UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-FLINT

Council of Deans Meeting

Thursday, November 13, 2014
3:00 p.m. – Shiawassee Room

~ Minutes ~

Members Present: Bob Barnett, Scott Johnson, Vahid Lotfi, Albert Price, Chris Waters, and Gerard Voland

Guests: Brad Maki, Director of Graduate Admissions
         Jacob Blumner, Interim Director of University Outreach

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

2014 Graduate Student Survey Results ▶ Brad provided an overview of the 2014 Graduate Student Survey Results explaining that this survey is given to students every two years. He stated that the purpose of the survey is to assess various aspects of graduate education in terms of academic experience, course scheduling, campus services, decision to attend UM-Flint, and recruitment and admissions. A total of 1,624 students were surveyed with a 34% return rate.

Brad noted a slight trend change in that in previous years more students worked full-time but now we have more full-time students. He also noted that there was a wide variance regarding what days/times are desirable for on-campus meetings, with the more desirable being Saturday mornings. Brad added that although some say that students don’t read their email, the overwhelming preferred method of receiving important student services information was via UM-Flint student email address. Brad reported that overall they were pleased with the results and he is planning to share the results with the other VC groups as well as provide a breakdown of the information by program to pertinent units.

Neff Center Update ▶ Gerard indicated that as a follow-up to a previous Neff Center report, Jacob and Bob were asked to look at the program and information available and come up with ways of moving forward into Phase II. Jacob reported that in broadly thinking about how to move forward, he and Bob built an outline, Neff Center Phase II Proposal, which he disseminated. He also provided a spreadsheet of College Positive Activities that have been occurring at the Neff Center with all partners. He and Bob felt that Phase II should include an assessment of Phase I programs. He explained that we need to develop or create new programs to focus on our four basic goals and also align programs from all of the partners. They felt the following needs to be included in Phase II:

• More thorough assessment.
• Narrow and define goals more.
• Work with major constituents.
• More investment in Neff Center as a learning lab.
• Create ongoing mechanism for assessing the program.
Bob added that as part of Phase II, an additional need for the Neff Center is funding and if we agree that we need to be committed as an institution, then the commitment has to be more than from just Outreach. Much discussion took place and ideas emerged as follows:

- To involve UM-Flint students and/or faculty, the distance may be a factor and we may have to be innovative in addressing that.
- EOI Grants were discussed and the possibility of expanding their uses to Beecher if possible.
- There was consensus that whatever programs were added or expanded, they had to be measurable to show impact.
- With the many small initiatives that are happening at Neff, there needs to be a mechanism to funnel them together so that they are somewhat aligned. Perhaps developing a mechanism that shows how to address goals, similar to how we did for General Education.
- Discussed college readiness and how to improve that; possibly taking a very small cohort of students as a pilot.
- Scholarships were discussed as well as a form of some kind of dual enrollment program.
- Work choice incentive programs.
- We need to narrow our focus to ensure success; can’t have objectives that are beyond our ability to meet.
- Tier Mentoring.
- Variation of the DEEP Program that would encourage 10 students – mini-version and possibly focusing on remedial needs.

The conversation concluded with Gerard asking Jacob and Bob to conduct an assessment and try to come up with a narrow focus, including who the players would be, and the structure to bring back to the Council next month.

Approval of Minutes from September 25, October 9, and October 23  ►  The approval of the Minutes from September 25, October 9, and October 23 were tabled until the next meeting.

Graduation Intervention Plan for May/August Graduating Class  ►  Chris explained that something that we are doing differently this year is trying to figure out exactly where our students are in terms of their scholastic path and how to assist them in graduating within six years. She disseminated a document which provides an overview of our 2009 FITIACS and their status to date in relation to graduating. She said that one of the main reasons for this initiative is that our FITIAC national and state numbers are not good in terms of graduation rates. She explained that we are looking at the 2009 students who, if graduate in August, would still fall within the six years. Efforts include reviewing transcripts and identifying those who have a minimal number of courses to complete. Also, they are looking at those students who have run afoul with Financial Aid and see how we can help out. Following the 2009 review, the 2010 and 2011 groups will be identified as well.

Faculty Reviews  ►  Scott indicated that some time ago the Council discussed two- and four-year reviews versus three-year reviews and asked for clarification whether a decision was made for a consistent policy. Discussion took place regarding how units were conducting reviews and how they incorporate a third-year review into their plans when needed. Gerard indicated that units need to have some kind of third-year evaluation; he said that the two-year is too early and he doesn’t want to see just giving out another three-year contract without a thorough evaluation.

Carry Forward Funds  ►  Gerard announced that in working with Greg Tewksbury, and because all units have carry forward funds, Greg would like to create a discretionary budget line in each unit to house these funds. The goal should also be to keep approximately 10% of carry forward funds for emergency, i.e. tuition decline, etc.
Course Scheduling Policy  ► Gerard announced that in conversation with Mary Jo Sekelsky, the Registrar’s Office, and Stacy Lee, there are a significant number of course changes each semester which affects students. In the near future, a policy will be developed that when the schedule goes live, the courses will be locked from changes in terms of course, day, hours, and mode of delivery unless there is a severe emergency. An example of a severe emergency would be characterized as perhaps a long-term illness of a faculty member. The Registrar’s Office will be providing additional information at a future Council of Deans Meeting to share with faculty.

Matters Arising  ► No items were discussed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.