

University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire
University Senate Academic Policies Committee
Vol. 56, Meeting No. 17
Tuesday, April 21, 2020
Via Microsoft Teams

Present: *Members:* Travis DuChene, Bob Hooper, Marquell Johnson, Hans Kishel, Der-Fa Lu, Joel Meier, Bill Miller, Vicki Samelson, Evan Weiher
Guests: Margaret Cassidy, Erik Hendrickson, Mary Hoffman, Deb Jansen

Presiding: Chair Marquell Johnson called the meeting to order at 2:08 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

1. Approval of minutes from April 14, 2020

- Updates were made to the minutes from April 14, 2020. They will be redistributed for approval at the next meeting.

2. Department of Physics and Astronomy Program Review

- Erik Hendrickson was in attendance to provide information and answer questions. Issues include lack of diverse hires and microaggressions (will be addressed and EDI training will be continued), both of which are being addressed. External reviewer comes from a different type of institution and some of the comments made weren't relevant.
- How serious is department in offering engineering?
 - To get ABET accredited, need one additional faculty and two different design courses. Dual-degree was one step, allows UWEC to team with other schools. Would like to pursue engineering physics and have proposed it when positions become available. Considering bringing an engineering faculty as a replacement in an upcoming search.
- Discuss additional efforts being made for time-to-degree and credit-to-degree? Majority of students have 148 credits upon graduation. Does certification in Lab View contribute to credit-to-degree?
 - Credit-to-degree: Small statistics/not many graduates. In addition to some graduates being education majors (which require additional credits), dual degree also contributes as students complete three years at UWEC + two years elsewhere then all of those credits transfer back to UWEC so students can finish their degree (two degrees totaling five years) which also increases average number of credits. Provide unique offerings, which students are willing to do the extra work for and pay extra tuition to attain an education degree or a highly sought-after dual degree. During last budget cuts, some of the upper-level courses were switched from being offered yearly to every other year. Even with advising, some students miss enrolling in the courses and are then off by a year. Determined that PHYS 365 was the course that was contributing to added time-to-degree and is required for all of the department's majors and emphases, course is now offered yearly. Aware of the issue and are trying to determine other bottlenecks. Lab View certification is not required but does add to the number of credits.
- Department's relationship with ARCC?
 - Dual degree coursework timeline very specific, but relationship with ARCC has been good. ARCC advisers (physics education majors and physics majors have different ARCC advisers) come to major advising meetings and meet with Erik every semester. Dual degree requires majors to meet with both their ARCC and faculty adviser before they can get their PAC. Work together well, more communication is key.
- Concern about "settling" on candidates?
 - Prior to proceeding with phone interviews, ensure entire committee feels each candidate (on paper) would be acceptable, a good addition to the department; discuss if any member of

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search committee doesn't want a candidate's expertise or feel the department would be "settling". Can't always hire the top candidate due to budget constraints, but don't feel the department has hired anyone that "hurt" the department in terms of quality

- What kind of salary would bring in an Engineering Physics faculty member?
 - Way more than what anyone in the department currently makes, administration is aware of what they'd need to commit, would cost more money but feel the major is something students would pursue
- Has department thought about forming an external advisory committee? Could back up some of the department's recommendations. Department places students in local industry, alumni are staying close, have community support/external validation of direction department should head.
 - Erik has met with Kent Syverson to discuss how Geology has moved forward with this, it's on the radar.
- 50% of the department's faculty to retire during next 7 years. What is the plan going forward? Any concern about the department being cut due to low number of graduates?
 - Retirement is weighing heavily on department. Hoping to use the time to attract spousal hires to enhance or diversify the department.
 - Small department is a conundrum. Looking at the 505 physics bachelor degree granting institutions across US, UWEC is consistently in the top 10 as far as the average number of graduates in the previous three years. Doing a great job, but being cut is still on their mind. Department is used as a model of what physics departments should be. Community, seminar rooms, faculty eating lunch with students, interactions with campus (student organizations), outreach with local schools, telescope, planetarium, make the department special.
- Able to provide more time to faculty to do research and scholarly activity?
 - Have 399/499 which aren't part of load. If a faculty member does want to pursue that, they will have less contact hours/labs, which someone else picks up. Rotate them. Haven't come up with a research methods course, some majors do their research off campus. Have discussed adding it as a required course, but would need to remove something.
- Inability of the department and Academic Affairs to agree on the number of students involved in HIPs? Any progress in terms of getting accurate counts on the number of HIPs being completed by students?
 - A lot of interest expressed in broadening the definition of HIPs, Academic Strategic Plan group was underway this spring and this will probably be on their agenda, work happening now on how the experiences can be noted on the transcript even if they're not for credit which will help with counting
- Program Review Form – Committee unanimously agrees to the 13 recommendations with the addition of No. 14: APC strongly supports planning of a modern digital planetarium in the development of the new science building as a means of enhancing community outreach and outreach to the schools. (7-0-0)

Chair Marquell Johnson adjourned the meeting at 2:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Forcier
Secretary for the Meeting