

**COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS  
DEPARTMENT HEADS' MEETING**

**September 15, 2009  
2:00 p.m. in Solms 106**

**Present:** Laura Barrett, Mark Finlay, Yassaman Saadatmand, June Hopkins, David Wheeler, Tom Cato, Zaphon Wilson. Guests: Andy Clark and Anne Thompson

**AGENDA:**

**1. SACS**

Andy Clark distributed discs with information on AASU's 5<sup>th</sup> year report to SACS that concerned Student Learning Outcomes for all academic programs. SACS issued no "findings" of problems in this report, but there is a need to build on the program for 2011. CIS is constructing space in COVE for publication of this information and to allow a venue for faculty discussion. The next steps of the process will be more rigorous.

Outcome assessments were discussed at length and a question arose as to why grades are not used for this. Dr. Thompson reminded all that using grades does not allow all students to be measured on the same metric or rubric to ensure that learning objectives have been met. While AASU passed the evaluation, there is room for improvement. Faculty discussion and input is needed and a suggestion was made that an assessment committee be established within each department. Ideally, such committees will keep minutes that show faculty input into this process, and show how new curricula, new tests, or other assessment measures are adopted in response to these discussions. A handout, Appendix B, "Guidelines for Program Review of Departments, Incorporating Assessment" was distributed and is filed with these minutes.

Lengthy discussion was made concerning assessment of the Gen Ed program. Learning outcomes need to be developed for Gen Ed. MAPP tests are not being used by all faculty as there is not much faith in the accuracy of their measure. There will be a call made in mid-October for a committee to put together an assessment protocol for Gen Ed.

Conversation was held concerning the Department and University exit exams. Several department heads are not receiving scores on the University Exit Exams; Mr. Clark promised to look into this. Discussion

and debate occurred on the usefulness of these scores. There was more credence given to the value of the individual department's exit exams.

It was brought up that part-time faculty teach much of the core curriculum and that there is a need for continuity due to the high turnover rate among these faculty members. Objectives and content of courses should be clearly stated and structured to assure this continuity.

Dr. Hopkins argued that skills tests are more useful than standardized tests. She indicated that the questions on the standardized tests are geared more toward content and many courses are not available on campus that would aid students in answering these questions. Consequently many students do not do well on them. The general consensus of the group was that testing that measures "how to do" (i.e., critical thinking) is a better measure than testing designed to measure content or facts.

Faculty credentials were discussed at length. Starting this fall AASU must submit what each faculty is teaching and their credentials. Full-time faculty is mostly complete. Part-time faculty still needs to be done. Andy Clark stressed that heavily scrutinized "guidelines" are being used for this purpose (handout appended). Any faculty teaching a course whose degrees do not clearly indicate their qualifications to teach a particular subject will need an exception filed. These exceptions may be granted based on the content of an individual's post graduate transcripts, work experience, a certificate of completion, etc. Dr. Brawner is chairing a committee to gain input on building these exceptions. Anne Thompson will gather resources to assist with ways to take care of this process.

## **2. Promotion & Tenure – deadlines and policies**

Deadlines for Promotion & Tenure recommendations and packages are as follows:

October 5, 2009 - Submission to the College Promotion and Tenure Committee

November 23, 2009 –P & T committee's report due to dean

January 11, 2010 - Submission to Vice President Whitford

Dean Barrett announced that any faculty hired in January will not receive credit for their first semester towards the promotion and tenure process. They will begin their count the following August.

### **3. Part-Time Faculty – maximum hours in USG**

Part-time faculty cannot exceed greater than half-time for all USG facilities. They may not teach more than nine credit hours each semester for all Universities. This does not include summer sessions.

### **4. H1N1 Virus**

Faculty members are not being asked to keep actual attendance records; however, they are asked to report the number of classes where the absentee rate is greater than 10%. Each faculty member is asked to have a backup plan for classes in the event of illness and a method to communicate with their students. It was suggested that films and library assignments might be a good way of covering a class in the event of the professor's illness.

### **5. Two-Year Departmental Course Schedule**

Departments are required to map courses for the next two years beginning in January. Several department heads raised concerns that problems will arise if this information is published for student use. The primary concern is that students will delay scheduling needed classes. The schedules will be subject to revision and cancellations due to demand and other factors. A strong disclaimer was suggested as a possible remedy to this problem. Dr. Barrett stated that scheduling is needed not only for the students to map their course plans but will also determine new hires. Dr. Barrett asked the department heads to submit plans along with their objections in January 2010.

### **6. Website**

Brenda Forbis attended last month's meeting and discussed the change over to the new web format which includes a goal of making the websites more systematic. Dr. Finlay announced that in early October teams will contact individual departments to help with the change over to the new format. Specific issues with department pages were discussed and each department will need to update and correct any outdated/inaccurate information when the transition is made. Suggested guidelines for format and content were distributed (copy filed with minutes).

### **7. College Symposia**

The group was asked about their interest in participation in college-wide symposia, to be held once per semester or so. Interest was high and discussion revealed that the department heads felt that a symposium should be convened twice a semester. A college-wide symposium will meet

in October and two more times during the spring semester. An agenda of discussion topics needs to be developed, and department heads were asked for input.

## **8. eFACE**

Dr. Hopkins presented information on eFace. Summer semester responses were abysmal. Of 466 students only 99 completed (21%) eFace evaluations for the History Department. Other Department Heads reported a similar response. Because the low response numbers limit their usefulness in faculty evaluation it seems essential to develop another tool to measure faculty performance. Several methods were discussed with mixed reaction. Faculty resistance is the primary obstacle to these suggestions. Dr. Barrett stated two peer reviews were utilized at her last college and were very helpful, particularly with promotion and tenure. Again, faculty resistance was brought up as an obstacle. It was determined that the biggest issue with the lack of response from students' eFace evaluations is for the annual faculty evaluations. It was recommended that the Faculty Development Committee could help develop new procedures for peer review, and that the topic should be discussed at a future College symposium. Department heads were asked to articulate their concerns as well as possible solutions.

## **9. Summer Session**

Dr. Saadatmand addressed the group with concern that lengthening the summer sessions could kill study abroad programs. Students who wish to participate in study abroad will not be able to participate in more than one summer session due to scheduling. Increasing summer sessions to 12 weeks would give the illusion of three full semesters encouraging more students to take more of their course load during the summer to the detriment of the fall and spring semesters. This will adversely affect the University's state funding as summer session does not receive state funding. Additionally, extending the session lengths would reduce time off between semesters, creating additional time pressure on both students and faculty. Dr. Barrett stated that a survey would be sent out to students and faculty on September 16, 2009 asking for preferences, objections and suggestions on changes for the summer sessions. Dr. Saadatmand will contact Dr. Jim Anderson, Director of International Studies with her concerns.

## **10. Furloughs**

### **a. Administrators & ADP**

There are and continue to be many issues with the ADP payroll system. During the weeks with furloughs, it will be mandatory for administrators to fill out time cards indicating 32 hours worked. It was brought to the attention of the group that defaults set up in the system, as well as instructions from HR to enter only sick and time off into the form, creates the illusion that faculty and department heads are working 0 hours. Since this information becomes part of the employees' permanent work record, concern was expressed that not only is this data inaccurate, but somewhere down the line could come back to harm the employee. Additionally, at least one department head expressed reluctance to approve a time sheet showing that the faculty had worked 0 hours.

Dr. Wheeler brought to the attention of the group that money being taken from compensation for placement in retirement plans by ADP does not seem to be deposited in said retirement accounts on a timely basis. It is not known if this is an ADP issue or University issue. No interest is paid to individuals for the period of time that the funds are not on deposit. In some instances when money is finally deposited into a retirement fund it is being misdirected to the incorrect fund. He further stated that Georgia Southern University is experiencing this issue too. Dr. Barrett will contact VP Whitford and Rebecca Carroll with questions regarding this.

### **b. Policy on non-furloughed employees:**

Dr. Saadatmand brought up concerns previously expressed by Dr. Hopkins, herself and others that employees who are to be exempted from furlough are not really exempted as they have to use vacation time or attend training. Dr. Barrett reminded her that this issue had been resolved via telephone conversations with the department heads. A form will need to be completed for any non-furloughed employee who will be working from home on furlough days.

## **11. Designation of Concentration on Transcripts**

Dr. Saadatmand asked why concentrations, such as the International track in Economics cannot be added to a diploma despite minors currently being shown. Dr. Barrett stated that conversations with Greg Anderson and Judy Ginter revealed there are limitations on the form and it would take at least a year to be able to address this issue. Inviting Judy Ginter

to a future meeting was suggested as she would be better able to speak to this issue.

## **12. Requirements for Majors**

Dr. Barrett expressed concern that there are so many specific requirements for degrees that there is little or no room to allow students pursuit of a minor or double degree. She asked the department heads to give some thought to loosening up some of the degree requirements to allow this option for students.

## **13. Brunswick and Liberty Center**

The College's commitment to deliver courses at Coastal Georgia College in Brunswick will be phased out by spring 2011. Liberty Center is expected to continue growing.

## **14. Interdisciplinary Programs – Resources and Scheduling**

Jonathan Roberts and directors of the various interdisciplinary programs will be invited to the next department heads' meeting on October 20, 2009. The group will discuss ways to support and staff interdisciplinary programs. Attendees were asked to think about this and be prepared with comments and/or suggestions. The new two-year plans for future course offerings should help.

## **15. IRB**

Department heads were asked to discuss IRB guidelines with their faculty who may be using human subjects in their research projects or class assignments. Susan Arshack can answer questions.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ginny Predmore