Summary of Executive Council Meeting on 11/04/14

1. Sally Moore brought to our attention the wording of the Graduation AR 4020-13 that gives students five years to complete any program started. In the cases where programs have been eliminated (e.g. two-year automotive certificate), the state regulations are different (three years) and the AR should be updated to reflect those differences. The committee decided to ask Beth and/or Sally to revise the AR and send it directly to College Council.

2. The topic of the use of Moodle and Instructor websites was discussed and various ideas of how to use each were mentioned. Andrew Feldman has asked that every course in his division have a Moodle shell containing at least the course syllabus and instructor contact and availability information. No decisions are made by AACEC, but we will hear about Andrew’s trial next term and check in to see how it is going.

In order to best support faculty whose use other instructional software and websites (not supported directly by the college), AACEC will ask Beth to send a general informational email to all faculty asking that they include instructions for access and login on their instructor websites, for quick access by support staff when students have questions about logging in at the beginning of the term. (This was a concern brought forward by support staff that we hope can be addressed on instructor websites.)

3. Next, AACEC had a short discussion on the course scheduling, including firewalls, standard course meeting times, etc. It was generally accepted that a campus-wide discussion was needed about campus-wide values and choices in scheduling from which perhaps a smaller task-force could then look at the details of our current zone scheduling and make recommendations to AAC for changes. AACEC decided this would be an agenda topic for the next AAC meeting.

4. One issue that came back when faculty were solicited for ideas to discuss at AACEC was the idea of differential tuition and we had a lengthy discussion about
the topic. The idea was brought up by about a dozen faculty as a major point of concern. Some areas are hit with extra fees of around 20% and faculty have raised the question of equity for students and transparency in the allocation of the extra funds collected from differential tuition.

Andrew recognizes the concerns and has been asked to participate in a newly-formed Finance Committee that will work on this specific issue. In addition to the transparency, they are going to work to clean up the confusing array of terms used (class fees, lab fees, program fees, differential tuition, etc) on campus. Any specific concerns, comments, or questions can be sent to Andrew and he will take them to the committee for discussion.

5. We had a short discussion on hiring policy. HECC (Higher Education Coordinating Commission) will soon release its recommendation for secondary education teacher qualifications for College Now that will go to the Legislature and eventually written into an OAR. Once that is done, we will have to proceed on modifying our AR to match the state OAR.

6. Classroom furniture was also a topic of conversation. This was mentioned briefly last year during an AAC meeting and again at the AAC August retreat. AACEC decided to add this as an agenda item for AAC in November to discuss all the different possibilities and a campus-wide vision for classroom environments.

7. Finally, the topic of new Department Chair training came up. We have discussed having this in the past, and AACEC would like to form a task-force of interested people who could take the documents we currently have on duties of the department chair and create a time for learning the online systems (bookstore, CPI, catalog workflow, etc), budget 101, and whatever else may come up. Interested staff are encouraged to volunteer for this task force!

Comments, suggestions, and thoughts are welcome regarding AACEC. If you have anything you feel that AAC should consider, please contact Jeff Crabill (x4627).
Meeting Goal #1
Since course-level assessment is a primary focus of our work this year, Andrew Feldman will provide members of AAC with a brief update of the work of the MAC team and the current status of assessment work on campus. [Chair note: Last year, the reorganization of AAC included a commitment to send standard campus updates to other places for dissemination. We still hold to that standard, however, AACEC decided that this update item would be appropriate given the focus of the college on assessment this year (and the focus of AAC on the goal of quality), and asked Andrew to provide short updates from the MAC team at each meeting.]

Meeting Goal #2:
Conduct a college-wide discussion on the values and assumptions that currently drive the course schedule. Since the inception of “firewalls,” “standard course meeting times,” and “zones,” there has been much discussion at the department and program level, but it is time for a larger discussion about the values we have that drive the schedule, primarily concerning general-purpose classrooms that are shared by multiple departments.

Preparation:
Please discuss with your staff the following questions:

- What drives course scheduling in your area?
- What should drive course scheduling in your area?
- Do you have evidence in your area of student wants/needs for certain courses and certain times?
- Is there data available that helps us understand the demand for courses?
- Where does faculty preference for course times come in?
- (Hypothetical) When there are perhaps 20 sections scheduled for time slot “A,” how should the institution prioritize scheduling those into the three general purpose classrooms available at that time?
- What big ideas do you have that would create more room in the limited number of general use classrooms available?

Also, for general discussion, would you collect and bring the percentages of your Fall term offerings that fall into each of the current “zones?” (Zone 1 is 8:00 – 9:50am, etc.) For example, we have 18% of sections in Zone 1, 45% in Zone 2, etc. We would like to get a rough idea, anonymously, of how we’re doing in the allocation of courses to the zones, as a baseline for discussion.
Meeting Goal #3:  
Conduct a college-wide discussion on the impact that classroom environment, including furniture, has on the learning environment. We have a wide range of teaching styles among the faculty and with the introduction of more types of classroom instructional models, there is a need to discuss, at the institutional level, how we can accommodate those new demands on classroom environment. 

This discussion will be limited to the general-use classroom shared by everyone and will focus on institutional values and decision-making. Classrooms which have been designated as exclusive use shall remain under the control of their respective programs. 

Liz Pearce has agreed to lead the conversation

Preparation: 
Please gather input on the following questions:

- How does furniture type and arrangement add to or take away from your goals in the classroom?
- Do you ever weigh loss of instructional time against the value of re-arranging furniture at the beginning and end of class?
- How do we make a college-wide decision about which rooms become good candidates for change and alternative arrangements?
- Would you like to explore alternative classroom arrangements (to the general purpose room norms)? What would your ideal classroom contain?
- Do you want to be involved in this discussion and with decisions as time moves on? Eventually, the college would like to know who would want to use different classroom environments and how many sections would make use of them.