Minutes
University Senate Academic Policies Committee
Volume 50, Number 13
April 15, 2014


Chair Pratt called the meeting to order at 2:01 pm.

1.0 Meeting Minutes

Minutes from 04/08/14 were approved as distributed.

2.0 Physics and Astronomy Program Review discussion

Discussion occurred with L. Ford, Department of Physics and Astronomy Chair. The Department was commended on having student oriented faculty. There were no substantial changes to be reported since the Department Response was written earlier this spring.

Chair Pratt asked about the process of the review using PAM and SAM data. L. Ford had mixed feedback regarding the process as some questions were ok but some data did not fully reflect their current practices, such as all majors completing HIP by graduation. L. Ford also commented that the review process seemed different as it is more focused on the present situation and not much on where the Department would like to go in the future.

Chair Pratt noted that the recommendation is to change in form and asked how the Department might envision that change. L. Ford replied that the Department would like to expand Engineering Physics and Medical Physics but acknowledge that they cannot do this with the current resources, both personnel and space. This is one limitation of the checkmark system of the current review process – agree with recommendation to change, but knowing that it is not realistic and is not going to happen. The Department would certainly like to pursue expanding but is currently consumed with other obligations.

Discussion occurred on how the Department provides 80-90% of work towards service courses, which affects the upper division courses, scholarship, and service. Example is Physics 211. The number of seats in the course has grown due to demand despite limited resources, and have been very difficult to reduce the number of seats after this growth. L. Ford is uncertain what might occur with demand once Liberal Education reform happens.

Question was asked whether the Department might seek accreditation for Engineering Physics. There is extensive documentation on what the requirements are so the Department has an idea of what is needed, but they would need additional space (both classroom and lab space) and a position for this.
The Department is to be commended in that each major conducts some form of research before graduation, whether it is in teaching, senior design project, or faculty-student research. L. Ford indicated there are different ways to meet the requirement, but that each major does complete a HIP before graduation.

J. Markgraf asked whether the Department might consider a different pedagogical approach for Physics 211 as suggested in the review reports. L. Ford said that the Department is exploring this and a subcommittee is to report back later this week. They will be looking at ways to better serve the population of students they are seeing, such as life sciences (Kins & Bio). They will be looking at ways to make physics more applicable to these students as well as pedagogy.

Discussion occurred regarding the LTS response for stand-alone computers as identified in all the reports. The Department does not computers changed out every 4 years as LTS requires. This requires the Department to request Lab Mod money to use for surcharges and updating the computers in their 5 rooms rather than additional equipment the Department could utilize. It was suggested that the Department could write for exemptions as LTS has accommodated other science departments in the past.

Chair Pratt asked about the faculty and course rotation in teaching assignments and how it is working. L. Ford said that has always happened in physics and that they need a broad background in different subjects. All faculty should be able to teach in half the courses. Rotating teaching assignments may help morale due to faculty will eventually teach in courses they like teaching in and it encourages faculty to talk and share more. They also have a good relationship with the Math Department.

The Department was again commended on focusing on students. J. Markgraf asked if faculty are generally happy with the balance between teaching, research, scholarship, advising, and service. L. Ford replied that faculty can chose what they want to focus on more and also depends on where individual faculty members are in their career. Individual research isn’t the strongest focus in the Department, but it is encouraged due to student research. The challenging part is how to credit faculty working with students against a huge teaching load. Faculty are overloading without credit. M. Carney shared how the Chemistry Department reduced hours and credits in two introductory chemistry courses, which allows faculty to use those hours to work with students on collaborative research projects.” L. Ford said that he suggested reducing credit in lecture but that the Department didn’t support this. It was commented that workload appears to be the most significant issue at UWEC and how does faculty get credited for everything being done beyond teaching – assessment, research, service, student-faculty collaboration, etc.

Discussion with L. Ford concluded with comments that the review reports overall were fair and provided a snapshot of the main points of what is happening in the Department of Physics and Astronomy.

3.0 Kinesiology Program Review vote

Chair Pratt asked for any changes in either the narrative summary or the form. The recommendation will be to change in form or direction regarding the Exercise Science and Rehab Science majors rather than the departmental climate identified by the internal reviewers. It was
noted that recommendation #5 was not on the review form when it initially went to the Dean, so will be copied to the Dean when it is sent to the Provost. It was noted by J. Prushiek that 0.5 FTE would be moving from the College to the Kinesiology Department to help with growth.

Vote to recommend that the Department of Kinesiology change in form or direction was unanimous (9-0).

4.0 Liberal Education Reform Update

Today the full Senate Executive Committee will discuss an alternate framework to move forward. The Senate Exec meeting last week with the Provost became a closed meeting and only faculty were allowed to remain. A modified alternate framework was proposed last week that is very close to the previous alternate: K4 – 1 exp, S3 – 1 exp could be within major, R2 – 1 exp, R3 – 1 exp, I – 2 exp with 1 being within the major, and Service Learning outside of R3 as a standalone requirement in the core. Chair Pratt is uncertain if the alternate framework that will be forwarded to the full Senate will be amendable or if it will be a yes/no vote. S. Harrison is Parliamentarian and will be at Senate Exec today to help clarify.

5.0 Upcoming agenda items

Meeting adjourned at 2:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted
Gail Hanson Brenner
Secretary for the Meeting