Meeting Minutes

Present: Wendy Hardenberg (recording), Elliott Horch, Joe Fields, Wes O’Brien, Liz Keenan, John DaPonte, Polly Beals, Deb Weiss (Chair), James Tait, Marianne Kennedy, Marty Hartog, Kim Laing

- Meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m.

- Minutes of 1/18/12 were approved unanimously.

- Announcements
  - Deb reminded the committee that Winnie Yu will attend the February 1st meeting to for an update on Technological Fluency.

- Old Business
  - Update from Polly regarding Southern’s relationship with the community colleges: Bruce is trying to get the transfer bank into an online format as it is currently still just a spreadsheet.

- New Business
  - Transfer students
    - Transfer credits – from Appendix A (see below) – discussion regarding limits on number of Tier 2 courses that may receive credit (“waived”)
      - Deb asked the committee whether only transferring up to 36 credits was adequate and reasonable. Consensus seemed to be yes.
      - Jim inquired whether or not the Tier 2 courses that transfer students have to take are constrained. Deb noted that the 36 credits are not automatic and students are unlikely to have them all waived often. John pointed out that often more than half of the courses that students take at community colleges tend to be in their major and so there is no problem if we say “up to 36.” Liz replied that good advising will lead to general education requirements being fulfilled, and so we want to be transparent about our process for the sake of the good advisors. John granted that some disciplines will have problems while others will not.
      - Jim asked whether a transfer student with an Associate of Arts would still have to take 3 LEP courses. According to the document, the answer is yes. Liz pointed out that it is typical for students to have to take at least some general education classes when transferring, so that is not a problem. Other students will come in with a lot of credits, but most of the credits transfer in as electives because the students were preparing for jobs rather than furthering a university education, and that situation is explained to them.
      - Deb asked whether SCSU is at a disadvantage as far as what we require from transfer students. Liz replied that Social Work transfer numbers are actually increasing. Deb asked about the rumor that we...
are less friendly for transfers, but Liz stated that she had not heard that rumor. Polly noted that the disadvantage is only anecdotal and we should make sure we have real data, specifically: 1) how we compare to the other CSU schools on how much general education is waived; 2) how many credits we require for our programs vs. how many they require; 3) whether we have a clear rationale for our policy if we are different. Since administration is focused on numbers, we need to be clear about why we’re taking our position.

- Polly then went on to mention the fact that SCSU is still admitting students into the university and the LEP after the start of the semester, which is wreaking havoc on their schedules and raises the question of numbers vs. quality of education. Deb noted the pressure exerted by declining enrollment and proposed that we ask Marianne why she thinks it has declined—is it difficulty of transfer, a tarnished reputation, or something else for which there is data? Kim pointed out that enrollment goals are set by the enrollment management council and is a university-wide decision, which leads students to be admitted until that goal is met. The lack of classes is based largely on the unpredictability of failures. The targets for Fall 2012 are 1322 new freshmen and 950 transfer students, but there is a question of how many potential students even exist to apply. Marty commented that we are trying to grow our way out of a budget hole, but John countered that there is an approaching drop-off in numbers of Connecticut high school graduations, which means a smaller application pool, but in any case finding classes for late admit freshmen is an old problem not unique to the LEP. Kim pointed out that the LEP structure does make it more difficult, and Polly added that the AUR hid the problem. Deb noted that SCSU seems to be compared to CCSU frequently. Wes commented that high school graduation really is down and there are multiple factors, including competition from private colleges, lowering standards, and admitting more students. However, we should not make things more difficult with the LEP, because the administration and the Board of Regents will be looking at it. Liz asked what it was about the LEP that would make anything more difficult. John said that it was more about the sequencing of courses, since Tier 1 has to come before Tier 2. Liz pointed out that INQ 101 is waived for transfer students.

- Kim then asked why transfers weren’t applying in the first place, and suggested that it was because our information isn’t good enough for the advisors. Deb pointed out that Central does not have an easy general education program—it has lots of requirements and students lose time there just like here. John said that Central apparently waives requirements, like foreign language, more readily than Southern. Marty looked up Central’s program online and revealed that they have 44-46 credits not including foreign language. Polly remarked on the ‘80s datedness of that curriculum. Liz asked how we should communicate with community colleges about LEP in order to be proactive about fall numbers. Deb brought the discussion back to the transfer bank and resources, because that communication is not up to us. People need to be in these positions doing this work for seamless integration, which means they need funding. Liz asked where we
wanted to prioritize the resources, because we want a pipeline, so we need to figure out how to communicate and make it accessible. Elliott pointed out that LEP is hierarchical, unlike Central’s general education program, but this is the program we voted for and we favor it.

- Deb reiterated that we have nothing but consensus on the issue of transfers taking at least two Tier 2 courses plus the Tier 3 capstone course. Marty asked whether an Associates degree absolved a student of general education in the AUR, and the answer was no. The compact agreement only guarantees 30 general education credits.

- Guest – Interim Provost Kennedy – answers to focus questions
  - Marianne told the committee that the top priority of the Board of Regents is transferability, that students need a seamless experience from Community Colleges to the CSU schools. There is a draft proposal currently under consideration that says: 1) by July 1, 2012, a student with an Associates degree in liberal arts will come into a CSU with junior status and a minimum of 36 general education credits; 2) there will be an articulation of progress for the top ten majors to ensure timely graduation (i.e. student should be able to start anywhere in system and finish anywhere in the system in 4 years); 3) Bachelors degrees would get capped at a maximum of 128 credits and L.A.S. degrees at 66 credits. There is also proposed legislation around teacher education, for example having student teaching last for a year. Since we don’t even have a common understanding of general education among the institutions, that might be a good first conversation. SCSU does not want to go back to a distribution model when we’ve finally transferred to a competency model that is better for workplace development. We want to present a new plan with a more reasonable timeline involving data-driven progress. Feedback must be given by February 1st, then the new document will be distributed to faculty, then to the Academic Affairs committee of Regents who will work with a faculty advisory committee, then there will be open meeting(s) for faculty feedback. The Board wants to approve whatever plan there is at their March meeting. Some Community Colleges are really interested in creating Critical Thinking and Technological Fluency courses, but we may need to make some compromises too. The top ten major initiative is not reasonable in such a short time period, although maybe the top 5 could be explored the next year. Intentions are good, but most on the Board have no idea how a university works or how curriculum gets developed because they’re business people. The Board needs to be educated, but we can be open to some of their ideas. Our program is good which means we can have influence because we spent a lot of time thinking this through. Even the Community Colleges are different despite their common course numbering system. We should think about who our campus representatives will be.

- How will the shortage of Spanish sections for freshmen be addressed by the administration for next year’s classes?
  - The World Languages and Literatures Department did not request bond funds for mobile lab equipment, but they could.
  - Students tend to come in with 3 years of Spanish, but then they want to take SPA 100 instead of SPA 101—maybe we could have a summer brush-up program so they feel more confident. Marty commented that
a summer program that ended with the possibility of taking the
STAMP test would be great.
  • There are faculty searches open right now in Spanish and French.
  o How will the necessary resources for coordination of LEP, FYE, and Academic
    Advising during winter break and summer session be provided?
    • By creative reallocation of resources.
  o When will the full-time position requested by FYE be filled?
    • We already have to give back approximately $700,000 back, so this is
      not at the top of the priority list. A new position is probably not going
      to happen next year, but that doesn't mean we can't think about
      internal reorganization. The administration understands resources
      are needed.
  o What funds will be provided to appropriate faculty to complete the transfer
    bank?
    • Faculty are needed to make the decisions, but a graduate assistant
      could do the actual coding and input. John reminded the committee
      that UConn and Middlesex need to be added. Marianne said that
      something would be figured out. Liz noted that it would be much
      more welcoming if prospective students and advisors could just go
      online and see how things transfer. Polly said that Community
      Colleges want an interactive Banner interface for the transfer bank.
      The data are there, so we just need to communicate what is in the
      degree evaluations. Liz asked if we could give community college
      counselors the HTML code that would let them see blank degree
      evaluations, and the answer was yes. John pointed out that we had
      done workshops for faculty advising in the LEP, so maybe we should
      do the same for community college counselors. It would be a nice
      gesture to go to them.
  o Are there still funds available for faculty to create new Tier 2 courses (grant)?
    • Yes, Bonnie is coordinating that.
  o What financial resources will be available for assessment?
    • We didn't get to this question.
  o What do you see as the primary measures that should be addressed globally for
    the LEP?
    • We didn't get to this question.
  o Why are our enrollment numbers down?
    • There are multiple reasons, including simple demographic change,
      bad press from the issues that occurred at Southern over the past few
      years, the perception that we are difficult to transfer into by the
      community colleges, private colleges that offer funding for students
      • Deb pointed out that from that list, the only thing really under our
        control is communication with the community colleges.

  • Meeting adjourned at 4:42 p.m.