

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT HEADS MEETING/LUNCHEON
August 9, 2005
12:30 p.m. in Solms 106

Present: Ed Wheeler, Mark Finlay, Todd Hizer, Jane Wong, Ken Relyea, David Wheeler, Rick McGrath for Yassi Saadatmand, Zaphon Wilson, Tom Cato, Lorrie Hoffman, June Hopkins, Jim Handley, and Dick Nordquist.

Discussion Question: What steps does your department take to help new faculty members in their year of transition? How do you mentor new faculty in your department?

- Take new faculty individually or as a group to lunch to make them feel welcome
- Provide early information about what will later be trivial details such as: “what should be on syllabi,” “how to order textbooks,” “how to operate copier,” ...
- Inform them how travel money is allocated
- Meet with new faculty periodically as a group or individually
- Try to get them in every two weeks to help them acclimate to campus
- Some heads felt the new faculty orientation should be on Monday and Tuesday, rather than Thursday and Friday, in order to give them more time before classes start
- Allow them to watch advising process before having to do it
- Go over forms and curriculum with them
- Recognize the specific area of expertise of current faculty and tell new faculty who to go to for what area (Professor X for advising, Professor Y for faculty governance, Professor Z for getting started on scholarly program, ...)
- Heads may wish to invite specific senior faculty to be available to junior faculty during the first few weeks of the semester, but they be careful not to create “enforced friendships” or unfortunate political alliances that may sour over time.

Note: As part of the discussion, Dick Nordquist moved, and the group approved a recommendation, that Dr. Murphy re-examine the pre-service two days of faculty orientation with attention to when the orientation begins, the length of the orientation, and a possible stipend attached to this early work.

AGENDA

1. Weeks 1 and 2

- Thursday and Friday are important for advisement. Advisors should be available until 7:00. Be sure to post a notice as to advisor’s physical location.
- Monday and Tuesday are important because approximately 400 more students could be registering. Need advisors on duty until 6:00 p.m.
- Need representative from each department for curriculum committee

- Need representative from some departments (probably history and LLP) for promotion and tenure committee

2. Meeting times for fall 2005

Department head meetings for fall 2005 semester will be held on the second Wednesday of each month at 3:30 p.m. The next meeting will be Wednesday, September 14.

3. Travel funds and operations funds:

Each department head was given his/her 2005-2006 budget which represents an increase from last year's budget in both travel and operations. Wheeler discussed the following reminders:

- Budget needs to cover not only professional travel of faculty but administrative travel related to USG business and faculty recruitment
- Travel guidelines should be spelled out in each department so that each faculty member knows how and when to apply for funds
- Travel to teach does not come out of this budget. Such travel should be cleared beforehand with Dean Finlay. If it is deducted from this travel budget, ignore the deduction. (Note: Wheeler did not really remember to say this, but he was supposed to have done so.)
- In addition to travel funds available from the departmental budget, Wheeler will support faculty making presentations at professional meetings. He will provide up to \$400 for this purpose with the following caveats:
 - One trip per faculty member per year
 - Until money is exhausted

If departments have concerns about their travel or operations budgets, Dean Wheeler will be pleased to discuss those concerns with them at their convenience.

5. Academic Program Review

This happens each year and is due by September 15 rather than July 15 as indicated in the Department Heads Handbook. As in the past, the review involves a response to data provided by Institutional Research. Five departments will also have comprehensive program reviews due this year.

6. Grades

This year Institutional Research will resume the process of providing grade distributions for each semester. Dean Wheeler indicated that he is an avid reader of these distributions and has had some conversations with specific department heads about problems in their departments. However, he also asked department heads to be familiar with those distributions and work with their faculty members to conform to the grading

expectations on page 56 of the catalog. Wheeler mentioned a couple of warning signals that can be found in the grade distributions:

- Faculty members who regularly have grade distributions in which “A” is the modal (most often repeated) grade
- Faculty members who regularly have grade distributions in which 60% or more of the grades awarded are “A’s” and “B’s”

Both of the symptoms are most troublesome when they occur regularly in core courses, but individual disciplines should also discuss whether there are upper level courses for which they are not appropriate. At the very least we must be sure to read grade distributions in parallel to FACE evaluations as we complete annual reviews each spring, and we must give careful guidance on grade distributions to part-time instructors.

7. Six-year graduation rates

Because of some statistical anomalies that are deeply rooted in the fact that we do not have a business major, AASU does not compare well when six-year graduation rates are examined. As a university, we will be giving attention to this issue for the next several years. As department heads we must be careful that our policies do not exacerbate the problem. Work creatively with students who need a particular course for graduation ... encourage those students who are lingering because they are enjoying being here too much.

8. Two new majors!!!

Armstrong has been approved to offer a BA in Law and Society and B.A. in Chemistry. If the faculty sees fit to approve these curricula, our students can enjoy these opportunities in the near future. Wheeler asked heads to look over the handout on the Law & Society degree and get comments to him by Wednesday of next week (Aug. 18) before the curriculum process begins.

9. Friday lunches: September 16, October 14, and November 18

Wheeler will be taking the two new department heads, Wheeler and Hopkins, to lunch for question/answer sessions. He will invite several “seasoned” department heads to join them so that someone present will know how to be a department head at AASU. (Wheeler has clearly forgotten!)

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Sellers