**CLA Senate Meeting Minutes: Monday, May 14, 2018**

**1. Approval of Agenda**

Agenda approved unanimously at 2:31 PM.

**2. Approval of the minutes from April 2018**

Approved unanimously at 2:31 PM.

**3. Dean’s Report**

Before the Dean arrived, Moderator passed around a list of committee members for review, noting that we still need two more Senators for the Executive Committee. Moderator then raised the question of how to handle the at-large Senate seats. Our constitution gives us four, including two TT and two NTT. The two incumbent TT at-large Senators will stay on for AY 2018/19. There are three NTT faculty interested in serving. Motion to approve adding additional at-large senators; unanimously approved

Motion to constitute committees, as they currently stand, contingent on replacing two Senators whose terms are ending. Approved unanimously at 2:39 pm.

The Dean reported on the State Senate audit oversight committee hearing of the previous week, which he was invited to attend. In his remarks on the Mt. Ida deal, he focused on UMB’s infrastructure challenges, arguing that if we think of UMass as a system, and UMass Amherst’s purchase of Mt. Ida as an investment in the system’s infrastructure, the “total unfairness and irrationality” of UMB having to bear the burden for an old debt we have nothing to do with becomes very clear.

Regarding the Chancellor search, all UMB Deans met for 90 minutes with UMass President Marty Meehan on May 10 and had a good discussion, although the “real takeaway” of the meeting was not clear. The Dean reported that Mr. Meehan described the selection of UMB’s new Chancellor as one of his most important decisions, and urged faculty to be very involved in vetting candidates, e.g. by taking advantage of open meetings with finalists. Search committee faculty member Jane Adams said that the committee had all the information they needed after intensive interviews with the finalists, and thought all three should be “given a chance.”

The Dean said that he had been optimistic about the fiscal year budget, until last week he received a “disturbing” email from Tom Miller saying that with all the new initiatives proposed, they ended up with $23.5 million more requested than they had anticipated. (This total does not include the amount spent on the new dorms). The budget will be helped by what looks like a 10-15% increase in new students next year, but the Dean wonders whether that gain will be counteracted by the decrease in grad student funding, which could make it difficult to offer some undergrad courses. In other words, he is now more nervous about the budget than he had previously been, but he’s not sure whether his concerns are legitimate.

The Dean said he is “ecstatic” about the quality of the finalists for the two Africana Studies positions, and about the mostly unified sense on the search committee of which candidates they will pursue. He is confident that we can’t lose no matter which finalists we end up with. He is optimistic that the department will thrive and show more willingness to collaborate with other units.

The Dean thanks Senators for their hard work this year, because faculty governance is vital. He really appreciates our efforts and the high volume of work output (e.g. the number of new courses approved).

Senator asks about department requests for hiring. The Dean responded that he has “no clue yet” despite the promised May 1 deadline for this decision. He believes this matter is tied up with FY2019 budget discussions, so there may not be full certainty yet. He suggests that we may know by June 1, which is still better than early August, the past standard.

Senator asks whether the meeting with President Meehan resulted in any concrete actions. The Dean says no, beyond the President’s admission that the Mt. Ida purchase was “handled poorly.” The Deans suggested that a UMass system-wide committee be formed to deal with Mt. Ida, and that there should be a system-wide analysis of any future property acquisition. But the Dean describes the President’s position as “well, we’re administrators, we have no resources to do anything about” the Mt. Ida acquisition. The Dean hopes that the upcoming Wednesday hearing will be more productive, since they are feeling great pressure from UMB alums and others. Senator asks whether someone at that hearing will talk about the unfairness of making future students bear the brunt of these decisions. The Dean says yes.

Senator asks if, given what she has heard about faculty reservations regarding the three Chancellor finalists, there is a chance of a failed search? The Dean says he has had signals from the Interim Chancellor that this is a possibility. Also, with President Meehan’s repeated statements about the importance of faculty involvement in the search, if the faculty rejected all three candidates he would have a hard time hiring one of them (though that doesn’t mean he won’t).

Moderator states that President Meehan’s announcement of the finalists was misleading when it highlighted “faculty involvement,” since the search committee has only two faculty representatives. The Dean acknowledged that the finalists “are not the group I was hoping to see.” Moderator asks whether there is any chance that the Interim Chancellor will stay on longer. The Dean doesn’t know.

Senator asks how faculty responses to the candidates will be gathered. The Dean said this is a good question and he does not know. However, with the speed of the process so far it doesn’t seem likely that this will happen. He suggests that the faculty could do something independently, e.g. write a letter expressing their sentiments about the finalists.

Moderator notes the good news that the computer replacement program has been revived.

Dean’s Report ends 2:58 PM.

**4. Moderator’s Report**

Moderator asks Senator to present her department’s statement in response to new protocols for using comparative student evaluation data for tenure review. Senator reports that Provost describes this as a “request,” not required. Her department shared research showing the impact of gender bias and students’ grade expectations (rather than teaching effectiveness) on survey responses. Provost argued that they still need this data to respond to challenges to tenure decisions. The department pushed back, suggesting they use something else. Provost seemed somewhat responsive, but stated that it is just a “metric of convenience.” Moderator noted that tenure candidates are already being held up, so clearly the data are being used.

Senator stated that her department was upset because one of their candidates was held up despite having filled all requirements, and the Provost said she knew that this person was a good teacher. Senator added that one problem is that information is funneled through other channels, instead of coming directly from the Provost. Moderator suggested that we should ask the administration to put in writing that this is a request rather than a requirement. Senator notes that his department has a case in fall 2018 for which they have already been asked to prepare comparative data, even though it’s not in the table of contents for the tenure file. The department feels strongly that they do not want to do this.

Moderator asks what the Senate should do to prevent another round of negotiation in the fall, e.g. work with FSU? Senator states that in a way it’s a workload issue for the administration. They have access to all student evaluations, so they could just hire someone to analyze the data for them, but they don’t want to do this. FSU has said that faculty also have the right not to see this data, and it needs to be stressed that departments have autonomy on this issue. Senator notes that FSU efforts have helped, but there is still evidence of pressure on departments to provide this data. Perhaps the Senate should write a letter to the CPC directly about this? Moderator offered to share report by Senator’s department about evaluation data and perhaps include this issue on the fall Senate agenda. Senator adds that several chairs have signed a statement opposing this idea, so there is more going on.

Moderator’s report ended 3:04 PM.

**5. Motion from the Academic Affairs Committee to approve the following NEW courses:**

* HIST 150:
* HIST 347: Approved unanimously as a block

Discussion of new course approvals ends 3:08 PM

**6. Motion from the Academic Affairs Committee to approve the following changes to existing courses:**

* HumCtr 230: Approved unanimously
* Theatre 300L: Approved unanimously

Discussion of changes to existing courses ends 3:09 PM.

**7. Motion from Majors, Honors, and Special Programs to approve the following changes:**

* Changes to the IR Major and Minor

Senator explains that changes were made to remove bottlenecks that slowed degree completion. For the major it is a small change, but it is important because previously students had to choose designated IR electives when they were already in the IR major and the department can’t always offer IR electives at the same time. They now can use electives from other fields (e.g. Comparative Politics). For the minor, they have courses for the capstone, but they can’t both be offered in both fall and spring. With this change, students can now take one or the other and finish quickly.

Approved unanimously.

* Closing a program in LAIS

Approved unanimously.

* Changes to Economics Major

Senator explains that these are small and superficial changes. Not many students take courses Pass/Fail but they wanted to limit this to two courses. Before, students could test out of the Pre-Calc prerequisite. Now, major requirements state that they have to take a proctored test, which is better.

Approved unanimously.

* Changes to Italian Major and Minor

Senator explains that the Italian major and minor have not been updated since their creation, and now they only have 1.5 faculty and the field has changed a great deal. Department is suggesting more flexible requirements while still paying attention to rigor.

Approved unanimously.

Discussion of changes to Majors, Honors, and Special Programs ends 3:15 PM.

**7. Diversity language in course titles (response to Diversity directives)**

Moderator reminded Senators of the background for this discussion, involving the elaborate rationale required of faculty applying for Diversity. The concern relates to the Diversity Committee’s effort to foreground courses that count for Diversity in WISER. Moderator says that we have suggested a review of courses every 5 years to allay these concerns. Senator states that she has had a similar problem when applying for Social & Behavioral Science distribution. She was asked to put her One form language in the course syllabus. Moderator asks whether the Senate should broaden the language of our position so that it is not only about Diversity. Senator suggests that we could invite Neil Bruss (or current head of Diversity Committee) to talk with the Senate. Moderator agrees that this could be a good idea.

Senator counters that it might be better to respond only to Diversity because so far they are the only group to explicitly issue this directive. An alternate proposal would be to invite the Diversity person to talk to us and then we can mention in that discussion that the same problem is occurring elsewhere. Senator notes that the committee’s concern has to do with the preservation of diversity content if instructors of a particular course change. But this monitoring should be done at the department level. Senator disagrees, stating that once a course has a Gen Ed requirement attached, all instructors are obligated to follow through in their course syllabus.

Moderator says that our suggested 5-year review process could catch these things. She likes the idea of inviting Neil Bruss and/or Tim Sieber to talk to the Senate and will respond to the Diversity Committee with an invitation for September 2018.

Motion to send to invitation to Neil Bruss and Tim Sieber, approved unanimously 3:29 PM.

**8) Curricular Concerns Committee Presentation of Data on Pre-requisites**

Senator presents data on all CLA courses for the last five years (fall 2013 to spring 2018), noting that data for summer and winter courses (and independent study courses) were not included because they don’t significantly affect the outcome. Senator presents slides showing trends for 100-400 level courses, comparing number of courses with and without prerequisites, and enrollment with and without prereqs. 200-level courses show an uptick for both. For 300 and 400 courses, data show that there were more courses offered with prereqs and more students taking courses with prereqs than without. However, across CLA, at the 300 level, 35% of students took courses without prereqs in this period; at the 400 level, that number is 25-30%. So the real issue is whether we should be concerned about this trend. The graphs show a big dropoff in 400-level enrollments: from spring 2014 to spring 2015, 800 fewer students took courses without prereqs. He also has data for the number of courses canceled because of low enrollments. Overall, that data do not show a relationship between enrollment and prereqs. Results for 100- and 200-level courses are exactly as expected, while, surprisingly, 300- and 400-leve results do not show a clear correlation.

The next step was analyzing course cancellation trends, which was more difficult. We can’t know the number of students enrolled in courses that are canceled, or the reason for canceling particular courses. We do know that the Provost’s office would use a cutoff point of 2 weeks before the semester starts. The Senator looked at the dates of course cancelations and found a large drop-off in the number of cancelations after the 2-week cutoff point, indicating that cancelations during this period were likely due to enrollment pressures.

Senator adds that online and Copley courses were not included in his analysis. He presents tables showing the number of courses canceled by department and by semester; enrollment by department/program for 9 courses with more than 1,000 students; number of independent study courses from fall 2013 to spring 2018. The latter shows some increase but not a substantial one, so we can’t conclusively attribute the drop in other enrollments to students running away from regular courses to independent studies because of prereqs.

Senator summarizes the main takeways of the data analysis. We are not seeing dramatic change either way, in the number of 300/400 courses offered with or without prereqs—this is mostly staying the same. The Registrar can’t get data for new courses to show whether there is a change in the number with/without prereqs. Basically, while the data do not show a correlation between enrollment and prereqs, this finding will not likely be enough to allay concern in departments who are worried that adding prereqs will harm enrollments. There may be a way to check with students in existing 300/400 courses to see whether they’ve taken courses that could have (or could) serve as prereqs for those courses.

The Moderator thanks the Senator for this work and would like to decide the next steps. Moderator asks whether the data support our sense that the use of prereqs is diminishing. Senator responds that the data aren’t that clear. Moderator asks whether, in that case, our work is done and we should now write up recommendations for the Dean. Senator responds that there is more to be done, for example if we can determine whether students are already taking prereq-deserving courses. But this varies by department, with Economics for example already very rigorous in prereq use, so unlikely to be affected either way.

Moderator asks whether we should empower the Curricular Concerns Committee to draft recommendations to the Dean based on our position about the use of prereqs to ensure curricular integrity. Senator argues that this is not worth doing, as it would be a non-starter for certain departments, e.g. Asian Studies. Senator adds that perhaps then the issue deserves further study. Several senators debate the question of whether more time should be devoted to discussion of this issue.

Motion to adjourn, approved unanimously 4:15 PM.