Natural Sciences and Mathematics Council Meeting Minutes
18 October 2017 in WO1240 3:30-5:00 PM

Call to Order

- Presiding: Hans Gottgens
- Present: Jim Anderson, John Bellizzi, Kathy Fisher, Hans Gottgens, Michael Heben, Edith Kippenhan, David Krantz, Brenda Leady, Timothy Mueser, Kathy Shan, Qin Shao, Don Stierman, Deborah Vestal and Sibylle Weck-Schwarz
- Absent (excused): Tom Megeath (substituting for Michael Cushing), Song-Tao Liu
- Others Present: John Plenefisch, Brian Ashburner

Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve minutes from September 19, 2017 meeting with noted corrections, motion carried.

Unfinished business

- Academic Grievance Committee.
    - Deborah volunteered to join AG from Biological Sciences. Motion passed to approve.
    - Math still has seat open. Does not need to be a council member.
    - Need 2 undergraduate student representatives. Asking for names to be submitted to Hans.
- NSM council also needs 2 student representatives. Asking for names to be submitted to Hans.

University reports and proposals (limited to business that directly impacts college and council)

Faculty Senate

- Edith – House bill 66 (tenure process) discussion ongoing. Mike Dowd presented an unequal treatment case at UT of an administrator being treated differently in misconduct than a faculty member.
- Sybille – Discussion of revision of Dean's evaluation instrument. Update on 2 mandatory training sessions required every 2 years. Brief presentation on open enrollment for health care – more sessions added, significant changes.
- David – "120 credit hour for bachelor's degree" minimum is optional not required. Wants discussion in NSM council about reduction.

Graduate Council

- Brian – No meeting yesterday – Fall Break. Next meeting is Oct. 31.

College reports and proposals

NSM chairs meeting

- Hans
    - New scholarship application website is easier and more uniform.
    - Asked to minimize use of PR grades. No state subsidy. Suggestion to eliminate at grad. level.
    - Assessment plans for departments due toward end of semester.
    - Dean wants Research Advisory Council (RAC). Chairs nominate 2 faculty per department.
        - Brian – meeting once per semester.
        - Mike H. – Should coordinate with other similar bodies in other colleges.
        - John P. / Brian – NSM RAC focused on NSM.
        - Tim – Are we trying to work with Office of Research to work with College of Medicine?
        - Brian – Not being approached formally. Only informal discussions to date across UT. Talk about coordinating Core Facilities across UT.
        - Brian – If asked to sit on an internal review panel for Office of Research, should volunteer to your voice is heard in decisions.
        - John P. – NSM RAC can advise Karen on issues and become point people in wider discussions.
        - Hans – There is a university wide Research Council with faculty members approved by Grad Council.

        - Brian – Little communication coming out of Research Council. Recalls no reports during Grad Council meetings.
    - Brian suggests and Hans supports extending invitation to attend NSM council to Frank Calzonetti.
  - Dean requests Points of Pride be submitted monthly.
- John P.
  - Dean plans to meet all departments (faculty and staff) individually to discuss NSM strategic plan for input.
  - Strategic Plan can be distributed.

Council Committee Reports

Curriculum Committee (John Bellizzi)

- No new proposals. Some queued for next month.
- New proposed requirements for NSM college honors – more details next month
  - Reduction of total number of credit hours to 27
  - 2 tracks – requires min. GPA and capstone project
    - Gold primarily HON courses, capstone may not be research project
    - Each college creates their own Blue track pathway plus research project
      - Each dept. should have their own definition of "research project"
      - Discussions with Honors College
  - Tim – do we have guidelines?
  - John B. – in discussion to develop
  - Hans – similarity between departments
  - John B. – some variations – GPA, presentation type and required courses
  - John P. – department decides what works for them. Real situation where currently if you don't meet increased GPA, you don't get department or college honors. In new system, you could get Honors College degree without department honors.
  - Brian – attrition in Honors College is huge, new tracks try to address this.
  - Kathy S. – college honors sets minimum, department can make more/ higher requirements.
  - John B. – don't have to change dept. honors as it stands, must address reduced credit hours
    - Blue track is minimum of 27 hours.
  - John P. – department can require more than minimum 27 hours for department honors
  - John B. – dept. honors goes on diploma
  - John P. – college honors you get 2nd diploma from Honors College, no designation of field
  - Brian – dept. honors can be divorced from Honors College, get dept. honors without being part of Honors College
  - John B. – if we are confused, how confused are advisors and students? who is best served by different options
  - Edith – Who decides about research projects in industrial settings versus academic setting?
  - John B. – Discussing what a capstone project is. Who decides if gold track capstone is of value?
  - John P. – discussion between Honors College and NSM about capstone projects for gold track
  - Tim – outside reviewer may see Honors College (lower/ less requirements – minimum track) as less than department honors (more/ higher requirements) and that's a problem
  - John P. – color names are problematic – gold has a connotation of more being "gold" than blue
  - Tim – hierarchy is a problem where one is "more" than the other, Honors College should be the higher honor
  - John B. – look at as BS vs. BA. BS is rigorous while BA is broader. Overlap between BA and BS. Blue vs. gold should be viewed the same way. Similar but different goals/ purpose. We decide what is required for department honors. Honors College decides on theirs.
  - Hans – curriculum committee will be deliberating on this for November meeting

Election Committee (Sybille Weck-Schwarz) – Nothing to report

Academic Grievance Committee (Tim Mueser)

- Some cases in pipeline.
- Tim – could we get warning ahead of time for cases?

        - John P. – no, because of confidentiality
    - Edith – what are student deadlines?
        - Tim – deadline is on website. Always refer student to website. Must follow university policies.

New Business

College Research Advisory Council

- Discussed above in Chairs Meeting.

Input into draft College Strategic Plan

- Hans - #1 is "Improve student retention and graduation". Listed is 120 hour undergrad degree.
- David – 120 credit hour minimum – "to allow" "where possible"
- Brian – came down from state legislature as mandate
    - 120 as minimum is standard across country
    - Some accredited programs must require more hours (most at 124 hours)
    - Department doesn't need to do anything but our competitors should be considered – students choose program with lowers credit hours as faster/ cheaper
- Tim – thoughts to fix college requirements and fix it all?
- Brian – multiple discussions last year in provost office
    - No one knows where 120 to 124 came from, why did we have 124 to begin with?
    - Provost said to go to Faculty Senate for approval
- David – Faculty Senate has not approved 120
    - Seems we are being told to go to 120
- John P. – can't go to 120 until college has to approve "to allow" language
- John B. – if college dropped 4 from minimum core requirement, then departments wouldn't have to change
- Hans – there aren't many at college level to begin with
- John P. – departments decide about 120 or not
    - Major that is not certified could go to 120. Certifications require more.
- David – 98% of our courses are already compliant (120-126 credit hours for degree, unless more due to accreditation)
- Tim – if state is not requiring this, who is?
- David – part of new UT strategic plan
- David – very few programs at 120, most at 122-124, few above 126 without reason
- Hans – bottom line is college has to allow 120 first
- John P. – department then chooses what their programs could do without, 2 physics could be combined into 1 course to shave off 2 credit hours, discussion within and between departments
- Tim – is 120 mandated or not?
- John P. – no but you will feel pressure
- David – as a college we should allow the 120, then as departments have serious discussion on each major, if you decide to not go to 120, be prepared to justify your position

Meeting adjourned 5:05pm.