

**Prince George's Community College
Academic Council Meeting
May 12, 2011; 3:00 – 5:00 pm, C133**

Members Present:B. Adkins, A. Anderson, B. Brennan, J. Calhoun, M. Doss, S. Dunnington, L. Ellsworth, M. Gavin, O. Hansen, C. Hoffman, R. Karlsson, M. Kramer, A. Lex, A. Mickelson, N. Plants, B. Sanders, S. Sinex, C. Thomas

Members Absent: M. Harley

Others Present:R. Bentley, K. Hopkins, T. O'Donnell, R. Spells, B. Teal, V. Teasdale

Approval of Agenda:

The agenda was approved as circulated.

Approval of Minutes

The agenda was approved with a correction to the following name spelling: Brenda Teale.

Information/Discussion Items

Follow-Up to Academic Council Survey – M. Gavin

M. Gavin shared the following recommendations from the Faculty Senate for improving communication between the Academic Council and the college community:

- Clarify channels of communication:
 - Governance chart should go on portal
 - Committee descriptions should go on portal
 - Make sure information and action items from Council are on the agenda at division meetings

It was suggested that, rather than linking to the agenda online, paste it into the email which goes out to Council members and the campus community. There was some discussion of an Academic Council portal page. It was clarified that a portal page is already in progress.

It was agreed that, from this point forward, T. Roebuck will paste the agenda into the body of emails, including the times. In addition, T. Roebuck will send a notice to all faculty when approved minutes are posted.

Technology Plan – O. Hansen

The Technology Task Force is in the process of gathering information. O. Hansen went over preliminary data on faculty members (user groups) available on SkillPort.

Faculty User Groups (from SkillPort)

10 mo faculty: 236

12 mo faculty: 13

Adj faculty: 894

Total faculty: 1143

Blackboard Faculty

142=12% of all faculty are using Blackboard for online courses

Instructional Technology Training

Existing technology, upgraded technology, and classroom technology access information are all currently being tracked, however the cost-related information (eg - the cost of outfitting a classroom) was not available.

It is obvious that even though the AC has an investment in this, other areas of the college must be included as well, so the Technology Plan committee has partnered with other areas of the college to ensure the collection of accurate information. It is likely that the committee will not meet the deadline in terms of a comprehensive plan (as far as the strategic goals are concerned). There are issues that can be addressed now, but not all can be addressed at this time. It is, however, feasible to address the professional development aspect of the plan next academic year. The committee will work on addressing professional development before the next Council meeting.

General Education Update – N. Plants

- Approval to Continue

Background

The Gen Ed committee has been working on developing a method or plan to address some of the current gen ed courses that probably do not meet usual criteria for gen ed courses, and to provide some means of letting the respective departments identify and remove those courses. Per previous discussions, the departments/Gen Ed Committee would then proceed with a reassessment of those courses on the gen ed list and the Council was tasked with developing a way to do that/this process.

It was clarified that there is an expectation that gen ed courses are developed in large part to allow students to develop a core group of skills (usually identified in the CLOs). Thus, faculty members must teach the core learning knowledge, skills and values in addition to course content. Council was asked to consider the recommendations for how courses would be evaluated in the future, in terms of determining whether or not they are gen ed.

In terms of the guiding principles, both in the introductory paragraph and the bulleted items, one of the cornerstones of gen ed is that those courses do more than teach content. In addition to discipline specific content, above and beyond that there is another component including knowledge skills and values (to provide students with skills like critical thinking, reading skills, speaking skills, value differentiation, etc) which has always been understood as the strength of gen ed as the student can apply those skills and values to later courses.

There was some discussion regarding concern amongst the Chairs with particular attention to the issue of providing criteria (page 2, numbers 1 and 2). It was clarified that criteria number 1 is identified as a criterion by the Intersegmental Chief Academic Officers (ICAO) agreement. If the course is only content specific to a discipline, that would not meet the criteria for a gen ed course

according to criteria set forth by the ICAO. Further, the document was set up in such a way to make it easier to determine whether courses meet the criteria which determines gen ed courses. In considering a course, if the answer to questions 1 and 2 is yes, then we must proceed to the additional requirements listed in the document for each of the six areas of general education courses: Emerging Issues, English Composition, Humanities, Mathematics, Science, and Social Sciences.

The committee attempted to:

- 1) articulate gen ed in terms of our CLOs
- 2) identify any additional required criteria above and beyond our CLOs (as identified by ICAO officers)

It was reiterated that, as an institution, we have been largely unaware of the additional criteria until recently. That is one of the very important reasons why the gen ed committee has done this work. Whatever we come up with must be reflective of both the additional criteria (per a state agreement in 1998 between 2- and 4-year CAOs) and our CLOs.

The overarching concern from Council members was that the wording in the document does not accurately reflect actual expectations:

- It is not clear that the expectations are relative to the students' discipline (eg: the expectations of Art vs. Literature students)

Please note the following correction made to page 5 of the document (under Additional Criteria, 2nd paragraph):

“In addition to developing their ability to comprehend the nature and value of the arts and relate them to human experiences, humanities general education courses should also develop in students the capacity for and exercise of creativity in writing, thinking ~~and~~or producing art.”

- Repetition in expectations of students in each course versus at a program level (eg – if a CLO need is met in one course, the student should not also have to meet that requirement in another course).

It was clarified that the additional criteria align in large part with the CLOs mandated by the State. The instructions are current and colleges are obligated to follow them until they are revised.

In summary, Council members were less concerned about the criteria from the CAOs than they were about the CLOs (concerned that every course having to meet those outcomes would not work). If there are certain outcomes tied to gen ed courses, they must be assessed. This discussion was tabled until the next Council meeting at which members will present their ideas.

Template for Distance Learning Courses – M. Doss; R. Spells

M. Doss and R. Spells updated Council on the template for Blackboard courses. Concern has been expressed by online students about instructors being left to their own devices as far as template design is concerned. This has resulted in confusion for some students as materials for each instructor are not found in the same place consistently. A template was presented which included some of the feedback from students and the committee.

Outcomes so far:

- The [standard] template itself will use the colors that were PGCC approved colors through Marketing and Creative Services (gold and blue)
- The template will include a standard photo (will show in the top left corner)
- There was discussion of having department specific banners at the top of the page, but it was determined that that is not feasible as eLearning cannot implement a banner for each department. The taskforce is, however, recommending that respective departments have a standard welcome message. eLearning would be willing to work with the departments to create a banner.
- The template would apply not only to online courses, but also hybrid and f2f courses that use BlackBoard.
- The template would include standard buttons on the left sidebar (e.g. syllabus, schedule, content, discussion board)
 - Faculty are responsible for populating content behind those buttons
 - Remaining areas are to be populated by the system

Next, the taskforce addressed implementation. Should the switch to a new template take place all at one time or be phased in? The group came to a consensus to phase it in using volunteers for the first semester where at least one faculty member from each department volunteers to use the template, then come back after that semester and get feedback (including evaluation from the instructors and students) before it's actually rolled out.

The taskforce then considered specific areas (syllabus, schedule, etc.). Should we go so far as to prescribe what instructors must include behind the syllabus and schedule buttons? Or are only the buttons required and the faculty members determine what goes behind them? One of our goals is to make sure we have elements in the template that assist us in meeting QM standards for those courses. The new template would be piloted most likely in Spring 2012.

Suggestions from the Council included flexibility under the buttons and the ability of faculty to add to the list (make the menu items expandable).

The Blackboard template taskforce will report back to Council in the Fall.

Department of Education Requirements: Defining Credit Hour – S. Dunnington/V. Teasdale

Council members were made aware of the “Dear Colleague” letter from the U.S. Department of Education regarding the need to define a credit hour. The impetus this is that the Inspector General went to three of the seven regional accrediting agencies and found they were doing very

little to collect data and doing very little to enforce credit-hours. Thus, the federal government may be paying for credits that students are not actually earning according to federal guidelines.

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education will be enforcing the requirement. By July 1st, 2011, colleges must show a good faith effort to address this issue (credit-hours are defined on pages 5 and 10) by doing the following:

- Must have a policy in place (approved by the BOT and become part of the CODE)
- For 1 credit, there has to be 37½ hours of direct instructional time and assignments beyond instructional time if you are working in semesters (must show students are meeting this regardless of modality)
- Must clearly show what our policies and procedures are and show a sampling across disciplines and programs

How much of class time outside of class do we believe we are assigning to students? It's going to be our best estimate and our good-faith effort to define this in terms so that when we look at our courses, every faculty member understands that we must meet the criteria. In setting up the course and allocating the credit for federal financial aid, we must be accountable. Middle States will come in to look for our procedures, pull courses randomly, and audit them to determine if we are in compliance.

We will need standardization in what we require across courses. The issue is identifying how much time it takes a typical student to complete any type of assignment. It was suggested that faculty could state on the syllabus: "for every hour you spend in class, you should spend X hours of study time outside of class". Another suggestion was to at least initially require new courses that come to curriculum committee already have that mapped out. We are unclear on how the conversion of credit hours to clock hours would affect LORs. Council members agreed that, a minimum of 2 hours of outside work per week per credit is acceptable.

It has been suggested that we get a taskforce together to address this, to consider what some of the procedures might be, and get a draft definition in place. V. Bagley has already been asked to serve on the committee, as well as the Director of Financial Aid, Sharon Hassan. Others are needed to work on the taskforce. The taskforce will then bring information back to Council in June, at which time we will develop a timeline. S. Dunnington has requested that this be an item on the CAO's agenda tomorrow.

Credit Hour Taskforce Plans:

- Enlist Student Services representatives, faculty representatives, et al
 - representatives from English, Science, Communication & Theatre, include online faculty
- A. Richman will serve on the taskforce due to SACS experience?
- V. Teasdale will send language to M. Kramer regarding what will be expected of taskforce members.
 - Working draft will be ready for July 1st
 - The first meeting should take place before graduation

- Other issue is to address what we do first, second, third...

M. Kramer will ask Bob Goldberg and Mark Hubley to serve on taskforce and T. O'Donnell will ask D. Rhoden.

Additionally, we now must show a good faith effort toward getting the required approval to offer online courses to students who are out-of-state (this is on hold for three years, but we must show a good faith effort towards implementing this).

M. Kramer will ask R. Bentley to serve on taskforce and T. O'Donnell will ask D. Rhoden

Action Items – NONE

Reports

CWF – Laura Ellsworth

Curriculum Committee – B. Sanders

Reports were tabled until the next AC meeting in the interest of time.

Questions and Answers

Next Meeting: May 26, 2011, time not determined

Completion Issues

Technology Plan: Classroom and Professional Development Needs

Credit Hour Definition

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.