Academic Affairs Council
Meeting Notes for February 24, 2015

Next Year
Jeff announced that the Executive Committee will need 1-2 new members for next year. Please pass this onto your colleagues and contact Jeff if you are interested.

Meeting Goal #1: Discuss and give feedback on the draft pre-requisite document from 2008 and assign an ad-hoc committee of interested faculty to further investigate the issue, and draft a college-wide policy on the addition/deletion of pre-requisites to courses.

Bruce Clemetsen facilitated the discussion.

- Faculty felt they needed data to support whether or not the pre-requisites are working.
- Beth reminded the group that these decisions must be data-driven, they can’t be based on our feelings. We need to decide how we’re going to look at the available data.
- The bigger question that “is this the right pre-requisite” should be “what skill set do the students need to be successful in subsequent classes”
- Seek out services that offer data from our peer institutions, not only ours
- Can we determine if success is based on a set of traits students develop over time as a student or is it the curriculum of the specific pre-requisite course?
- It was mentioned that the faculty hoped the committee will put together some guidelines for departments to follow (or not), rather than this being a “heavy-handed” mandate.
  - Beth reminded faculty that within the parameters (which are data driven) there will be some freedom.
- Greg Mulder thanked those who implemented pre-requisites as it has made things much better for the Physical Sciences department.

Roger Maurer will take this to the Faculty Senate to coordinate a committee. This committee will need to start working ASAP so we are ready for Accreditation Review (October, 2016)

Meeting Goal #2: Discuss the draft principles from the online success committee and take feedback from the committee. Steve Smith facilitated the discussion.

- It is difficult to establish a sense of community in an online course
- Faculty are seeing that some students just do not belong in an online course.
- Principles should include student preparation for online classes.
- Interaction between student and faculty is key. As it takes much time to interact to the degree needed, how can we expect part-time faculty to put in the extra effort.
- Students are overly optimistic of their skills. It was suggested we have a self-evaluation of their computer skills before they are registered for any online courses. Perhaps a first assignment is needed in each course that takes students through all of the necessary technology skills needed in the remainder of the course.
• Some faculty expressed a desire for more standard expectations of when students can be dropped from an online course.
• The Library asked everyone to be mindful that it sometimes takes students several days to get their Moodle and email logins and passwords squared away, so assignments due early in the term may be unavailable to students unable to login to the course.
• It was suggested that we consider rewording from a goal of parity to improving pass rates relative to face-to-face courses.
• Be careful when comparing to institutions with high online course pass rates (e.g. Western Governor’s University) who have no part-time faculty and lots of student support! Remember to compare apples to apples, here!
• Professional development support may be needed to learn how successful online programs are developed and administered. Perhaps faculty can be supported to enroll in some of those courses and learn about them from the student perspective.

Steve appreciate the feedback and discussion and he will take this back to his committee for further work.

Meeting Goal #3  Discuss the draft policy on immediate family members and collect feedback for revision. Lynne Cox facilitated the discussion.

• Some wondered whether there was a form for the dean to fill out to make sure the policy had been followed.
• The question was raised about whether this will become a college policy, an AR, or a BP? The discussion settled on sending it eventually to College Council to become an stand-alone AR, or perhaps part of the “Nepotism” AR (or at least, in the same series as the Nepotism AR).

Lynne will take the feedback and revise the policy for approval at the next AAC meeting, after which it will be sent to College Council. She will also look into drafting a form for deans to use when necessary.