2009 Provost's Council 16 November
by California Baptist University
Meeting Minutes

Members Present
Anthony Donaldson, Steve Emerson, DawnEllen Jacobs, James Lu, Tracy Ward, Andy Herrity, Bruce Stokes, Jonathan Parker, Susan Studer, Mary Crist, Art Cleveland, Gary Bonner, Dan Wilson, Connie Milton

Absent: Mary Crist

Discussion and Action Items

• The Council reviewed minutes of the 26 October 2009. The minutes were approved by consensus as amended to reflect Scott Key rather than Jim Buchholz as the Chair of the Faculty Tenure and Promotion Committee.
  o Jonathan Parker surveyed deans for promotion and tenure candidates.

• Jonathan Parker reviewed Executive Council meeting minutes from 15 October.
  o Discussed master template for agency partnerships
  o Reviewed athletics fundraising materials
  o Approved MSAT fees increase. Submit to Board of Trustees.
  o Selected employees of month for November and December
  o Discussed agency discounts for outside groups
  o Discussed tuition discounts for international graduate students
  o Discussed book store charges
  o Approved a proposal for continuing wireless deployment across campus
  o Discussed Disability Studies Master’s Program

• Jonathan Parker updated deans on faculty searches.
  o Dr. Parker has received requests and position descriptions from most deans.
• Ads will be placed in the Chronicle of Higher, on the CCCU website, the IABCU web site, higheredjobs.com. Deans may, if they wish, utilize discipline specific sources with funds from their cost centers.

• Tracy Ward reported on freshman student retention.
  
  • Retention of first time freshmen from their freshman to sophomore year has dropped in the past two years from 82% in 2007 to 74% in 2008 and now 70% in 2009. Ms. Ward gave deans a handout of the retention data by school or department and by major. Deans were encouraged to take the information to their faculty to generate ideas for ways to be more proactive in retaining students.

  • From fall 2008 to fall 2009, 130 did not return. Of these 44 made their decision based strictly on finances (GPA and academic performances were strong and there were no behavior issues in this group). About 40 of the decisions were influenced by academic factors, but may have been impacted by financial considerations as well. Further inquiries will be made on this.

  • Deans discussed anecdotal evidence that students may be turned off by questionable activity along Adams and Magnolia. Parents have expressed concern.

  • Freshmen tend to take mostly GE classes. It is very important that full time faculty be regularly involved in teaching GE classes within their major areas. Deans discussed the need to pull them in and connect them to the major earlier, involve them beyond courses. Suggestions included sending a letter of acceptance into the major, holding informational meetings or utilizing 101 Introduction to the Discipline-type classes. Structuring GE sections for cohorts within a major and linking a major course to that GE course was discussed as a way to create learning communities. Students have responded positively to the professional interview assignment required in ENG 123.

  • Deans asked to get the names of dropped students so that they can contact them. It was suggested that deans focus on current freshman who fail to register for 2010 Spring classes rather than trying to contact those who did not return for Fall 2009. This may be another avenue through which to determine which students may be struggling, especially financially, and intervene. Ms Ward will send deans a list of their first time freshmen.

  • Steven Nielsen is capturing data from students who did not register for Spring 2009 and Fall 2009. No pattern apart from financial and academic concerns was discernable.
• ARC data indicates that the retention rate was 75% among those students who utilized the ARC. This rate is higher than among students who did not make use of the ARC’s services.

• Tracy Ward updated deans on progress implementing electronic SIMs.
  o Most department secretaries are currently testing it.
  o By the beginning of December, a determination will be made about a staggered Spring roll-out.
  o The new system will require deans’ electronic signatures that will need to be timed differently than is currently the general practice. Otherwise, the system is fairly intuitive and operates much like the old absence request system.

• Susan Studer gave an update from Faculty Senate.
  o Senate sent a letter to the President requesting that the decision to forego Christmas lights be reconsidered.
  o Senate also sent a letter asking the President to consider reinstating the retirement matching funds.

• Other business raised by the deans included the following
  o Conflicts with performance groups’ rehearsal schedules and the need for students to make hard decisions among increasingly demanding activities and majors. While every effort is made to avoid conflicts, they are inevitable. Additional classroom space would alleviate some of the issue, but not all. Students need to be trained to talk through and understand their options for multiple obligations.

  o Problems arising from late hours for tech week on the current play. Deans were reminded that there is a mechanism for identifying students who are at risk academically.

  o Deans raised concerns about students who asked to take finals early because they had purchased plane tickets home for the holidays, some leaving as early as December 2. While faculty have freedom to address the issue as they deem appropriate, those who accommodate may risk setting a precedent for repeated behavior.

The meeting adjourned at 9:55am.