~ Minutes ~


Guests: Tracy Wacker, Director/Thomson Center for Learning and Teaching
Deb White, Director/Office of Extending Learning
Nick Gasper, Information Technology Manager/Office of Extended Learning
Aimi Moss, Director/Student Success Center

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m.

Meet/Greet – Kristin Lindsey, Vice Chancellor for University Advancement ▶ Doug announced that Kristin would not be joining us due to illness. He indicated that Kristin’s task is to organize the Capital Campaign in terms of the work that has been done, prioritizing tasks, and mapping them to the University’s broader goals, along with making sure that a communication plan is in place and followed. She will be invited to the next meeting for us to have the opportunity to meet her and hear about her plans for the University.

Doug also announced that plans are in place for the Council to have a joint meeting with AAAC to discuss emerging issues that both groups deal with such as the academic and curricular policy infrastructure in terms of consistency and perhaps doing an audit of what we have and where we may need to develop additional policy.

Peer Observation Follow-Up ▶ Tracy indicated that as a follow-up for the peer observation plan, she was given three tasks to follow from a previous deans meeting: develop a survey regarding formative classroom assessments and develop a schedule and budget for implementation of the plan. She disseminated copies of all three. Tracy pointed out that she and Deb White are still finalizing the questions regarding online courses but those should be done soon. She reviewed the schedule noting that we are already in year two of Module 1. Module 2 is a micro-teaching simulation rather than in-class demonstration. Module 3 incorporates Module 1 with a focus group of students. She indicated that we could have people certified as early as Winter Semester. She explained that the trainings are all-day sessions and felt that Virginia Hamori-Ota’s fees were very modest but may be negotiable as well. The goal is to get all faculty certified. In the meantime, because of the volume, the plan is to have some of our own faculty certified who can conduct trainings themselves in order to reach as many faculty as possible. Tracy indicated that she would like to know within a week if the Council supports the plan.

Tracy explained that another approach in training/certification would be to offer it unit-by-unit based on the availability of the faculty. Susan indicated that the College’s approach is to encourage the chairs first and hopefully we can rely on the “train the trainer model”. Tracy indicated that the first training session this year is November 6 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The Deans were very supportive of the program and Doug indicated that it was a good model for all kinds of reasons and we need to move forward with hard-wiring it into the institution as quickly as possible.
**Student Evaluation Response Rates**

Nick indicated that the same presentation will be given to AAAC in their next meeting. He presented a PowerPoint for the Council regarding the status of course evaluation return rates. He provided some background information regarding the history of the program indicating that when paper evaluations were utilized, there was an approximate 66% return rate, the same as when online was initially implemented in Fall 2011. He said that over time faculty governance initiated changes in Winter of 2012 such as the return window being reduced from two weeks to one week; incentives were banned; the number of reminders to students were reduced, etc. Our most recent numbers indicate that we are at an approximate 40% return rate.

Nick explained that OEL has looked at other universities who are having similar problems such as Purdue and one of the major problems is “survey fatigue”. Nick said that it wouldn’t be unusual for a student, who is involved in clinicals, labs, etc. to receive 10 surveys or more. They also conducted an in depth study of individual student rates and the completion rate by position outlined in the PowerPoint. Much discussion took place with the following comments and/or suggestions:

- Perhaps have a very short, two-question survey that students can complete via phone.
- Reminders were discussed. Nick indicated that both students and faculty members receive reminders.
- Faculty members need to make more of an effort to increase return rates. One way is by demonstrating to students that their input “was/is” heard by explaining how, for example, they have changed a portion of their class because of the input of previous evaluations.
- Faculty can explain to their students the value of completing the evaluations.
- Talk to faculty members who have high rates of returns and ask what they do.
- Faculty Senate in Ann Arbor is having a very similar conversation.
- TQ management was discussed and how it is used in hospitals and other businesses.
- Posting evaluation return rates by course was suggested. Nick did explain that return rates are made public to students for the first four university questions, but not comments.
- Develop flyers for faculty to disseminate to students advertising that the survey could be completed through an app.

Doug indicated that the Deans should discuss the issue with their executive committees and design a process that increases measurable results. There was general consensus that there was no one thing that could be implemented that would increase rates.

Concluding the presentation, the Office of Extended Learning offered the following suggestions:

- Consider how many evaluations are being generated with perhaps the thought of combining some.
- Two week evaluation window.
- Random evaluation order. *(which has been done)*
- Increase reminder rate.
- Faculty conversation regarding incentives.

Doug thanked Nick and Deb and suggested that they circle back following their meeting with AAAC and getting their input.

**Student Success Center – Supplemental Instruction (SI) Program**

Aimi provided an update to the Deans regarding the status of the Supplemental Instruction (SI) Program and the urgency driven by the Student Enrollment Management (SEM) Retention Plan to strengthen the program because SI has been so effective. She explained how the SI Program works and indicated that the program is not only beneficial to the students, but also to the SI (student) Leaders. She provided a handout of the Performance Study conducted on the program with all kinds of analyses. In all cases, the positive significance of the program...
was evident when comparing students’ GPA’s coupled with having SI to students with similar GPA’s and not having SI.

Aimi also provided a handout of the Performance Study that was completed regarding the Tutoring Program. She indicated that the Tutoring Program is growing going from 30 sessions to over 142 last year. Aimi indicated that the Tutoring Program shows the same positive results with the exception of some math courses. She indicated that SI is more effective in math classes.

Aimi explained that they have been working with department chairs to try to get faculty to commit to SI early-on and include information into the course schedule so that students know that certain classes are available with SI assistance. In addition, she said that by doing this, it is especially helpful with prerequisite courses. Faculty can steer students who may have had problems in their class to the next class that offers SI assistance.

Aimi indicated that she is trying to build awareness; however, the program is also very expensive. Susan supported the program and said that she is working with chairs to stress early feedback to students so that help can be garnered in time to help them. She said that there are all kinds of ways to assess this early on. Much discussion ensued, including writing, the Writing Center, and the effort that was made in Gen Ed to incorporate writing into every course. Also, SI content versus study habits were discussed. Aimi indicated that leaders are trained to pick up on that.

Doug thanked Aimi and indicated that we need to get to the next level in an integrated way. Faculty have the opportunity of offering coursework in a more sophisticated manner that allows them greater success.

Proposed Tour of Merit Building ► Doug announced that a tour will be planned for the Council of Deans to tour the Merit Building; however, he stressed that we do not want employees going over randomly to look at the building at this point.

Doug disseminated a copy of the Recommendations for Instructional Promotions provided by Jeff Frumkin’s office. Sue noted that there are two new items to pay attention to in terms of the Summary Letter by the Dean for each candidate.

Vahid announced that he is extending the deadline to mid-November for Space Plans to be submitted. Doug indicated that the Chancellor and he will be conducting a space audit very soon looking at all kinds of things including instructional space. He said that we need to find ways to use space in different ways including collaborative, modernizing, and being flexible.

The deans discussed the Ken Dobbins visit and basically thought that it was very positive. They are interested in knowing his thoughts about different aspects of the university. Doug indicated that he is a strong proponent of individuals and schools becoming more academically visionary. The budget model was discussed. Vahid said that he appreciated Dr. Dobbins’ view in that we should not fear if one unit has much more money than another. Such an issue if one were to act upon it could be accomplished by capping or redistribution at the extreme; however, that would have the risk of hurting entrepreneurship on the part of schools and the college. A better idea is to have the top strategic priority to grow the pie rather than redistribution.

Approval of October 13, 2015 Minutes ► The Minutes of October 13, 2015 were approved as written.

Vahid reported that the Michigan I-CORPS initiative is still moving forward but at a slower pace than anticipated. He said that we have two faculty participating as instructors: Mike Witt, from the School of Management, and Paula Nas, from the Department of Economics. Training will occur next month and the other dates announced remain the same. The program calls for four workshops per year. However, we are not committing to that and viewing this first workshop as a pilot.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon.