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Arts & Technologies Cluster Meeting Minutes, 05.30.2018

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A&T Cluster Information Meeting with Cynthia Vascak

Wednesday, May 30, 2018 9:00 am Frost Commons

Cynthia reviewed the agenda provided (see attached).

Cynthia said the new leadership structure in a pilot format was approved. Recognizing that it was innovative approach and although not perfect knows it will be shaped and defined as needs arise. The structure has its challenges, but as long as everyone knows that it is a process. The structure definition will require lots of communication and support. Challenges the cluster faces are in its diversity, # of disciplines, number of faculty on sabbaticals this year, unique budgeting and space scheduling needs.

Review of those going on Sabbatical. Corrections were made to remove from Fall listing, Jong Kim and add to full year, Rebecca Noel.

The group reviewed the current academic year 2017-18 course release structure. Noting that special projects count as service release not course release. Ex. Director of Curriculum. For scheduling purposes it is important to know about all types of course releases. Note that if credit course release or stipend is not listed after discipline it means the coordinators are holding the role as part of their service.

A review of the leadership structure was President Birx. Gap being in the fall with no representatives for Personnel and Budget & IT position being held by Phil Lonergan who will be on sabbatical. This position will likely increase once needs are understood. Discussion ensued. What role will program/discipline coordinators hold? Anticipate course releases remain the same for future? No chairs for any of the departments moving into the Fall which was voted and agreed upon. Program/Area Coordinators also have Studio/Labs responsibilities associated with this.

It will be required to have one point person from leadership that will work with Budget and Finance.

Define the roles of discipline coordinators/program coordinators.

Curriculum & Student Engagement officer position. Cynthia mentioned that when Ann and Scott met with her to create appointment letters for the officers they were lacking information necessary. Need to define what each of the officers duties will be.

Cluster Curriculum vs. Discipline/Program curriculum? Process for proposals? Cross Clusters: How will this work with curriculum committee as it exists now. Want to facilitate innovation, moving to 4 credit, discipline specific.

How will P&T be structured to support faculty?

How and do we create a level between program/discipline coordinator and Provost office for P&T?

Idea to have discipline coordinators form a team for duties personnel officers would conduct to fill void. Annette would be happy to work with others to create.

Faculty contract to be ratified, process for candidates P&T:

1. P&T Committee
2. Discipline/Program coordinator to review
3. Moves to Provost

Does everyone in cluster have a discipline coordinator? Some disciplines are so small there are not enough members to warrant.

Current Department Chairs becomes discipline/program coordinator with less responsibilities as officers take on duties this coming semester.

Matt K: Dual structure run fall to spring. With no personnel officer, it will be difficult to do this.

Have been asked to report structure in the fall to Provost.

Karolyn K: Needs answers very quickly to determine course releases and what she will be doing. If course release, will need to find coverage for courses.

Nick S: Leaders/Officers met twice this week and have ideas to share with the cluster team as a whole on how to structure. We need to know how to move forward and have action steps with input from all.

John K: Important to take advantage of President Birx’s time with us for clarity and input.

President Birx: You all are in the drivers seat. It makes sense, has the right goals and principles. Think in terms of being a cluster as you move forward. This cluster will serve as an example. You are ahead in thinking of this as integration and less as departments. Anything that encourages discipline based community curriculum. How do we redefine PSU to better utilize our resources, while meeting student needs. Break away from the traditional mold. Move as quickly and as far as you can. The remnants will be there, but be open to stretch and move through the transitions. Predict 9 million deficit next year.

Create something unique. Vision & Conception. It is okay not to be able to see the full structure. Build it as you go thinking there are no restrictions. You can’t nail everything down right now. Administration is here to support you as you go and move through it. We are putting Provost structure in place in order to provide this support. Need to see it, use it, to see how it will work. Be flexible. Has to be up to the cluster on how to drive it, not the President. Go for it. Be cognizant that the wheels are not on yet.

Karolyn: As far as need of support from us. Is reducing course releases in this model doing what you wanted?

President Birx: We don’t want to restrict course releases, we have the budget for it this year. I want you to have the resources you need for this transition year. At the end of this year we have to be running efficiently. This is about retention. 3+2, 4+1 models is one way to do this, 12+ students per course...

Invest the energy and time this year. It will take a mix of both. You have the green light to move forward with your structure.

Cynthia: Have a model in place, run with it. When you get to January evaluate what is working what is not working. Be open to revising and keeping communication open and clear.

Jason: There is a need to have the program assessment in place for this model. Need to be ready to assess with hard data.

Karolyn: Clarification on leadership model.
Discussion followed with clarification about whether chairs are being eliminated and program/discipline coordinators in place with one course release each.

Matt: This is a balancing act as there are no position descriptions in place for officers yet.

Scott C: In my role as Curriculum officer I will begin finding answers to questions to help form the role. I will need help from program/discipline coordinators to answer these questions. What are the boundaries? I will be scheduling face time with each coordinator to figure out how the program works, this is going to take up coordinators time.

Karolyn: How do I get approval for a course release for fall?

Suggestion of running dual platform in Spring. President indicated we would need to work faster than that.

Nick: Art has several discipline/program coordinators. Art is working on figuring out course releases. Feasible to create a personnel position, to review workplans and duties chairs performed. Will it be enough 6-8 credit course release if we had personnel officer in place.

The spring is more time consuming with workplans.

Karolyn mentioned other duties besides workplans such as teaching observations, plagiarism, Title IX

Phil: Suggests dividing work up between coordinators for fall.

Matt: Same with us. Coordinator more work- chairs less.

Cynthia: In English could you distribute across faculty, maybe Elliot?

President Birx: Move ahead with work and separate it from the release time. Some areas due to loads will need more release time through fall. Be flexible in the fall, stay on plan. In the Spring it should all be in place. Don’t let allocation be a road block this fall. If you need more, than ask.

Karolyn: Spoke of desire to be involved with curriculum and cluster/discipline work.

John K: Talking about course releases…. Course release to keep sanity while doing work. Others keep taking on more because they want to and have capacity. Issue with appropriate compensation versus a mental health tool. Some speak about extra course release as if a commodity. If I take on more and will be paid with a stipend for doing so.

President Birx: As you move through the process think more about straightest, most streamlined way to keep your sanity this year. Think more about the cluster being more effective and using time/resources available. Can we create the organizational structure and way of teaching that engages students that is more effective and sustainable? This is the main focus. What do you need to work the plan and put the structure in place?

Nick: To do this I have to plan my schedule. Who is going to be teaching the courses I have been assigned?

President Birx: There is a lot demanded from each of us. Do whatever it takes to make it happen and to reach sustainability.
Cynthia: Find time for face to face meetings with whole cluster leadership team. Keep communication clear throughout summer and fall.

John K: Any other questions for President from leadership team?

Nick: We need meetings with empathic design, listening sessions with larger group this summer. Are there funds for compensation for summer work through stipends?

Cynthia: Yes, Robyn Parker and Ross on a low, med high ranking. Nick to check with Ross for information but summer stipend funds are available.

Scott K: Each officer’s role is very different and we need to know what the others are doing. I would like a meeting with all on curriculum (two: one in June and another in August).

Budget & IT: A lot of information gathering needed before fall.

Phil: Question for President Birx: In relation to the shape of the cluster and Comp Science leaving and possibly parts of Art dept. How does this process work? How is this defined?

Karolyn: Question should be how is this improving the students experience.

Scott: Looking at this from curriculum view… Programs leaving dept to clusters with no related discipline in cluster. This creates issues with curriculum and challenges the very idea of cluster when others in cluster don’t know or care what the discipline is.

President Birx: No to both questions. When we set the clusters up it was to the best of our abilities. Strengths of university, 21st century needs etc.. and we came up with groupings.

Personal preferences this is a distortion of the whole idea. When the Provost starts we plan to straighten this all out. Things that had nothing to do with clusters were influencing decisions. No, it is not the way we are going to operate. What makes sense in all standpoints? Put a process in place, this is all about the student experience and programs have to be tied together with a structure.

Cynthia: Clusters should not be come silos and cross cluster collaboration is key.

President Birx & Jason: To clarify not all requests brought forward for changing clusters have been President Birx with out strategic thoughtful purpose.

President Birx: We did not mean for clusters to be a box. A rich environment to create a network.

Karolyn: What is the difference between collaboration versus housed in a cluster?

President Birx: Closest affinity. What makes the most sense. Arts and Technologies. Computer Science should be there as it is where the nexus is.

Need to stricter a process and the questions to ask to make decisions.

Matt: Lots of good reasons why some art programs should stay in A&T cluster and I will address over the summer.

Phil: Faculty and programs are all moving at different rates. As curriculum evolves towards cluster discipline constraints will begin due to degree requirements by program.
President Birx: Need examples of work to show others to get them on board. Change dynamics by showcasing examples.

Need to identity and define use of titles. Ex: Officers, Leadership Team, program/discipline coordinators. A review of the budget structure for FY19 occurred with Mike Amicangioli and Laurie Wilcox.

Departments still in place with local spending as necessary still available.

Items sitting at cluster level include graduate stipends, non-capital equipment and professional development.

Structured by degree programs not options.

Revenues were not budgeted but will be recorded as actual.

General fund Budget only. All other funds remain as is.

Amanda advocated for small programs and the hope they will not get lost within bigger budget. Laurie explained that this year will be using program and activity codes which will be used to track actual spending and will be important for future decision making.

Trish Lindberg expressed concern about the small amount brought over in her budget for supplies. Laurie indicated that funds can still be reallocated as needed and identified.

Cluster level Professional Development is set at $600 per faculty member. Question was asked if faculty can still apply at Dean/Provost level for additional funds and the answer was yes.

Program/Discipline Coordinators should meet to discuss cluster project funds. Interim period for all with subgroups re: MTD and then keep Phil in loop over the fall.

Cluster Leadership Team has $39,000 for FY19 $9700 grad programs would have to request the use of this money for stipends through officer/leaders. Grad Program Coordinators do not get a course release, but receive stipends as part of contract.

Scott asked if the new faculty contract had been calculated into the FY19 budget. Laurie said no not into individual cluster budgets, but the yes at the Provost office budget level.

How will overload requests be processed? Cynthia said it should be asked at the Provost Council. Does this make sense release time plus overload pay? Scott indicated an overload credit banking system was part of the contract discussions.

Question was asked where cluster project funds would live. Laurie responded that FY19 the cluster project funds would be managed by Provost’s office. After FY19, there are no funds in budget for cluster projects.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:20 am