Deans’ Group Minutes 05/14/03


I. Minutes of 04/16/03 were approved with amendments as suggested by Ron Colarusso, as were those of 04/23/03 with amendments as suggested by Ron Colarusso.

II. Budget Update:
Ron Henry indicated GSU would receive (in addition to $12.2 M for workload) an additional $680,000 in function meeting the criteria for the “performance factor” established by the BOR. The Chancellor also has suggested additional $764,000 be given acknowledging credit hour generation and $20,000 for funding in comparison to institutions. Ron Henry projected GSU will have approximately $3-4 M to allocate which he suggested should be done in September, except those funds necessary to staff positions needed for the Fall term, recognizing potential future “hold backs” in state funding.

Charlene Hurt suggested the Library would not be able to wait until September to fund periodicals. Ron Henry indicated the end-of-year monies should be available for this need. Lauren Adamson recognized that it would be helpful to discuss the planned breakdown of the funding before September so units may plan accordingly. Ron Henry assured Sid Harris areas previously cut, would be covered first (Yamacraw, benefits etc.) Roy Bahl suggested state might recapture, at best, half of the budget shortfall. He indicated therefore, he would prefer to discuss allocation now, but reserve distribution until later. Lauren Adamson suggested those funds necessary to fund staffing for action plans should be discussed.

Ron Henry indicated to Ron Colarusso budgets for FY 2004 will approximate those of last year. Sid Harris indicated he is interested in discussing size limitations in comparison to quality issues. Ron Henry noted he agreed the university has reached such a size, but reminded GSU benefits from the BOR for increased credit hour generation. He also noted we may have reached the limits of these increases considering space and faculty limitations.

Roy Bahl asked about lobbying the state to consider quality as an indicator for performance factors. Ron Henry noted nationwide such measures are increasingly being considered. Lauren Adamson suggested a cost analysis of increasing tenure track faculty should be considered. Ron Henry indicated the cost for tenure track faculty has considered as 8-9 faculty members for each $1 M investment.

III. Enrollment Update
Bill Fritz indicated Banner backfill positions would probably be funded. He projected 109,000-110,000 in credit hour generation for the summer (including Maymester). He noted the transient numbers are down, he believes due to priority given to new students and transfers as well as due to tuition for part-time students not being as effective for the summer and those students are working through the summer to pay for other terms. He recommends freshmen not begin the summer in the future unless they are part of a “jump start” program or some other mentoring program to assure their success. He noted to Ron Colarusso freshmen who are not part of these early start programs tend to be less successful.

Bill Fritz indicated that with maintaining the May 1st completion deadline, a yield of an enrollment of 2250 and a class would be of higher quality. He noted a new category of consideration for applicants available on Statware. The “confirmed” category recognizes the return of cards from students who have been accepted. Approximately 98% of those who return these cards enroll. He proposes this “return card” method be considered by the university to compare enrollment rates of students who pay a deposit. Lauren Adamson suggested some contact should be made to the students who return these cards. He indicated the identity of these students may be available and he would
IV. Minority Mentoring Proposal
Ron Colarusso asked if the Minority Faculty Mentoring Committee and the advisory group proposed in the document are the same entity. Ron Henry indicated he believed this was true. Roy Bahl suggested the mentoring programs differ across the discipline, and therefore colleges may be the best to organize such mentoring activities, rather than a central organizational structure. Ron Henry indicated central organization might result in sharing of best practices.

Ron Colarusso stated he felt the issues surrounding minority mentoring are important, but the current pilot proposal might not provide the best model. He questioned the incentives for mentors suggested in the document. Lauren Adamson suggested this pilot proposal should supplement current mentoring practices, but not replace them. Susan Kelley supported the use of the proposal as a pilot project and that the minority mentees might benefit from connecting with others. Lauren Adamson suggested the term “minority faculty” might be better defined.

Ron Colarusso suggested researching the effectiveness of current mentoring practices in place on campus. Charles Louis noted there are programs in place on other campuses providing minority mentoring and should be considered. Roy Bahl suggested there are two aspects of minority faculty concerns, that of the nature of institutional culture as well as that of mentoring and these should be considered separately.

Ron Colarusso suggested consulting Roosevelt Thomas’ work and offered to share the references with others. Ron Henry summarized the group’s discussion as particularly supportive of examining the current atmosphere for minority faculty.

V. Meeting Dates
Ron Henry noted that the regular meeting date on September 10 is available for the Retreat, so the schedule will be altered.

VI. Guskin and Marcy Paper Discussion
Ron Henry suggested it might be beneficial to discuss working definitions of terms within the group. First the group discussed the meaning of “focus on student learning.”
Ron Colarusso thought learning is defined as ensuring outcomes are appropriate to program objectives. Lauren Adamson indicated a process of learning is as much a part of learning as are the final products. Ron Colarusso suggested these processes could be considered as a product or outcome. Ron Henry asked if being able to apply learning part of learning. Lauren Adamson agreed but noted good learning leads to development.

Sid Harris indicated he believes there is an emphasis today on lifelong learning as a goal. Ron Henry noted a shift from teacher-centric to learner-centric learning. Bill Fritz stated he was jolted by the Regents’ release of low rates of performance on the Regents’ Exam, as well as by a large employer who describe GSU grads as having good GPAs but that they cannot read and write to professional standards. Sid Harris indicated it might be worthwhile to compare our graduates. Ron Henry noted GSU now participates in NSSE to help to evaluate these outcomes. He also noted the university’s commitment to writing across the curriculum.

Janice Griffith defined learning outcomes as helping students look at new and different problems and to possess “skills set” to solve them. She indicated there is a set of basic necessary skills. She also noted the bulk of the students who come from public institutions tend not to be good writers. Sid Harris noted he did not have experience with multiple choice examinations and common finals in his academic preparation [at a private college].

Susan Kelley noted the acquisition of critical thinking skills is an important component of learning. Bill Fritz indicated the employer he spoke with stated GPA and grades in courses are not as important as the achievement skills. Charlene Hurt agreed a small liberal arts college is beneficial, but that large public universities must det
a way to meet the requirements of a student. Mary Jane Casto indicated during a course here at GSU the varying levels of ability in a course might direct the method of instruction.

Roy Bahl described that in Principles of Economics courses generally teachers help students learn how to build theory, use analytical skills, and apply these. He indicated then the decisions are made which outcomes should be achieved and then work backwards to decide how to meet these outcomes.

Ron Henry noted his involvement in Quality in Undergraduate Education group. In the history portion of this he explained the faculty are frustrated by their students’ inability to read critically, and are therefore not critical readers. Lauren Adamson described this undergraduate experience has been common to the liberal arts focus, that it is difficult on such a large scale. She noted that current methods do not need to be discarded however; she noted her tremendous experience as an undergraduate in a large lecture setting. Ron Henry suggested the key is providing an active learning environment. Lauren Adamson stressed nurturing a culture of learning including dormitory life and the benefit of the Freshman Learning Communities.

Sid Harris emphasized the importance of providing experiential learning opportunities, particularly international experiences. Charlene Hurt noted the need for the critical use of materials.

Next meeting: Wednesday May 28, 2003, 9:30 to 11:30 am, Room 200 Golden Key Board Room, Student Cer Submitted by Lisa Beck 05/14/03