**Notes from the Joint**

**Faculty Senate and Council of Deans Meeting**

Friday, September 30, 2011

3 – 4:30, Killian104

* Distinguished professors met earlier today, and they looked at the topics provided in the agenda for this joint meeting; if we do a factor analysis that really drives this: the stress related to the economic situation that all faculty feel (no raises, bigger classes, more workload, things you’re asked to do), all under the overarching concern it could get worse.
* Talked about earning credit for the recent additional/auxiliary duties to go towards release time (some departments have an articulated agreement with the dean; others may be working towards this);
* Faculty Caucus that developed in later Bardo years, a feeling of distrust; when it comes into the classroom that’s a bigger issue (not just money … as grad students learned to live lean); what a lot of faculty would like to know is how you see this issue and how you can help;
* At a point we need to rethink the university entirely; refers to *The Fall of the Faculty* (a book) and development of a whole layer of university bureaucracy; one thing we can work on is the erosion of the student/faculty partnership; need to recognize as a university we need to protect the core: the student/faculty partnership; theories on 4% drop in fall-to-fall retention and how budget has impacted that; that layer of bureaucracy takes dollars and it takes them out of the classroom. If we can maintain the higher quality of student/faculty partnership, that’s how we’ll maintain our students.
* Question if we’re getting students where WCU is not their school of choice, but they can get in; then it’s easier for them to get into school of choice as a transfer student.
* Fine and Performing Arts freshman retention was 87% (we’re usually 90 or 91%); you come to Western to be in a professional program, they should stay; the better quality you get, the more likely they’ll stay; in terms of partnership, we need to recruit top quality students, and it’s not SAT’s.
* What motivated this discussion was for faculty to participate in these types of discussions and what we can negotiate with the deans; being able to have some voice in the decisions and some voice in the rationale; would be nice to negotiate something specific.
* Faculty/Student relationships, when you make cuts that affect/support students, they come back to faculty; and you’re asking faculty to do more things not related to teaching or our relationship to the student; more and more we’re doing a lot more paperwork in a search
* A lot of this paperwork has been shifted down to deans offices over the last number of years, e.g. HHS has an HR office for the college so they try to help keep this from depts.
* What from the Council of Deans view is Senate not doing that we should be doing?
* Think this meeting would be better with Exec Council than the Deans; Provost agrees with that;
* Back on the Bardo days, things change quickly and what’s lacking (and what created problem with trust) is that deans couldn’t say or couldn’t communicate effectively with those who needed to know; meeting with the Chancellor’s division today and was overwhelmed by the level of transparency there; comes from the top down; we’ll be able to communicate in a way that has real meaning, and a change in communication that allows us to speak more candidly and rely on information we get;
* Echoing the previous comment; a misconception of the level of control that deans have (faculty sat in for a dean at council and realized they had just as little control as faculty); deans had very quick decisions and defined boundaries (esp. where budget was concerned); attempts to be transparent and trust that goes with that can’t be there when you have only three days to do something;
* If we can get a provost that is the second person in charge of the university that will really help; -- David Belcher is trying to move forward with that with a campus that has not done that in the past; Provost now leads EC when the Chancellor is gone; when he is gone, they look to Provost to make a decision; in his mind, the Provost is first among equals with the other VC’s
* What gets in the way of true restructuring is the way that we’re structured in our silos and the funding and structures that come with it; collaborative nature of a university that is non-collaborative in its funding model; forced into a box that doesn’t allow for creativity and collaboration; trying to get an interdisciplinary thing is a nightmare;
* Too many financial decisions being made at Raleigh, also on how you can spend money; we lose sight of this when we’re under stress (e.g. our IT infrastructure is an essential asset, yet it’s essentially gone unfunded for how many years?);
* Honestly we need to wipe the state clean and build it back, and this institution has changed dramatically; strategic plan – if we do it right, it is so crucial; opportunity to turn around and put our money where our mouth is; do think many things will shift on campus and should to match that strategic plan;
* Concern that there will be decisions that have to be made before that plan is in place;
* For four years we’ve been hit over the head with UNC tomorrow; will new strategic plan be based on UNC tomorrow? – GA is still using UNC Tomorrow; can’t say if our strategic plan will be on this or not;
* Saw common denominator as budget issue but also as a MORALE issue that’s festering around the faculty; no one minds pulling up their bootstraps in a time of need, but it’s wearing thin because there’s no sense it’s ever going to stop; we’ll probably get raises eventually, but it’s the other things that get at people and don’t know if they’ll go away. Somewhere within the system people would like to have the sense of “we’ve got your back” or say “this is it”.
* If you look at our data compared to other NC schools, we have the lowest class size (and this is being watched by GA); it has allowed us a luxury relationship in terms of times with students and excellent faculty/student relationship; not able to maintain that luxury to the level we need to; did we need to raise our classes sizes, yes we did; do we have to continue to do this, I hope not;
* Note, but look at the cost of faculty lines too when you’re looking at comparing class sizes; they’re funded at a higher FTE; moving in the other direction, the chances of rebalancing that FTE value is the issue; not comparable to peer institutions;
* High class sizes problematic to lack of strategic direction; strategic plan should tell us what we shouldn’t be doing; take resources and shift them; we’ve grown at all costs;
* There’s a time too, for stuff to come up through departments (not just Faculty Senate); for example stuff with classes; nothing strategic is going to come from a university level on mandating class sizes and faculty load; departments know individual traits, where we can increase class sizes and where we can’t; a university mandate would be very scary; be careful pushing for something broad-sweeping (administratively or from Faculty Senate); if it gets up to a higher level, all of those important traits get lost; not everything has to be done with a university level; have those plans in place at the department/program level;
* Just sharing information on what departments are doing (such as plans to accumulate credit towards a release from auxiliary service) is super helpful;
* Notion of quality, and quality being matched with teaching load; expectations in terms of what is happening in the classroom; national engagement studies; we’re really proud of the fact we have Carnegie engaged university; needs to be part of our strategic plan; what does it stay in terms of student learning and what is happening in our classrooms; how do we engage our students in the learning process; students say they can’t wait to get into the Honor’s College for the perks (residence halls, one-on-one contact with their faculty); surveyed class as to how they learn best – hands on, service learning; want to become competitive in the market and that’s part of our teaching load and how to make them marketable in a global society;
* To do that in the situation we’re in … what I’d ask Faculty Senate to do more of, seek out creative situations that you own that are from out there; would also ask us to think much more how we can be even stronger advocates for students; SGA is SGA; how can the Faculty Senate hear from those students and advocate for them; students genuinely do wonder why they’re paying so much in athletic fees when they can barely afford to go here; really worried about the students being able to compete in a global economy; and investments being made oversees in academics (and not athletics) – convinced we’re in a 1950’s university model; think the Faculty Senate could be a huge advocate for students;
* Think we need to meet with Students like this as well!!!!!
* If faculty have to make a choice between engagement and issues they see as ???(missed it), e.g. spending time with students versus filling out 2020 survey – they’ll take the time with the students; we’re so overburdened with everything else that they just opt for time with students; goes back to morale; students that I have this semester are the nicest I’ve ever had, and they have so much spirit; need to do something better to ameliorate the was faculty are receiving;
* Morale is not just down around faculty; think about the positions our DH and deans (and EC) are in-- trying to make decisions for this institution in these times; don’t know our Strategic Plan; don’t know what GA wants; it’s not an easy time for any of us; we’re all committed and concerned about the student experience as the bottom line; I hope faculty understand, it’s just not a morale issue among faculty;
* If faculty think they get a lot of emails, then step up a notch or two in administrative responsibilities; one of the issues of morale; a lot of talking about “wanting A” and “rewarding B”; want engagement but not rewarded if not published;
* Departments have their CRD, they have their option to honor alternative methods/ways to scholarship; some departments say regardless of the type of scholarship, it must lead to publication; not Boyer in the sense it has to be on this campus; we have a framework if we exercise it; we do have collegial review committees that got tenured a while ago and think that’s the way it has to be done, and we need to communicate that it has changed
* Comment in College of Business, we don’t necessarily have documents that reflect what we’re looking for in terms of engagement, etc.
* Phased retirement is not an entitlement; Council of Deans has discussed phased retirement; there is no one stance the COD came out on; did discuss what are the implications on the budget; you have faculty members that have served this institution well;
* Wanted to find out the ground rules;
* We have a history here as actually loosing the FTE that is phased; a risk none of us can afford to take right now;
* Three years (used to be five) is a long time in an academic world; administrators come and go and it’s a huge risk;
* Often, when someone retires, we can convert those monies to two positions;
* In one dean’s view, phased retirement increases your faculty load
* If money’s not there when you get ready to hire, you have to take money from others to be able to fill the positions; financial memory here is incredibly short;
* First think you hear from a new administrator is that they won’t honor previous admin’s decisions
* When someone goes phased retirement, ½ of the money/salary goes into this pool; the Council of Deans needs to talk about keeping that money in the same department;
* If a position is on phased, then it won’t get merit increases (if any came)
* It’s been easy for the deans to be a lightening rod, that’s the position we’re put in; but feel they’re as much in the position as we are; without background information, it’s easy for faculty make a decision; as long as there’s not another reversion, it seems we have more transparency now
* A dean goes to Faculty Senate a lot; that’s how he finds out about student issues, what things haven’t been conveyed to faculty; it’s very helpful to go and listen, and frequently, when there’s been a myth I’ve been able to stand up and clarify;
* Brings up a question, would this institution consider going from a faculty senate to an academic senate that includes deans, faculty, students, and staff
* Thank that’s what David is trying to do is create this with CLC
* Think there needs to be a time when admin can be there and a time when it’s just faculty
* What about another model, have colleagues with a model with basically faculty governance; what lies within the realm of the faculty versus the deans versus the chancellor; individual faculty members rotate up to chair to dean, etc. It takes so much time for an individual, you really can’t do your duty; I’m a proponent to partitioning – I like the middle management model – sees deans as middle management;
* Have not experienced a lot of the issues discussed here, our faculty have been extremely supportive and have stepped up; I came from this faculty and when I became interim dean, I haven’t separated from faculty but become a service component, a service to the faculty; sometimes tough decisions have to be made or tough actions taken … generally it’s for the benefit of the majority of the faculty; between deans, DH, and department members … as long as we keep clear communications, with strong DH’s that act as a conduit between dept and deans office, then message will be passed more smoothly;