MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Steering Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 04, 2013, 3:00 PM
Faculty Senate Chambers

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Members Present – S. Boyd, N. Brooks, W. Canak, M. Deme, T. Farwell, J. Gray, M. Knight, A. Lutz, A. McCullough, S. Mangrum, W. Means, J. Reineke, B. Rushlow, C. True, B. Turnage, A. Williams

Members Excused – M. Arndt,

Members Absent – D. Patterson

Additional Attendees – J. Miller

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Discussion Items
1. Prof. Boyd welcomed everyone. He said that the updates to the Faculty Senate Chambers have begun with the installation of a projector and screen. He said that painting will start within the next few weeks.
2. Prof. Boyd said he spoke with Jeff Gibson, Chair of Chairs, to discuss the data from the midterm grade reporting system. He said they discussed being able to use the data proactively instead of reactively. He mentioned that the Provost thought the data would be to the chairs and advisers in 2-3 weeks, but that could be too late given that the semester would be nearly over. Prof. Boyd said the October 2 email from Theresa Thomas said that the data would be available to advisers on the academic progress report. It was asked what circumstances were identified for the adviser to take action on the data. Prof Boyd said that it would be good for advisers to do what they felt necessary to assist students with low grades. A question was asked regarding the status of the attendance reporting system. It was said that several people were unable to access the system. Prof. Boyd said he was unaware of this issue and would follow up. It was said that some faculty were able to access the unofficial withdrawal system to change attendance reporting for students.
3. Prof. Boyd said that the issue of student responsibility was discussed with Dr. Bartel in the Academic Affairs Liaison meeting. Prof. Boyd said that the committee was informed that the President does tell the students what to expect at the open meetings and the information is reinforced in UNI 1010.
4. Prof. Boyd said that the Chairs Council asked the Faculty Senate to draft policy regarding faculty responsibilities. He said that he currently is having a student worker looking at peer institutions to see if there is a standard set of expectations. He presented a draft handout with suggested ideas that can serve as a starting point. Prof. Boyd said he would like to start this process with a select group of representatives and then bring the results before the

Faculty Senate for discussion. He said that whatever suggestions are made should address adjuncts, online adjuncts, teaching loads, course expectations, teaching modalities, and other key issues concerning faculty. A discussion followed regarding how and when faculty interact with students. It was said that several faculty respond to student inquiries by text, phone, email and other methods at non-traditional times (such as 11:00 p.m.). It was said that there was a concern that the suggestions take into consideration these alternative times and methods. It was asked if the goal was to draft a university-wide policy. Prof. Boyd said that it was his understanding that the Chairs were requesting a minimum university-wide policy. It was said that some faculty were concerned about a policy that would require them to be in the office when they teach online or off-campus. It was said that the policy should define what is meant by office hours.

5. Prof Boyd said that he learned that the ARGOS Dashboard does allow for investigation of data for graduate students. He said the options were all, graduate students or undergraduate students. He said that Lisa Rogers will present a demonstration of the dashboard at the next Faculty Senate Meeting. He said Lisa has tentatively scheduled 3 additional workshop times: Thursday 21st (2 sessions) 1:00-2:30 and 3:00-4:30 in the ITD training room and Tuesday 26th 8:30-10:00.

6. Prof. Boyd said that an email sent on October 20th reminded faculty about the TBR course revitalization initiative. He said the TBR initiative is similar to what we have been doing. Just wanted to make sure everyone was aware because there are potential funds available to participate.

7. Dr. Canak presented a handout on student attrition issues. He said he also shared this handout with President McPhee, Dr. Bartel and Dr. Sells. He said the handout gives topical considerations related to student attrition and provides some remedies that have been used at other universities. It was said that there was concern that the references that informed the handout were dated.

8. Dr. Canak said he was interested in the resource issues that were causing students to drop out. He said it was clear that some cannot support their continued education and he started to investigate organizations/employers who give support to students.

9. Dr. Canak said that the committee on committees was moving forward. He said he currently has 4 people on the committee and would like to recruit more. He said he met with Deb Sells and went through the committees she was connected with to see if any could be dissolved or combined. He said it was unlikely. A discussion followed regarding the impact of committee composition on small departments. It was said that the current committee requirements can put an undue burden on smaller departments. It was said that it may be necessary to determine which committees need full representation and which can function with a different composition. A question was asked regarding the data analysis from last year about which faculty members served on which committees. Prof. Boyd said the creation of the committee on committees was a result of that data. It was said that committees need to be examined in terms of service load involved.

10. Suzanne Mangrum said that the library was talking about having students scan their cards for tutoring to monitor student usage. She said the library would like feedback on the usefulness of this practice. Several committee members said they thought it would be useful. It was asked if Banner would

be allowed to sync with this activity. Prof. Boyd asked if this information should be brought before the Faculty Senate. It was agreed that he should mention the initiative and request for feedback at the next Faculty Senate meeting.

11. Dr. Willis Means said that TAF grants are due the 31st of January. He reported that there is less money than in previous years. He said the announcement for proposals will be made after winter break.

Action items:
1. Prof. Boyd to follow up with the status of the attendance reporting system.
2. Prof. Boyd to follow up with Lisa Rogers to see if others outside Senators can be invited to the ARGOS Dashboard demonstration
3. Prof. Boyd to submit a tentative agenda to the steering committee for approval for the next Faculty Senate meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Tricia M. Farwell
2013-2014 Faculty Senate Recording Secretary

1. <u>FACULTY WORKLOAD</u>: Faculty are obligated to a minimum of 37.5 hours per week on behalf of the University of which 30 of these hours, including class time, must be scheduled on campus or official educational sites. A full faculty workload consists of 15 credit hours of undergraduate instruction; most tenured/tenure-track faculty carry a 12 credit instructional load with a 3 credit equivalency for responsibilities related to advising, research/creative activity, and service. A typical 3 credit equivalency (course or otherwise) is approximately 7.5 clock hours per week.

2. <u>OFFICE HOURS</u>: All faculty are expected to establish, publicize, and maintain predictable and scheduled office hours during which they are available to students for conferences and special instruction.
   a. FULL-TIME FACULTY: It is recommended that a minimum of 8-10 office hours are maintained per week and that they are NOT exclusively "by appointment only." Faculty who teach ONLINE (partially or exclusively) should publicize and maintain on-campus and/or virtual availability in a proportional and equivalent manner to their workload.
   b. ADJUNCT FACULTY: (online or on-ground) should publicize and maintain hours of availability weekly (according to teaching modality).

3. <u>CONTACT & AVAILABILITY</u>: All instructors are expected to publish reliable contact information on course syllabi. At minimum, an email address must be included. Preferably, reliable phone contact information should also be indicated. In addition, all instructors are expected to check and reply to student communications regularly.

4. <u>REASSIGNED TIME</u>: Allocation of reassigned time for administrative, research, service, or similar responsibilities should equate to approximately 2.5 clock hours per each credit hour weekly; a 3 credit reassignment should equate to approximately 7.5 clock hours of work per week.
   a. The faculty member must make a written progress report each semester for which workload reassignment has been made.

5. <u>PLANNED FACULTY ABSENCE</u>: Planned faculty absences require prior approval by the chair. The "Request for Faculty Absence" form (available at: http://www.mtsu.edu/provost/forms/) must be submitted to the chair at least one week prior to planned absence, e.g. professional travel, surgery. It is expected that the instructor will make arrangements to cover the class in his/her absence. Each faculty member is responsible for reporting sick leave on the HR Web-time Entry System each month (for non-professional activities).

6. <u>UNPLANNED FACULTY ABSENCE</u>: If classes must be cancelled due to unexpected illness, instructors are expected to notify the chair and administrative staff (Kristy and Kimberly) as soon as possible. After returning to work, each faculty is responsible for reporting sick leave on the HR Web-time Entry System each month. Sick leave should be reported regardless of whether the faculty member made alternative arrangements for students (i.e. coverage by another faculty member or alternative assignments, etc.).

THE ROOTS OF STUDENT ATTRITION: COMMON CAUSES OF COLLEGE DEPARTURE

Provided by Donna Smith

(A nugget that I have accumulated)

1. ACADEMIC UNDERPREPAREDNESS

Attrition stemming from students being ill-prepared to accommodate the academic demands of college and meet the minimal academic standards of the institution (i.e., attrition due to academic failure or dismissal).

Remedies:
- Diagnostic assessment at college entry and strategic course placement
- Early alert/warning systems
- Intrusive academic support

2. ACADEMIC BOREDOM

Attrition triggered by lack of interest in, or enthusiasm for, the type of academic learning experience that characterizes college course work (i.e., the content of courses and/or the process of course delivery).

Remedies:
- Promoting faculty use of engaging pedagogies that increase active student involvement in the learning process, via:
  (a) faculty recruitment, orientation, and development
  (b) faculty recognition, rewards, and incentives

3. TRANSITION ADJUSTMENT DIFFICULTIES

Attrition resulting from new students feeling overwhelmed by, and being unable to cope with, the stresses that accompany the transition into college (i.e., attrition due to culture shock).

Remedies:
- New-student orientation programming
- Extended-orientation course (new-student seminar)
- Proactive & intrusive psychosocial support

4. UNCERTAINTY ABOUT EDUCATIONAL OR OCCUPATIONAL GOALS

Attrition related to prolonged indecisiveness about, and protracted delay in making a commitment to, an academic major or career path.

Remedies:
- Developmental academic advising
- Integration of academic advising and career counseling services
- Intrusive promotion of students long-range planning

5. ISOLATION

Attrition caused by an absence of social contact with other members of the college community and resulting feelings of separation or marginalization.

Remedies:
- Social integration practices that promote:
  (a) student-faculty interaction inside and outside the classroom
  (b) student-student interaction inside and outside the classroom

6. INCONGRUENCE (a.k.a., DISSONANCE or INCOMPATIBILITY)

Attrition attributable to poor institutional fit that may stem from either of the following causes:
  (a) mismatch between the student's expectations, interests or values and those of the prevailing college community,
     or
  (b) friction or frustration with institutional rules, regulations, policies, or procedures.

Remedies:
- Reviewing, revising, or streamlining of organizational practices and protocol
- Adopting student recruitment and admissions practices that promote retention

7. IRRELEVANCY

Attrition deriving from the student perception that the college experience is not relevant to real life outside the classroom, or pertinent to personal and professional plans.

Remedies:
- Developmental academic advising
- Experiential learning opportunities integrated into the formal curriculum

8. LACK OF COMMITMENT

Attrition resulting from student unwillingness or inability to expend the time and energy needed to persist to graduation, which may stems from either of the following causes:
  (a) weak initial intent to persist at college entry;
  (b) competing commitments or obligations to communities external to the college which pull away time and energy that would otherwise be committed to higher education.

Remedies:
- Promoting early institutional identification/incorporation
- Community outreach and inclusion

9. FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

Attrition emerging from either of the following causes:
  (a) student inability to afford the cost of college;
  (b) student perception that the cost of college outweighs its benefits.

Remedies:
- Strategic financial-aid packaging
- Increasing employment opportunities for students
- Financial-aid/money-management counseling
- Collegecost/benefit education

REFERENCES ON THE CAUSES OF STUDENT ATTRITION

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