Senate meeting, Feb. 22nd, for the College of Liberal Arts

Agenda approved

Minutes approved

Deactivation policy

A proposal had been forwarded by the administration to deactivate any course not run for three years. Such a change had been mandated by NEASC after it found that the number of courses advertised to the public did not sufficiently correspond with the courses actually offered regularly. After reviewing comments from the university community, the Dean’s office and Peter Langer have adjusted the proposal so that it now specifies that so long as a course includes a notice that it may be run infrequently it will be allowed to maintain its active status. Prior to any deactivation, the relevant department will be notified by the registrar and given an opportunity to respond to the proposed deactivation. If departs still have concerns, they or their senators should contact the Senate’s moderator.

By-lays of the Senate

Senate by-laws will be tabled for today.

REAB

[Note from the secretary: The minutes reflect the chronological discussion of the Senate. Many of the questions made and complaints raised are discussed and, often, resolved below in the Q and A section with the Dean]

The Moderator notes that REAB coordinators have largely ignored formal requests from the CLA Senate to provide a project timeline or to attend a session of the senate.

The Senate Executive Committee has formulated the following five questions regarding REAB

1. What are the overarching goals for this plan—guidelines?

2. Is this a temporary or permanent move?

3. What is the timetable and where are we now?

4. What role does the CLA Senate have in this process?

5. What formula is being used to allocate space?

A senator noted that some departments stand to receive more space than they currently have while others will lose space as a result of the planned changes. An apparent cause is that classroom space is being prioritized over office space.

A Senator reports that REAB has maintained that a single desk constitutes an office and, consequently, a single room regardless of its size can be defined as multiple “offices.” These classifications give a distorted image of what departments are actually getting in this process.

Another Senator reports that the Economics Department’s initial allocation of 28 offices was first cut to 26 offices and then to 23—several of these offices can only be accessed by entering and exiting a separate office.

The Moderator notes that the School of Management has refused to move, that other departments have refused to participate, and that this process involves our working conditions as well as issues of space allocation.

A Senator noted that FSU has also been discussing this issue and that perhaps the faculty need to organize to demand input and an overview of this process.

The Moderator noted that the senate could ask the union to attend the next meeting of the Senate, if desired.

A Senator noted that the English Department has specific concerns about transparency in this process and that it is intolerable that REAB continues to ignore the formal requests of the Senate for information and dialogue. The Senate is urged to take a stand on this point.

According to another Senator, REAB has already met with the three colleges. None of the colleges were happy with the proposals put forwards and they have succeeded in pushing back the process.

Dean David Terkla

Budget

The planning committee is reviewing a budget deficit of 9 million dollars, down from an initial forecast of 13 million. As of this date, FSU contract arrangements have not been paid for by the legislature. The university claims that the NTT budget is short by 3 million and that overly optimistic enrollment forecasts incorporated into the budget caused an additional shortfall of another 2 million.

The variables for reducing the deficit are limited. Certain accounting changes might decrease the deficit. The next step will be to go the vice chancellors to see what they can change to bring this deficit to zero. A temporary hiring freeze had been instituted, but was then cancelled. Instead, new hirings, excluding new TTs, will have to be justified in detail. It is quite likely that the deficit for the next fiscal year will be even higher.

Higher tuition with lower fees

A policy change has been instituted which lowers the amount of fees for students while proportionally increasing their tuition rates. For faculty, this means that faculty discounts on tuition for their families may increase significantly, i.e. it will costs a lot less for children of faculty to attend UMass or affiliated schools.

This is not necessarily a good thing for UMass Boston, which has a higher number of tuition waivers from state employees than other schools in the system. Consequently, UMass will now receive a much smaller amount from such students in the form of the smaller fee.

The stipends paid to MA candidates are also likely to decrease. A Senator notes that this could be very bad for CLA.

REAB

Dean’s response to SEC questions

1. What are the overarching goals for this plan—guidelines?

GABII will likely be put back on budget and the nursing program will move to that building. The renovation of Wheatley (W) and McCormack Hall (McC) will enable a series of changes and reallocations, some of which should be realized during the REAB process. In fact, a design firm has been hired to reorganize space, using multiple criteria such as office needs, interrelated departments, and graduate students.

2. Will these moves and changes be temporary or permanent?

They will not be permanent; the duration of the changes will vary for individual departments. Due to space shortages in the new building, the sciences will take over most of the space in Wheatley that departments from CLA had occupied.

The Deans pushed back on the first proposals put to them. In the original criteria classroom space was the top priority, which meant that office space was decreased. In the second meeting with the Deans, cuts were made to shared spaces such as meeting and conference rooms. After this meeting, a test fit was conducted to get a better idea/representation of the consequences of the proposed redistributions. The results disturbed a number of groups. Within CLA, some departments are happy with increased or improved spaces while others are disappointed with the new allocations. Issues of departmental culture are now on the table, e.g. conference rooms versus classrooms, the grouping of offices in each department, and the collocation of certain departments.

One of the reasons the moves may not be permanent and part of the impetus for these renovations in the first place is dealing with the old science building.  This is slated to close in the next couple of years and the departments in that building need to be absorbed into McCormack and Wheatley.  If the university can hang onto the science building for a while longer and those departments don't move until GABII is completed that would give the university more options in the short term.

3. What is the timetable and where are we?

Deans are meeting for a second time. (See Question 4)

4. What role does the CLAS have in this process?

Moderator notes that the Senate would like more transparency in this process.

The Dean responds that REAB seems willing to make adjustments and listen to input. There will be a stage at which departments will be able to influence the design and layout of the spaces they will inhabit.

5. What formula is being used to decide allocation of space?

The allocations are being made according to the needs expressed by each department. Performing Arts, for example, was able to influence what sort of space they got in University Hall. There is still discussion about the scope of the project.

A Senator asks how will growth be incorporated into these plans. It is widely accepted that we will not have sufficient space for future growth.

Dean responds that we should be thinking and planning for future needs.

A Senator asks how connected are issues of classroom space versus reallocation of space in departments. Can both of these needs be addressed?

Dean notes that this is indeed a good question, adding that we don’t yet have answers related to these topics.

Regardless of what happens, the air ducts and air circulation systems will be renovated in W. and McC.

Motion to table By-Laws. Made and passed.

Motion to dismiss. Made and passed.

Adjourned 4 pm

Minutes completed by Jim Dobreff