

Curriculum Leadership Team
November 17, 2009
Meeting Minutes

Adjunct Issues – Deb Bryde and Fred van Hartesveldt

Deb and Fred came to gather information and feedback regarding adjunct mentoring in departments and to encourage mentoring, if it does not currently occur. They are part of an Adjunct Advisory Team created to hear adjunct concerns and ideas. During a recent survey, it was found that adjuncts have a desire to be mentored. This informal, peer-to-peer relationship can be done one-on-one. It is voluntary for full-timers to participate. Most departments don't have a mentoring program; rather, they cover subjects with adjuncts in other ways. The survey uncovered a big gap in what people think about mentoring, with negative comments outweighing positive comments 2 to 1. Negative comments included: "My mentor doesn't want to be a mentor." "It's 7 weeks into the semester and I haven't met my mentor." Etc.

Deb and Fred are looking for best practices, as well as barriers. They hope to gather everyone's ideas and put the information back out to our group for departments to use. Fred says the English Department's program is informal, and they discuss politics, hiring, pedagogy, etc. Many establish a relationship and then keep in contact via phone and email, with relationships continuing after the semester. Mentors do not evaluate or supervise; they are just there to answer and ask questions and make sure mentees are applying curriculum correctly.

Janet P. – Seasoned adjuncts are also mentoring. She tries to match up schedules so they can get together more easily. She doesn't necessarily match instructors by courses they are teaching.

Glenn – He matches instructors by the courses they are teaching.

Eve– She also matches instructors by course. They have a checklist of things to cover re: college and program responsibilities. It is difficult to find time in people's schedules to get together.

Fred – It is difficult to get together at the beginning of the semester.

Ric – Is there a checklist to guide mentors? Fred said no.

Laurie and Janet tell new adjuncts when they are hired that they will be assigned a mentor.

Eve- Everyone in their department participates; it's "part of the job."

Becky – Everyone in their department participates and it goes longer than one semester. It is tough to find the time to get together.

Fred - Advisory Board recommends mentoring in every department, although it doesn't have to be done the same way in each department. We just want to do it well. There is no follow-up with mentor or mentee to make sure they're on track.

Doug – It seems like mentors would have to spend a lot of time on start-up issues. Who is responsible for covering start-up issues – dept head, mentor, or other??

Becky – Their adjuncts are given a handbook, so mentors don't have to deal with start-up issues.

If anyone has any other ideas, please send them to Deb Bryde.

Faculty Expectations for Bookstore

Karen Walker reported on the work this subcommittee has done to craft a statement. Members of the subcommittee were Eve Sidney, Nick Antonakis, Robert Long, Frank Conner, and Karen Walker.

Laurie – The goal is to have the bookstore be faculty driven. (We may need to ask Financial Aid some questions regarding using FA money at the bookstore.)

Ron – Asked about the first item of the statement (timing of release dates). Patti T. is working on this – the Higher Ed Reauthorization Act is going to require colleges to post textbook titles even earlier than before.

Laurie has served on a couple of committees to improve bookstore and learned they don't have a standard way of ordering books – they take book orders in any form, no consistency, and no accountability.

Ron - Sends bookstore an excel spreadsheet. If an issue arises, he can go back to the spreadsheet and "prove" what he said originally.

Steve – The statement is good and should be put into practice. A electronic way of ordering would be less costly and good way to do it. His biggest annoyance is having students buy things the bookstore recommends, not what faculty recommends. Book reps are in the mix to and this confuses everything.

Becky – "Instructor recommendations" should be the only ones listed.

Mike Vargo – We've addressed this before – bookstore knows they are not supposed to offer their recommendations, but are driven by the need to be profitable. What can we do to enforce? This is capitalism on the backs of our students.

Nick – There should be two sections in bookstore – one with instructor recommendation, one with bookstore recommendation. Don't put on the same shelf!

Steve – Change wording to "recommended" and "required". Be very precise with signage: "bookstore recommends this" and "Your instructor doesn't recommend this".

Fred – The College receives a percentage of bookstore sales.

Eve – Should we put the bookstore back in the college's hands?

Steve – It wasn't much better when we ran the bookstore.

Karen – Signs could read "gotta have" vs. "nice to have." Instructor should create this, not the bookstore.

Laurie – this document will be sent to AGC for further discussion. We have asked for these things before and haven't gotten them through before.

Mike Vargo – Change statement – Replace "should's" with "will's."

Consensus: Change "should's" to "will's" and recommend electronic means of ordering textbooks and have only instructor recommended course materials in the bookstore (no more bookstore recommended materials).

Laurie asked for a vote to endorse the statement with revisions noted: 21 votes for; 0 against.

Institutional Commitment to Blackboard

Mike Vargo reported on the second draft of the subcommittee's work. The subcommittee consisted of Bernie Manker, Ann Alexander, Garry Brand, and Mike Vargo. In the second draft, the subcommittee removed wording that indicated faculty would use Blackboard for posting course grades, as not all classes give grades and some can't be calculated on Blackboard.

Janet – training has to be offered in different modes, different times and days.

Mike V. - feels the current statement supports the Learning Academy doing this.

Fred – Since we have some adjuncts that only teach one class, is it fair to ask them to do this?

Nickie – Her adjuncts won't do this – they only have 2 extra computers in their department. Once the support and resources are in place, then ask them to get trained in it.

Laurie – We require adjuncts to submit grades electronically now.

John – This is useful as an early alert system. Instructors can address feedback as needed. Students want this! Everyone has computers at home. We are asking for very minimal requirements.

Sandy – This is easy to do electronically, helps with sustainability issues, reduces printing cost, helpful to adjuncts.

Nickie – Statement should be worded “encourage,” not “require.”

Fred – If we strongly encourage it, most adjuncts will comply. If we require it, we will get problems and people will resent it. He doesn't post his grades because he wants students to talk to him and not simply look at their grade online. Much of the student's grade is determined near the end of the semester, so it may look like they are failing the class.

Becky – This is a very minimal request - syllabus and grades should be posted.

Ric – We need to embrace using technology. Don't want it to be either or. This is an additional way to communicate with students. Instructors should use what works best for them. If face-to-face works for some instructors, then that's what they should continue doing.

Laurie asked for motion to accept statement: Steve Abid so moved, Becky Brinks seconded – 13 votes for, 4 opposed. Motion passed.

Department Decision-making re: newly allocated funds

Associate Deans have long been concerned that they don't have money and must ask for money through their Dean's budget. Recently, each Associate Dean was given \$4,000 to be used to promote student learning or quality initiatives at the college.

Some Associate Deans equally divided the funds among their department heads. Others maintained discretion over the use of the funds for their departments. Sandy wanted to hear ideas on how she should allocate the money.

Dan – Once he gets a request, if it is a small amount, he approves it; otherwise, he finds matching funds. He has gotten Diversity Center to match funds, etc. Cathy Noviskey keeps spreadsheet of requests and she can forward to Sandy.

Nickie - Has had 1 request. No criteria on funding.

Doug - Has had 1 request. No criteria on funding.

Laurie will approve funding if it promotes faculty/student interaction, active learning, student trips/activities, special projects that require materials in the classroom or if it's an initiative that couldn't be funded through C-3, IIPD, etc. She has received 1 request - English Dept. makes videos of student peer editing. She will fund or partially fund.

Dan – adjuncts haven't been requesting professional development funds this semester.

Mike Kiss – Has used half of his available professional development funds. First come, first serve, no strict rules.

Tom – Will funds roll over if they are not used?

Laurie – No guarantee funds will be available next year

Dan - Encouraged his staff to use money and show we need it, so maybe it will be increased next year.

Results of CLT Prioritization Survey

Laurie went over the survey results, which showed the group's top 4 priorities: full time vs. part time faculty ratio, CARP, goals for online classes and training, room scheduling. Asked the group if we need sub-teams for each of these priorities.

Becky – We may not need a team on Rooming (can join existing one), but we need to still be in the loop – they're not listening to what we need.

Steve Abid - Since job is growing, we need help in addressing how we can do our jobs - "Responsibility creep."

Fred – Academic Summit results will be addressed at AGC December meeting - some of our priorities may align with AGC priorities. Compensation study will look at department head's responsibilities on paper and beyond. Compensation is part of contractual discussions.

Mike Vargo – We need to realize how things have changes since these responsibilities were established (i.e. increased number of sections we're overseeing; adjunct hiring; more students, so more student complaints and more instructor complaints; transcript requests, prereq requests, program equivalency questions). It's certainly a larger job than when compensation was established.

We will wait to see Academic Summit results and put these priorities back on agenda for December meeting to discuss.

Laurie recapped today's meeting:

- The Adjunct Advisory Board recommends that mentoring occur in all departments
- Bookstore Statement, with revisions, was approved
- Blackboard Statement was approved
- Covered different ideas for using newly allocated funds
- Discussed priorities for CLT to tackle this year
- Coordinating group will address "responsibility creep" in their next meeting – CLT discussions should not, however, venture into contractual issues of compensation.