General Faculty Council

Minutes: Wednesday, December 1, 2021
12:00 pm – 1:30 pm

In attendance: Joe Fore, Julie May, Ed Murphy, Laura Serbulea, Amanda Flora, Esperanza Gorriz, Diane Whaley, Sharon Kelley, Nathanial Ratliff, Bonnie Hagerman, Troy Dunaway, Zaida Villanueva, Tisha Hayes, Terri Yost, Meredith Hayden

GFC Chair, Joe Fore called the meeting to order.

1. Approve Minutes

Minutes for the November 3 meeting approved.

2. Announcements

3. Guest Presentation: Learning Management System Project: Brie Gertler, Judy Giering, & Dana German

Brie Gertler began the presentation on the LMS project update – to adopt one LMS system for all undergraduates at UVa. The LMS currently used by the College and Engineering is Collab which is built on a platform on Sekai – this has become outdated. The University would like to adopt one LMS so that students do not have to navigate multiple systems over different schools.

Judy Giering discussed the results of the faculty survey which was sent in Sept. 2021. They wanted to know which functions faculty use, value, which aspects they rely upon most. They asked faculty what they would like to see in a LMS as well as concerns they have (including calendars, gradebook, general management, etc.) An LMS with analytics is also of interest to see how the students are actually using the system. Another element included students in online programs and how the LMS is used via cell phones, etc.

Dana German discussed the request for information they solicited from LMS vendors so that the committee would have a better sense of what is available. It was a good introduction. They canvased higher education peers, how vendors were doing in the marketplace, and who was losing clients. They also surveyed non-course collaboration sites for committees, project teams, etc. They held multiple focus groups and were able to get into significant detail on functionality, what to discard, etc. They also talked to UVa SIS, accessibility groups, procurement teams, finance, etc. This led to a comprehensive request for information from vendors (RFI). Once the results of the RFI are received, the steering committee will discuss next steps, including demonstrations, etc. They would like to propose a vendor by the end of February. Vendors approached include Canvas, Brightspace, and others.

Questions (with answers) posed by members of GFC included:

What additional support and training be available? Will staff be added or will training be done via the vendor? They are not at the point of deciding who will provide training.

Why is this just for undergraduates? The plan that every school that enrolls undergraduates will move to the new system.

Where we are down to two choices – is Brightspace in use? McIntire uses Brightspace.

One asked about the legal and ethical issues surrounding reporting and analytical tools – and wanted to know if those ethical conversations being held that go to the heart of what we think about student reporting and data privacy? They are investigating vendor capabilities and better ways of looking at students, grading with more focus on what the LMS can do. There are concerns about internal reporting and external reporting issues.

How long are we committed to the new system? We are looking at industry leaders. They will provide many kinds of demonstrations – adaptability, support. Would defer to the Provost's office about any issues of flexibility. The process is forward-looking and evolving.

When will this be implemented? We are currently for a multi-term roll-out and planning the transition. They may be a pilot group by the Fall of 2022. How is training, implantation, and then increase the number of instructors…to a full implementation.

4. Regular Reports

A. Chair's Report

B. Communications
No report

C. UVA Diversity Council
No report

D. Mentoring Network
No report

5. New Business

A. Status of PROV-004 Review
Cautiously optimistic. *Please refer to Maite Brandt-Pierce's Proposal for PROV-004 Revisions.* Highlights: timing for review and those who do not go up for review. They are considering the promotion review and "opt-out." They will remove the "extraordinary

circumstances" language. One member is concerned about notification with regards to those on one-year contracts. Also, of concern is 1+1+1 and the lack of data. Is anyone required to re-apply for their jobs? We are trying to protect those who are not promoted. Schools have more flexibility about requirements, scholarship on the teaching track, etc.

Issues with titles – can schools require general faculty to use "General Faculty" when communicating with external use? The policy states: "Schools can definer alternative titles for external use." Our titles are meaningless at other schools and discussion commenced about various titles and expectations.

The GFC Chair encouraged everyone to attend the December 13 Town Hall with additional questions or concerns.

B. Arts & Sciences Chairs' Letter
Expresses concerns about the direction of the College including the tension between the goals and practices. There seems to be a push to replace tenure-track with general faculty, investment in graduate programs and reducing the number of programs. This doesn't make sense for a research institution.

Some believe that hiring more general faculty would diminish the quality of the University. General faculty have less autonomy – and less protection, lower salaries. Perhaps GFC can discuss this further and remind the chairs and general faculty do not diminish the quality of the University.

Meeting adjourned at 1:31 pm

Next meeting: January 5, 2022 - 12 – 1:30, Zoom Meeting