protect and justify our academic quality as best we can in the face of a tightening resource constraint. MU needs to be proactive rather than reactive, in the face of external concerns about our use of money. And so we must find a way to explain what we're doing, and why. Right now, we're at the front end of the discussion on how to do this. As we work through this Academic Portfolio Review we will, eventually, be able to explain to ourselves and others why we continue to offer certain programs, and why we cannot continue to offer other programs.

The Provost emphasized, once again, that he seeks input and ideas from Chairs and Deans on how best to structure and implement the Academic Portfolio Review. Mike Castellani and Penny Kroll both noted the value of a self-study exercise and offered to share their own programs' self-studies and lessons learned with other units.

Deans Somerville and Van Horn noted that the Niche Statement approach is our chance to make the case that numbers alone are not the way to make important, strategic, Academic Portfolio decisions. We should look at the Academic Portfolio Review as an opportunity, and take advantage of it.

The Provost summed up the discussion by saying that the Niche Statement is a statement about the value of your program to MU. Because, to make informed budgetary decisions going forward, in the face of declining state support, we need to understand why we're doing what we're doing – as an institution.

The meeting concluded with extensive discussion of the retention problem.