

**A&S Council Minutes**—Halloween edition  
October 31, 2012

Present: Joanna Mosser, Joe Lenz, Curt Cardwell, Matt Esposito, Tim Knepper, Amy O'Shaughnessy, senator, Marc Busch, Eric Manley, Chinh Dao, Karla Kash, Leslie Marrs, Dan Alexander

- i. Joanna called the meeting to order at 3:36 p.m.
- ii. Minutes from the 9/26/12 meeting were unanimously approved.
- iii. Report from the Dean:

Joe shared that the most searched phrase on the Drake website is "Drake Observatory." The information yielded from this search is very outdated.

On a related note, in the next week, the college will be posting a position for a web content manager: a hybrid position providing support in Medbury and also assisting departments with web content. This is a direction Joe would like to go with administrative positions in the college from now on: position descriptions are outdated and do not really match the type of support we need in 2012. Joe has asked Amy to rate/prioritize which departmental sites are most in need of assistance.

- iv. Approval of CS curriculum changes:

These changes derive from ACM—the gold standard in the field of Computer Science. The changes are approved unanimously.

- v. Members' report on strategic plan consultations:

Joanna shared that she spoke one-on-one with a few people in her department re: changing what we already do to make it more efficient, equitable, easier, etc.:

- Rethinking teaching workload—is there a way to factor all responsibilities (independent study, advising, committee service, research, teaching) into the "workload"?
- Thinking more imaginatively about courses (online courses during the regular semester, redistributing teaching workload over semesters, team teaching counts as a full course (not half))
- How can we work with students more creatively on their writing? Weekend workshops with high school students?
- What could be Arts & Sciences distinctive impact on the University? It would be helpful to discuss what a liberal education is, talk more concretely about what Arts & Sciences uniquely offers.
- Retain A&S faculty development grant program, but allow faculty for any kind of scholarly travel, make restrictions on those funds less burdensome. (Joe—already done.)
- Work to make Drake more financially accessible.

Curt Cardwell:

- Missing from the strategic plan: How do we ensure that a student who comes in is going to graduate in 4 years? Make each course count as 4 credits instead of three? This is a practical question that's not being addressed.

Chinh Dao:

- Goal 1, Objective B: "Create an institutional environment that develops, supports, and recognizes faculty and staff for engaging the future" merits a look at how we treat adjunct faculty evaluate how they're utilized—they are valuable and productive scholars, but put into a tenuous situation. Drake should develop a way to help adjunct faculty develop as teachers and scholars. Joe noted that this was discussed at Dean's Council this morning; considering multi-year contracts.

Marc Busch:

- Equal distribution of labor—giving students individual research opportunities...how are faculty recognized for these sorts of experiences? Advising? How can faculty get credit for these things that greatly contribute to the students' experience?

Dan Alexander:

- In terms of workload, Arts & Sciences should thinking beyond 3-3 load.
- The college should perform a course audit--- are we offering more courses than we need? If so, this would free up time for pretenure release and other faculty opportunities.
- Look at implications of faculty being paid more for J-term than for summer
- Investing in a virtual desktop would make it possible to open up a computer in a classroom and view things the way you left it...This technology is possible and not difficult to deliver
- Digitize P&T applications; streamline administrative things
- Valuing community connections: faculty feel that their service and interaction with students in the Des Moines community is a better use of time than cranking out papers that only a few will read.
- Journal vouchers—release funds to faculty member: 100 times cheaper on an individual version than for an institutional copy.

Leslie Marrs:

- Properly fund Cowles library
- More \$\$\$ for travel grants
- Time spent in secretarial duties and material acquisition for courses takes away from teaching and prep time.
- The college should prioritize creative pedagogies: collaborative teaching with teachers across the state—a way to promote Drake, and exchange of ideas.

- The college should place an emphasis on basics of writing.
- From the music department: the general state of FAC is a concern. Joe explained that there was language in the last strategic plan about FAC but it never made it to the campaign—it was not identified as a fundraising priority. FAC renovations are still on the University's master plan for facilities.

Karla Kash:

- In recruitment, considering what makes Drake different from other universities; facilities are a huge issue for recruiting for fine arts students. Chinh contributed that FAC smells moldy—and Chinh knows his molds!

Joe noted that other spaces (Harvey-Ingham, un-renovated Olin), were also in great need of renovations. The labs in H-I were built in 1947 and have not changed—and despite that, science majors have increased in the past 5 years by 20%. What matters most is what's happening in those spaces.

Tim Knepper:

- Faculty are so busy with teaching, research, service. Need help in making the connections between curricular-co-curricular programs, and community engagement opportunities. A staff position, who really knew what the faculty were doing, would help with this.
- Team teaching—would like to see the policy formalized, especially for interdisciplinary
- College should make a formal recognition of mistakes/innovation on P&T; promote innovation by pre-tenure faculty.
- Increasing teaching assistantships—provide research opportunities for students, and a meaningful way to earn money.
- The college should make an effort to make software more public—ways to allow students to access the software and decrease cost.
- Perception is that Drake does not recruit in historically black schools or in east Des Moines—fix this.

Eric Manley:

- With a virtual desktop: what you have is stored somewhere on campus, not on your machine. This would make for more streamlined use of technology in the classroom
- Community outreach: faculty visits to high schools?

Joseph Schneider:

- Within Joseph's department, one person's top priorities: enhance faculty opportunities, hire African American faculty member, establish a post-doc in racial studies and recruit aggressively, create a "posse" program to help with recruiting African-American and Latino students.
- Restructure and repurpose cabinet and council.

- Historically at Drake, where there's momentum and enthusiasm is where funding is placed
- A&S should support faculty scholarship—there is a clear connection between active scholarly faculty and great coursework. ***The art of thinking should be endorsed and supported—this is special and particular to Arts & Sciences.***
- Teaching students how to write: this is Arts & Sciences' baby.
- Faculty are being taught about how to teach writing—we are moving to having a program where faculty are being taught how to teach students how to write.

Council members discussed the unevenness of FYS classes: some have no real academic rigor; just because someone works at Drake does not mean he or she should teach FYS.

Joe noted that part of the emergence of FYS was a shift from the English composition course, "First Year Seminar in Reading and Writing." The first year seminar stuck, but not the reading and writing part.

Council members discussed: *Where does thinking happen?* Do students internalize the information when talking and giving presentations? Is there a connection between clear writing and clear thinking? Is writing a way to help students with clarity of expression? Does thinking occur in the intimate relationship between thinking and writing?

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.