Minutes of the 13 February, 2010 AS Executive Committee Retreat


Absent: Laura Manson, Simon Balm, David Zehr, Tina Feiger, Tim Cramer
Mary Colavito, Esau Tovar, Marina Parise, Terry Green, Lesley Kawaguchi, Mitra Moassessi, Jinan Darwiche.

I. Call to Order – Eric Oifer – meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m.

II. Introductions

III. Information Items

A. Accreditation. Eric reported on recent visit –March 8 to March 11-. The chair of the accreditation committee did not report any red flags. Hard copy of Study is ready for review by membership. The most important area for improvement is to work on linking budgeting to planning. As needed to allocate funding to new programs.

B. Memo of Understanding with Kaplan University. Eric reported the chancellor of the California Community College System signed a memo of understanding early December with Kaplan University – a for profit institution- which enables students to finish their associate degree by taking online classes with Kaplan University. See copy of Memorandum. There was no consultation with Academic Senate.

IV. Action Items

A. Distance Education Committee Recommendation. Wendy Parise presented a summary of findings and results of the study conducted. The committee recommends extension of contract with eCollege for one year. Reasons behind recommendation:

- Lock in a four-year deal.
- eCollege offers the best features.
- eCollege platform adjusts to the needs of both novice as well as experienced users.
- DE and IT staff recommend extension of contract.
- eCollege provides 24/7 support for students and faculty.
- eCollege has the best trainers.
- Survey results: most online faculty does not support switch to different platform.
- Transferring from a complete service platform to a less expensive one implies giving up features online faculty are already accustomed to have.
- Comparable platforms do not present a clear advantage: all have pros and cons.
- eCollege, unlike other platforms, does not present a risk of being bought out.
- eCollege, unlike other platforms, does not contract out their software.
- A move to a new platform involves additional costs from training and managing of two platforms which would be running simultaneously.

Comments:
The report does not include a cost comparison which is necessary to comply with the senate’s directive. Cost being an important issue it would be best to address the issue of savings. Are there no savings from switching to a new platform? If there are savings, are the savings not worth the additional cost?
Presentation to faculty should:

- Include data in order to make it more an information document and less a document persuading faculty to stay with eCollege.
● Point out that presently, there is a large cost to number of user’s ratio.
● De-emphasize the drawbacks of switching to a new platform and provide instead a list of the “bells and whistles” we presently get from eCollege.
● Include a comparative description of other platform(s) considered in the study. Only Blackboard was considered.
● Since online offerings represent 10% of enrollment, it should include data on FTE’s potentially lost from a switch to a different platform.

Motion to support DE committee Recommendation made by Richard Tahvildaran-Jesswein.
Motion Second by Lucy Kluckhohn Jones.
Vote: 18 in favor, 1 abstention.

D. Senate Goals and Objectives. Discussion postponed.

E. Senate Elections.
Elections for Senate President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary and Department chairs will take place in March and Campus Vote will be used because it proved to be a secure and reliable tool.

Eric Oifer announces he will not be running for Senate President.

F. Global Citizenship and Study Abroad.

Eric Oifer reports the discussion in the Global Council about the Study Abroad program was controversial because of a common misconception among faculty on the nature and scope of the Senate’s purview. In order to clarify the issue, Eric suggests faculty read “What is the Academic Senate and Why Should It Matter To Me?”. The document is posted on the Senate’s web page and it should be made available to new faculty during orientation. The purpose of this document is to re-frame the discussion away from a divisive dialog pitching faculty against faculty and instead to redirect the discussion towards the proper process for selecting programs based on substantive issues.

Discussion:

It is important to clarify the relationship between the Global Council (GC) and the Academic Senate: if no decision making takes place in the GC and it only issues recommendations, then these do not have to be “Brown acted”. On the other hand, if decisions are made then they must be “Brown acted” and sent to the Senate for consideration. If the GC is not under the Senate, then how should we choose those who make these decisions? It is important to develop a process which justifies their power to make decisions. The GC was created by the Academic Senate, but the Senate - faculty- lost its control.

Some GC members believe they should have the ability to make some decisions and in fact decisions were made such as the decision on the “food theme”.

Because the GC controls a $200,000 allocation, it is important to provide a justification supporting the allocation of these funds.

The administration’s control of the GC may appear as shared governance only in the special case of a ‘faculty friendly administrator”. Without specific guidelines, shared governance could be lost with a change of administrator.

It is clear to the Global Council’s members that they must make some decisions. What is yet to be clarified is what kind of decisions should be made by the GC alone and which decisions must be sent to the AS. The decision on the food theme is a good example of a decision which should be made by the GC alone because it is not a requirement. Going forward, the GC must develop a more open and transparent decision making process.

On the issue of the Study Abroad, the GC members are comfortable with the notion that this process should be approved by the curriculum committee (CC). What is still being worked out is how the CC will do so.
Suggestion made to create a GC committee of the AS to determine the type of decisions that should be “Brown acted”, to provide guidelines in order to make the process more transparent and to establish a democratic election process for GC members. Additionally, it was considered necessary to develop an evaluation process for Study Abroad programs which includes a “stamp of approval” from the Academic Senate in order to guarantee quality and uniformity of programs.

It was also suggested that the GC should not be a joint committee. Instead, there should be a Senate Committee for the Study Abroad Program exclusively.

A suggestion was made to include students as part of the GC in order to get their feedback on their specific needs.

G. Lunch with Dr. Tsang, Senior Staff and Trustees

Upcoming Events: 1st full Senate Meeting – Tuesday, February 23rd
11:15 – 12:35pm – Bus 111

Adjournment – 1:00p.m.