Deans’ Group Minutes 09/18


I. Minutes July and August were accepted as submitted.

II. Service Learning Committee
Dave Sjoquist presented the group with a report based on their activities. Jim Wolk described Service Learning known as experiential learning, as characterized by providing students with educational experiences and also the benefit the community may gain. Chip Gallagher indicated the literature shows large benefits to students in terms of education, social responsibility, tolerance; many of these benefits are achieved regardless of the degree of integration. He also pointed out the University’s stated commitment to community service in the strategic plan.

Dave Sjoquist indicated there are several barriers to implementing Service Learning at the University; it is not a designated part of the mission statement, the reluctance on part of faculty because of lack of reward structure and large start-up costs, little administrative support, and a small knowledge base among faculty.

Jim Wolk gave a specific example of service learning in a freshman learning community he directs. These students have joined AmeriCorps and will be providing 300 hours of community service, will receive a $1000 academic award and three hours of elective credit is received. Chip Gallagher described projects in which an introductory Sociology class of 200 attempts to link theories and class work with on-site community issues of gender, race, and social structure. Ben Oviatt described how business students in the Entrepreneurship Program have worked with small businesses in capacities such as raising funds, developing web sites, business plans, and investment interests with Herman Russell.

Daphne Greenberg detailed some examples and presented a handout of Service Learning projects in areas including art, biology, and computer science. In addition she noted higher education has embraced the concepts of service learning programs. For example, a variety of institutions such as the state institutions in California had been asked by the Governor to develop Service Learning projects and the University of Redlands (SC) has also implemented Learning.

Dave Sjoquist concluded that the literature clearly indicates benefits to students and the university and that additional resources are needed to support Service Learning projects on campus. The committee suggested one goal might be that every undergraduate student has a service learning experience before they graduate. They further suggested short-term goals (within the first five years) might target involvement by 25% of undergraduates. The Committee also indicated a broad definition of Service Learning be adopted appropriate to the stated mission of the university.

The Committee also asked for support from the administration as well as from the departmental level. They suggested WebCT implementation might be considered as a model to facilitate the implementation of Service Learning on campus. They also suggested appointing an individual (as well as a continuing committee) to begin the establishment of a common community definition of Service Learning at GSU, set objectives for this, develop a plan for promoting and marketing.

Ron Henry indicated a major issue to consider would be that of collaboration. Chip Gallagher mentioned he receives much support from his department chair Don Reitzes. Jim Wolk indicated that Service Learning might become of some GSU 1010 courses. Lauren Adamson expressed concern with the specific definition of Service Learning urging caution as to whether the experience must be a component in a class or if a practicum may be considered.
non-graded experience already in place may be appropriate. Ron Colarusso noted that most school partnerships within the COE have the primary goal of training teachers, but also to aid the college. He also noted there are student organizations in the COE which volunteer and provide opportunities for community interaction. He also suggested the Teaching and Learning Center as a potential location to house some Service Learning coordinating offices. Henry indicated some volunteer experiences might not meet the definition of Service Learning because they may not contain a reflection component.

Susan Kelley asked about the university structure necessary to support this proposal and Dave Sjoquist suggested existing structure may need to be reorganized. Janice Griffith indicated in the COL there are several extant experiences for Service Learning such as extern experiences with nonprofit, state and governmental agencies as well as the Tax Clinic, and asked if these might meet the definition. She emphasized that these activities are labor-intensive (especially the clinic) and add considerable amounts of responsibility to the university. She also cautioned that the university must be careful not to interfere with the organizations in which these activities are organized.

Charlene Hurt mentioned some GSU 1010 courses do not contain content areas that may provide the best environments for Service Learning projects. Chip Gallagher noted nontraditional students may have insufficient time to be involved in Service Learning projects and that these may be more suited to younger students.

Lauren Adamson raised the question of responsibility and supervision for students in the field as well as appropriate positions and titles. She stressed the importance of providing appropriate models for relationships and partnerships within the community. Ben Oviatt indicated his experiences with developing Service Learning experiences were most productive when standard contracts were developed with positions clearly identified, the objectives defined, students are evaluated twice a semester, and faculty meet with students every other week.

Charlene Hurt spoke in favor of the Service Learning Proposals. Susan Kelley also agreed and encouraged adequate resource support and proper placement and coordination of the project. Roy Bahl asked why a change in the current implementation is necessary. Dave Sjoquist indicated such change was needed for the university to be consistent with mission of university, and noted the benefits to students including academic benefits.

Ron Henry cautioned barriers might exist in attitudes toward Service Learning concerning faculty reward etc. Christenberry noted some of these obstacles are similar to those encountered with inclusion of web based learning. He noted that institutional support for the project will be vital, giving the university community support in terms of making the option a choice and not a mandate, and by allowing peer and student pressure to propel it. He also feels with web-based learning a balance was struck between central and distributed support models. He also suggested promotional activities be incorporated. Charlene Hurt noted the importance of enthusiastic early adopters in the WebCT implementation. Roy Bahl suggested WebCT was a teaching tool and he thinks Service Learning might be more difficult to get faculty to implement.

Lauren Adamson asked if there were similarities between adding Service Learning to the curriculum and that of the addition of “writing across the curriculum?” Ron Henry agreed that there were many parallels as well as with inclusion of computer literacy and communication requirements. Ron Colarusso cautioned that in one experience the COE, the schools had become overwhelmed from the influx of university students.

III. Enrollment Update

There will be one more fee reconciliation made, but currently 27,500 students are enrolled for 298,000 credit hours. New graduate student headcount is up 580, however there are 500 fewer seniors enrolled.

The freshman class enrollment (2439) is up by approximately 270, next year the freshman index will be raised minimum of 2500 for Spring; it is estimated 350 fewer students might have been enrolled this Fall if that criterion had been in place, but it is projected that increases in numbers of students admitted will continue to cover this
2300 new freshman are predicted for Fall 2003. The enrollment management committee will be developing a mechanism for limiting enrollment even though it may not be necessary for Fall 2003.

IV. Budget
As far as the budget, the University is close to being balanced, assuming no more cuts are added. Discussions occur concerning cuts of up to an additional 3% due to reduced state revenues. The University has no way to absorb these additional cuts - they would have to distribute among the units. Ron Colarusso asked if any state reserve had been used. Ron Henry indicated these funds had not yet been tapped.

The FY2004 budget is less optimistic, with a 3% loss from base budget ($2.1 to $2.2M); the System will probably lose the hold harmless money ($3.9M) and additional $1M (Yamacraw, special funding initiatives) for a total loss of approximately $7M as compared to this year. On the positive side, workload money will result in $12.2M additional funds minimally (netting $5M). In FY 2005 GSU should receive $20M in workload money.

V. Extra compensation Guidelines
Ron Henry suggested the group consider separate policies for staff and faculty rather than the combined policy prepared by Human Resources.

VI. Student Evaluations
Ron Henry noted the most recent format is acceptable to the Executive Committee of the University Senate. Colleges will not be able to mandate on-line student evaluation forms. Under special circumstances, the department chair with the approval of the dean will be able to override the choice of the faculty member from on-line evaluation to the paper form. Every faculty will declare their choice on or before October 4th.

Next meeting: Wednesday October 9, 9:30 to 11:30 am, Room 200, Golden Key Boardroom, Student Center.

Submitted by Lisa Beck 10/08/02