11-29-2010

2010-11-29 Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate

University of Dayton. Academic Senate. Executive Committee

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Present: Judith Huacuja, Bradley D Duncan, Andrea Seielstad, Heidi G Gauder, Paul Benson, Joseph E Saliba, Leno M Pedrotti, Corinne Daprano, Katie Trempe, Antonio Mari

Guests: James Farrelly

Opening Meditation: Katie Trempe opened the meeting with a meditation.

Minutes: The minutes of the November 15 and November 22, 2010 meeting were approved.

Announcements:

Heidi Gauder was selected as the next UNRC member at the last ECAS meeting of November 22.

The APC will consult with the Provost concerning the appointment of the Associate Provost of the Common Academic Program.

Old Business:

Review of APC report in support of the B.S. Degree Program in Medicinal and Pharmaceutical Chemistry proposal.

APC has finished its review of this proposal and has concluded that there is no need for further Senate involvement. There are no cross-unit implications that could be identified in the proposal so there is nothing for the Senate to legislate or approve. APC reviewed the viability of the program and discussed whether biology and premed supported it, whether the college supported it, and whether there is likely to be an impact on other units or the possibility of competition for coursework to be taken away from another department. Their conclusion was that there were no such impacts. However, it is important to report that the proposal was presented to and passed through the Senate’s consideration, and APC would like to see it archived for future programs to review as they consider curricular changes. The following is the APC’s report in full:

APC Report:

From: Academic Policies Committee

To: Judith Huacuja, President of Academic Senate

Date: Nov. 24, 2010
Re: Proposal for Medicinal and Pharmaceutical Chemistry degree

After review of the Department of Chemistry’s proposal for a Medicinal and Pharmaceutical Chemistry (MCM) degree, the Academic Policies Committee offers its support. The proposal seems to require few resources, poses almost no risk, and has potential to make a positive impact on curriculum and even student recruiting or retention. Furthermore, it is supported by the two programs (Biology and Pre-Med) that it would be effected, and it has been supported by the Academic Affairs Committee.

In its request for review of this proposal, ECAS asked the APC to determine whether it required a vote of the full Senate. The APC determined that Senate action is not warranted in this case. The program has no impact across units, and therefore it does not fall under Academic Senate purview. We recommend that a brief report of this new program be given to the Senate to raise awareness, but no action should be taken.

ECAS discussed APC’s recommendations. Much of the discussion focused around university and Senate process for approving proposals of this nature. Some members, however, expressed concern about the conclusion that there were no cross-unit implications. One member pointed out that the proposal included a letter of support from the Department of Engineering, indicating there was some need for review by other units. Others argued that the creation of such a program would always have some implications, whether they involve financial considerations, assignment of coursework, or about prioritizing among university programs and faculty lines. The majority of the members seemed to agree, though, that the cross-unit academic implications of the proposal were negligible, if any, and that the financial considerations should be between the department and the Provost, President and Board of Trustees, not the Senate.

With respect to process, it was pointed out that the College Academic Affairs Committee examines such proposals for conflicts between departments as opposed to conflicts between units. The Senate through APC and ECAS had an opportunity to give input on the merits of the proposal as well as to review its cross-unit implications. There was no suggestion that the proposal would require another unit to change course requirements, require that courses be taken from other units, change credit hours in other units, or otherwise compete with courses or programs in other units.

The Provost indicated that he would present the matter next to the Provost’s Council for a vote to allow the deans to have a voice in any university-wide implications that may be caused by the new program. This would permit consideration of financial considerations as well, which is something the Board of Trustees will eventually have to consider.

A number of ECAS members agreed with the merits of that process and the benefits of allowing the Academic Senate, via its APC and ECAS, to consider the academic components of a proposal like this, leaving the financial implications for independent consideration by other entities. It was pointed out how, unlike other proposals for new degrees, the Senate was informed and
involved early and given an opportunity to review the document, contribute to its formation in early stages of the process, and pass judgment on whether it implicated other units within the university. However, a concern was raised about the Provost’s Council being placed above the Senate. It was argued that the proposal should go through the Provost’s Council first and, then, be presented to the Senate for legislative concurrence. This is a proposal coming from College of Arts and Science for approval for a new program, not from the Senate. It should come here as legislative concurrence to this body based on something that Provost’s Council has approved. Some members liked the idea of early Senate involvement of the nature that took place with respect to this proposal and subsequent review after the document had been vetted by the Provost’s Council.

A lengthy discussion ensued about the appropriate role for the Senate in intra-departmental proposals for new degrees or other curricular changes. It was agreed that ECAS should examine this larger process issue further. Members agreed it was important to consult the Constitution and Provost documents outlining university approval processes as well as to evaluate a number of other considerations. These consideration include but are not limited to the need for departments nimbly to be able to make curricular changes suitable to their program’s needs and goals, the need for the Senate and other departments in the university to be able to review proposals for potential cross-unit implications, the need for review of financial viability and consideration of who should be apprised of financial considerations and at what stage in the process, and the appropriate role of faculty in the review of both programmatic and financial considerations. It was agreed that these issues and the concerns and questions over process would be taken up for discussion at future ECAS meetings.

At the conclusion of the discussion, J. Huacuja moved ECAS to consider whether members agreed with the APC recommendation that the B.S. Degree Program in Medicinal and Pharmaceutical Chemistry proposal has no academic programmatic impact and therefore requires no further action by the Academic Senate. Following a second by A. Mari, a vote was taken with 8 in favor and 2 opposed; no abstentions. The proposal will be forwarded to the Provost for further review and movement through the university decision-making processes. The proposal and the ACP/ECAS deliberations will be reported at the December 3 Senate meeting.

One final issue was about how to memorialize this proposal for future reference. It will be included on the Senate site as part of ECAS minutes but not on the Senate documents page. It was suggested that ECAS officers explore ways of developing a new webpage linked from Senate page that will allow unit proposals and Provost documents to be posted and accessed.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20.

Respectfully submitted by Andrea Seielstad