PRAC minutes for 1/17/13

Present: J. Webb, C. Dellinger-Pate, M. Bay, P. Kahlbaugh, T. Lin, M. Enjalran, T. Radice, M. Davidson, M. Fede, S. Clerc
Absent: K. Gorniak, R. Zipoli, C. O’Sullivan

Meeting came to order at 9:45 a.m.

The Committee recommends that UCF grant continuing approval to the Exercise Science department.

As requested, Dr. Swartz submitted an additional document for Exercise Science covering PRAC standards 16 & 17: strengths/weakness and vision or plan for the future.

PRAC reviews are in-house and if there’s an advantage to departments in undergoing internal and external review, it might be the ability to be candid, even blunt, in the report that stays within the family. The Exercise Science report for standards 16 & 17 is an example.

The strengths of the department lie in the curriculum and faculty. Exercise Science has carefully structured a cohesive, progressive curriculum that ensures Southern graduates receive both didactic instruction and clinical practice. The faculty are dedicated to student success and, remarkably, manage to achieve it in spite of deplorable conditions.

As is the case with many departments at Southern, Exercise Science is hindered in their educational mission by chronic understaffing. Faculty who have left have not been replaced, and instructional credits that were once split with another department have been removed entirely without replacement.

Faculty are dispersed across 3 buildings and the 4 members of the Athletic Training program share one office, making it impossible for students to have any privacy when meeting with their instructors.

These problems are overshadowed, however, by the frankly shameful physical conditions in which both students and faculty must function. As the report aptly states:

   With the impending destruction of Seabury Hall, Pelz Gymnasium will be assuming the role of campus eye-sore complete with layers of filth and cockroach infestation.

The classroom spaces additionally suffer from erratic climate control that sometimes raises the temperature to near 90 degrees, and the lab spaces are converted closets. Paint is peeling from unwashed walls, ceiling tiles are missing due to water damage, and vermin occupy the building. Pelz is not, as the report points out, conducive to a learning environment. From the description in the report, it appears to also pose a threat to health and safety.

The Committee has read reviews from many departments that struggle with antiquated equipment, lack of technical support, and inadequate instruction and lab space, but to read that our students and faculty are working in the conditions that exist in Pelz Gymnasium is shocking.

The state of Pelz Gymnasium is an embarrassment to the university. PRAC urges the administration to respond quickly and substantively, per the resolution at the beginning of this academic year, to the Department of Exercise Science about how this situation can be mitigated.
Meeting adjourned 10:15

Submitted by S. Clerc