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Arts & Technologies Cluster Meeting Minutes, 04.25.2018

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Cluster Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 25
Frost Commons

Begin 3:34


Agenda Item Overview:
1) Cluster Officer elections are underway – please vote! How should we deal with the lack of personnel nominees?
2) What are our plans for moving forward with leadership model after they are voted in?
3) Will we hold a May cluster meeting? A Cluster Retreat?

ITEM 1 – Officer Elections

- **Brainstormed problems concerning lack of personnel nominations:**
  - Ann: Lots of nominations (great!) but lots turned down (not great)
    - Why did they turn down positions? Other workload.
  - Personnel may be an undesirable position – it’s hard to get people to be the tough guy with no rewards. By separating things out by position, did we separate out the one task that no one wants to do?
    - Scott – We’ve created a plate of mixed vegetables and only some people want peas:
      - People say, you have eaten peas, now you’ll do it again!
      - Yet if one has even eaten the peas, you don’t even know what they taste like.
      - (Peas = personnel committee work)
  - People express a problem with write-ins; with one person running uncontested there’s no choice/agency in votes
  - Abby – 1) How different is this election process from the departmental process? Why don’t we do this with in-person discussion like in the department meeting? 2) Nominated people who we want to be mentors. Would it make sense to maintain personnel in discipline coordinator, and what that means for workload?
    - Problems: Some discipline coordinators signed on with promise of no personnel so we’d be putting that back on. How do we even define disciplines?
  - Trish: Wants cluster to make mentoring pre-tenure faculty a priority in different ways. Abby worries that mentoring isn’t evenly applied.
  - Teaching Lecturers – communication needs to be clear to them about WHO they report to, WHO reviews their evals, etc. Union contract requires teachers to be reviewed, etc., and people don’t know who to write to for next year yet!
  - Are cluster elections going to affect course availability this fall for classes students have already registered for? Yes.
- **Brainstormed solutions to personnel problem:**
  - Increase number of people in different positions so that there will be less work for each individual
  - Create a transitional model with discipline coordinators continuing to do personnel work
    - Originally Spring ‘18 was supposed to be a transitional semester, so we lost this transitional semester and pushed back to fall, then elections didn’t go the way we hoped
      - Next fall: current chairs have 1 course/semester to liason to cluster officer position
        - Phil is worried because he wants progress
  - Flesh out description of what’s on slide so nominees have a clearer idea of expectations
    - John K - We need to have more conversation. People are concerned about job load/role matching that described on the Powerpoint.
  - Are there structures in place that can pressure/encourage people with low service loads to take on their share?
  - Reimagine the way we handle P+T altogether.
    - Matt - Rethinking the way we do workplans? We publish them online so cluster can see them and get feedback from peers, for example?
    - Joe – Why do we have to do it the way we always do it? I find P+T process ridiculously cumbersome and terrifying for junior faculty. What if we just say everyone gets a raise?
      - We should change our attitude toward P+T
      - We’re caving in to all these nebulous things that the administration puts forward
    - Workplans are good because they create a paper trail, accountability, and were created via faculty taskforce. But some things are redundant: ie reporting on ALL workplans.
    - Joe later reiterates that we should do platoons/groups. Becky is concerned these are like 6 equal size departments but they’re not by discipline
  - Scott – Abby’s point about uneven mentoring is why having a small # of dedicated personnel people is important – so that things are evenly applied and fair across the cluster. Sticking it back down to disciplinary coordinators raises more possibility for uneven application.
  - John – Thinks we may need 2 levels of personnel – one serving discipline, other the cluster.
  - John - Mentoring – make sure people aren’t mentored back into the discipline, but also make sure they’re serving the cluster
    - Phil – there’s no savings if we have discipline AND cluster levels. We still need to do the work – work isn’t going away so we just need to redistribute it
  - John – We should do the math. How many hours does it take to do a task, then assign it out
Scott – In earlier plans, we talked about committees and teams. Maybe we need a personnel team that is proportionally represented. As long as we’re going back to the drawing board and revisit older solutions

Joe – Regiment and platoon. Think groups instead of jobs
- Reiterates this is awesome
- Scott – metaphor of the chairs role as stuff packed into a closet. Now we’re opening the closet and stuff is falling out

What are we doing about the election?
- Ann doesn’t think people who get written in will accept

Matt Kizer: Motion to revisit description of personnel officers following election to make sure it is palatable and manageable. Ann McClellan seconds.

- Scott agrees. What’s the longest we can go without having personnel? End of the summer? Then who figures this out?
- Do we go back to the drawing board about the roles?
- Wasn’t there going to be a mechanism for reelection or impeachment if they are not good stewards?
- There should be an evaluation or mentoring process like there is for chairs
- Lots of people in this room are on sabbatical next year. Abby says that we have great people, but what are the institutional structures that support that? If everyone goes away, what remains? Are we just relying on the goodness of people but they aren’t codified? There’s no motivation to mentor future leaders. There’s no value to doing work – no institutional acknowledgement for any of this work. It’s just expected (example: no reception for chairs).
- Becky says – we need to put this on the record! If management thinks we’re going to a horizontal structure so they don’t have to have receptions they are wrong (see McSweeney’s article, https://www.mcsweeneys.net/articles/a-poem-about-your-universitys-absolute-and-unwavering-appreciation-of-its-faculty-in-spite-of-said-facultys-crap-salaries)
- Service is uncompensated
- We lose scholarship, and that’s what elevates us – otherwise we’re just a community college

2 Nays  9 Yays – Motion passes

ITEMS 2, 3

- Pass the baton to new leadership and they can plan

Other Discussion

- Chairs received an email about budget – only administrative units already have budgets, academic units still TBA. Deans will let us know soon
o Ann sent request to council of chairs that all department chairs get printed copy of FY19-20 budgets by next meeting – email may be a way of saying you’re not going to get that

- Good Questions: Can people work in cluster and not the department? We had a department meeting that was reinforcing dept structures. Is this allowed? Is it the department who determines who can move beyond, or the cluster? Can we exist in cluster w/o belonging to department?
- Is there some kind of structure that can control how departments steward/enforce cluster model?
- Matt: Encourage people who are concerned about clustering to come to meetings and learn more.
- Trish – concerned about # of people who haven’t been present in the cluster and how they feel or what they think. How can we get more people here? Is the cluster meeting going to be like a faculty meeting where people should really come? People keep choosing not to come. We need to change institutional culture and expectations.
- How do you assuage fears of people who don’t respect / acknowledge authority of cluster?
  o Trish is sad people aren’t coming. Wish we could identify why people aren’t here. Our cluster can be one that values everyone.
  o Becky says don’t read into it. Cause of people not being here.

Concluding Remarks

- Abby – I feel like we have smart people in this cluster and I’m happy and thankful to be here!
- Thank you, Ann! Applause.

Adjourn 5:15pm.