

## **FACULTY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MINUTES – 11/17/11 (Revised 1/11/12)**

The Faculty Affairs Committee met at 10:30 am on November 17, 2011. The meeting was held in 50 Purdy-Library, in order to hear a presentation on on-line courses from James Mazoue', Director of On-Line Programs at Wayne State University.

The following members were present: P. Beavers, A. Biswas, M. Cooney, R. Hoogland, M. Fakherddine, J. Potoff, J. Fry-McComish, M. Sengstock, J. Sondheimer. Others: L. Beale, S. Calkins, E. Golebiowska, J. Mazoue'. Absent with Notice: N. Datta, E. Puscheck, K. Skillin.

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 am. The minutes from the October meeting were approved as circulated.

**On-Line Education:** The main item of business was to receive a report on the current status of on-line courses at the University from James Mazoue', Director of On-Line Programs. Mary Cooney, who had arranged the meeting, introduced Mr. Mazoue'.

Mr. Mazoue' provided a summary of the current on-line programs and courses, as well as some data comparing WSU with other institutions. A distinction must be made between classes with an on-line component and those which are completely on line. We will be talking primarily of courses which are on-line only. This differs between institutions – some institutions also count classes which are partly on line. WSU has some programs which are completely on line; other programs have some on-line classes. There are also some certificate programs which can be taken on line. About 600 sections per year are held on-line. This represents about 6% of our credit hours. About 1 in 5 students take an on-line course; this compares with 1 in 3 students nationally.

In 2010-11, WSU's on-line classes were rather equally divided between graduate and undergraduate. In 2011-12, this has shifted to about 60% undergraduate courses. Nationally, on-line courses are predominately graduate. At the undergraduate level, CLAS has about half of the on-line classes. At the graduate level, Library and Information Sciences has the largest; Social Work is growing. The drop rate of on-line classes is \_ the rate of regular courses; this is a surprising outcome. A participant questioned how accurate any dropout rate can be if there are no protections in place to ensure that the student who signs up for the class is the one who "attends" online – or even that there is any online attendance. Self-reporting is notoriously erroneous.

The Chair told Mr. Mazoue' that the charge to this committee is to ensure that faculty control the course and that faculty hours and responsibilities are not affected. He responded that he knew of no efforts to force faculty to do anything. His office only wishes to provide assistance in the courses.

Members of the committee asked several questions about assessing student learning and maintaining integrity in on-line classes. A particular problem is determining the relative effectiveness of on-line and in-class courses. Special issues about the investment of

student time were raised. Instructors often find that this is a major concern in regular classes; students who attend class and do the assignments are more successful. How can this issue be studied in on-line classes? On-line courses generally require much more constant on-going feedback to be effective.

Mr. Mazoue' said that there are several mechanisms for ensuring integrity, including holding exams in testing sites, which can be placed in easy to access places and held at convenient times. Also, several institutions are investigating the ways of comparing on-line and classroom courses. It has been estimated that it takes about \$100,000 to develop an effective on-line course. It was pointed out that we also need to look at blended courses (i.e., courses that combine on-line and classroom instruction). One question at the meeting was whether any of these methods for ensuring integrity or determining the quality of "pure" online education were being used at Wayne. Mr. Mazoue's answer was no – there are currently no quality checks on online courses in place.

It was pointed out that there are a variety of different models for courses. Synchronous courses are those in which the interaction is taking place at the same time; in asynchronous courses, the students and the teacher may be working at different times. There are some courses in which the instructor may be teaching in one location, with the course being streamed to more than one other site at the same time, allowing students at several locations to participate. WSU also has several different lecture capture systems.

Another question asked at the meeting was whether the statistics offered covered "pure" online or "hybrid" in person/online courses. Mr. Mazoue's answer was that these statistics related to pure online courses, although at a later point he made a comment that suggested that many of them might be hybrid courses with electronic supplementation.

The colleges and universities in Michigan which have the greatest number of on-line classes are Central Michigan University, Eastern Michigan University, the community colleges, and the for-profit institutions. Mr. Mazoue' said he had not done a comparison among these schools, but was willing to do so. Mr. Mazoue' will be available for further discussion if needed.

There was a discussion about the basis for conclusions that online education stands on a par with in-place education. A participant noted that the bibliography provided dealt primarily with the benefits of using electronic resources/methods to supplement in-class presentations and lectures, which no one disagrees with. But there is apparently very little about "pure" online classes.

At one point Mr. Mazoue' made the statement that Wayne was behind other universities in use of online courses, but he was asked whether the figures he was using included schools such as the University of Phoenix which are private-owned, for-profit organizations with solely online course offerings, and they did. In that case, the questioner pointed out that the statistics would be considerably skewed in favor of online, somewhat like including Bill Gates' income in with 8 other men in a bar to arrive at an "average income" figure. Also, it wasn't clear what institutions were being treated as

Wayne's peers in this regard. Mr. Mazoue' indicated that the measurements were not against the national research institutions that Wayne would consider its peers for purposes of evaluating its research endeavors. Further, some of these statistics presented showed that Wayne had almost twice the number of online courses/headcount enrollments as peer institutions – so it was difficult to see why the administration considered Wayne “behind” in developing online courses.

**Student Publication Issue:** Mr. Potoff indicated he had not investigated the issue further. Mr. Biswas indicated the Graduate Council had not yet taken up the proposal for a revised statement on student publication. They have spent considerable time discussing the proposal to require 3 publications in 4 years (as opposed to the previous requirement of 1 publication) for listing on the graduate faculty. This proposal has been questioned by the Academic Senate. There has been discussion about flexibility in the requirement, as well as the equivalency of articles, abstracts, and books, and whether the decision ought to be at the departmental level as opposed to a centralized decision by the Graduate School. The outcome is still unclear.

**Grade Change Issue:** The Chair reported that she had spoken with the Senate President, Lou Romano; and he believed this issue is resolved and need not be considered further.

**Analysis of TA Distribution Across Departments:** The Chair indicated that the Committee has been asked to investigate this issue and asked for volunteers to assist.

**Next Meeting:** The committee decided not to hold a meeting in December. So our next meeting will be held in January. The Chair asked that everyone make sure to indicate their time availability for the winter term to facilitate determining meeting times. The meeting adjourned at 12:10.

Mary Cay Sengstock, Chair