Academic Senate
MINUTES
March 11, 2009
4:35 - 5:00 p.m. H111

This meeting followed the College Planning Council/Classified Staff Consultation Group/Academic Senate/Management/Instructors’ Association Joint Meeting (3:00 – 4:30 pm, Room H111)

Ignacio Alarcón introduced Dr. Kelly Lake, our Accreditation Faculty Co-Chair, who attended to talk about Draft IV of the Self-Study. Kelly Lake began by announcing that Draft IV is available at the website address printed on the back of the handout. He reminded everyone there was also an email sent today with an update on Draft IV information on the upcoming Accreditation Forums.

Kelly encouraged everyone to spend some time reading the Self-Study and to also fill out the feedback forms attached to the emails where your ideas and comments can be made. The idea is to make sure that what is in the Self Study report is what we do. We need to be accurate. We need to be upfront. We need to brag about what we do well and we need to say very clearly: ‘we don’t do this very well and this is how we’re going to work on it.” It’s really important for not only our eyes but our colleagues’ eyes to look at it to make sure that it does really say that. It is not going to be a good visit if we don’t do that and we want to make sure that the October 19th that happens in the fall semester is what we want it to be. There is lots of good stuff that we know we do. We just have to say it in a way that it comes out and that people know that. And we have to be upfront about some of the things that we’re working on that we haven’t had a lot of time to put into process and to practice to see “does it really work?” That’s why the mid term report in three years will be really crucial for us in some of those areas so that we can really report after we’ve had the time to really see to put something into practice and evaluate it. “Does it really work? Do we need to make some changes? And, what are they? So it’s really important that as we go through the rest of this process and then think about the fall semester. The accreditation visit will be a highlight for the fall in-service and it’s really going to be important that we’re all talking about the same thing. Not our impressions or our interpretations of what we think but it really has to be what it is.

Tom Garey asked how we are handling the self study when we’re essentially cramming to get caught up with the new accreditation standards and a lot of things that we are supposed to be meeting aren’t even implemented yet?

Kelly said that a good example was the Program Reviews? We’re talking about that and it’s new. At this point in time this is the process. We won’t have real time to run through a cycle and really evaluate is what we’re saying. For that particular topic the mid term report in three years is crucial. By then we will have gone through the cycle several times, we will have evaluated it, we know what works, we know what we have to change.

Tom said that in essence what we’re saying on a number of these issues is that we’re making progress but not at a sustainable level. Kelly said that this is correct. We can’t inflate where we are. What we can say: “This is where we are.”
Jack Friedlander said that we are jamming a lot. We’ve had to make these changes in Program Review and link them to our planning processes. By the time the visitation takes place we’ll have had that cycle completed.

Kathy O’Connor said that the responsibility of the Senate is to educate faculty about the accreditation team visit and process. Division representatives can help to inform and educate their division faculty and staff.

Kelly plans to return to the Senate at the end of April for the Self Study document endorsement, before it goes to CPC and the Board of Trustees.

Barbara Bell asked if it would be a good idea to discuss what happened at the joint meeting from 3:00 to 4:30. It seemed that there was a lot of subtext going on in the Q&A session and wanted to hear from people who had concerns and what they are. Maybe no one wants to talk about it. I’d be interested in a response to what we heard and some of the concerns we might want to discuss a little bit further. Maybe nobody has any.

Jan Schultz, Esther Frankel, and David Morris had specific concerns about the funds that may be coming back and what will happen if/when they do.

Barbara Bell asked about the concern with hourlies. She said she wasn’t familiar with this since in her division they don’t have a lot of hourly issues.

Kathy O’Connor said that in her case they deal with a lot of that and that they had to cut some of our hourly and actually the unfilled full time position we have requested for four years through CPP actually makes the hourly budget we have. From talking to Liz and a few others, one of the goals is to hire more full time and have fewer little bits and pieces where you can. She said that she will be making a huge case for hourlies if they don’t get a full time position.

Esther Frankel said that one of the issues in the instructional area is that hourlies do things like tutoring and those are not positions that can be converted into full time positions very easily. What I heard is that we were going to re look at hourly because the goal is to replace them. I think the instructional side of the house needs to make a case that that doesn’t always fly in all divisions. It may apply to the operational area. On the administration side that’s what you’d want to do. Our side, we have a lot of hourlies that perform important functions from an instructional perspective that cannot be replaced.

Tom Garey said that we need to identify needs, and that no one size fits all. We’re certainly moving toward a more centralized planning if the new process is implemented. David Morris stated that unless he was misunderstanding something, this isn’t a “proposed” process. This is the process, period. The second thing, and the hourlies issue is an example of this, what we’re told is to identify ongoing expenses and then your periodic occurring expenses will be part of a commitment to fund. But then in the case of hourlies, what I heard was that in that case “we’re going to re look at that.” As I understand it, most departments are employing hourly people and they have put their hourly needs and resources into their original plan. Is that the case? Esther Frankel said that this was the reason for her concern, that they are being taken away.
David Morris said that hourlies are in our original plans, and that so far there has been no process to identify anything in those original plans as well. It’s just been, “well we need to be concerned about maintenance”: translation – we need more money for that and we need to be concerned about hourly: translation – “we need less money for this.” There has been no process to arrive at that conclusion. That was a conclusion arrived at by the President. David said that he didn’t think that there is necessarily consensus among the deans that this new process is the best process. He said that he is concerned that even though we’re told there will be a commitment to funding both regular and irregular recurring expenses what this example seems to say: ‘if the administration agrees with those plans.’ We’ve still heard no process by which this issue of hourlies, maintenance, what gets moved where, is going to be decided. David said that he was pretty disturbed by this. He said he had understood when this was originally brought to the Senate this was something we were going to be asked our input on. Now it’s not anything we’re going to be asked about now, it’s something we’re told.

Ignacio Alarcon said that he thought we had had input in this. Jan Schultz asked how, if no action was taken. Ignacio said that different iterations of the initial proposal had incorporated input from the senate. Tom Garey said that there had been no senate action taken. Jan Schultz said that she had problems about our shared governance and the top-down approach that has been taken. She said that she thought that the joint meeting was going to be shared governance. Over and over we heard “I want you to give it a chance, I want you to hear my perspective.” We did not get any kind of feel that she wants to hear ours. At the senate there was one discussion about this. There was very little consensus and it was leaning toward there were real problems. Then it’s a done deal and we are told you’ve had your say. There was no motion, no vote. She said she’d like an opportunity to vote on this. Jan said that if we are powerless on this then she questioned the functionality of shared governance. David Morris expressed that we could at least go on record saying that we have real concerns about this process even if it doesn’t change anything and goes no further. Jan Schultz said that it was very frustrating to see how all the President wanted was to have a streamlined process to get the message out. Jan said that this is not shared governance; it is a top-down process. The process of how we’re getting to the Continuous Sustainable Improvement Level is the problem.

Esther Frankel said that this a process that the President wants to try. As an institution we have a choice. Just like we had a choice about implementing SLOs and we chose not to do what other schools have done. Speaking as a business person, we had a choice to do this differently. I can’t believe what I need to go through to get $600.00 in tutoring funds for next year. This may be a good process for the non-instruction side. Nobody has asked. Nobody has asked the department chairs.

David Morris said that the fundamental issue that was raised at the last Senate meeting has never been addressed. The fundamental issue is real simple: we’ve done a program review, we’ve gone and done the templates, we’ve connected our program and our plans with our resource needs and our requests. What the President is insisting on is this particular process to resolve the requests is necessary according to the accreditation standards. It’s never been explained why the current process that we’re using with Fund 41 funds doesn’t satisfy these standards. It would have been good to have this clarified.

Ignacio said that this could be an Action item for our next meeting, and that not because it wasn’t today it couldn’t be brought up again.