

University Committee Agenda
Wednesday March 8th, 2023
3:00 – 5:00 PM via Microsoft Teams

Minutes – Patricia Terry

1. Approve minutes from March 1, 2023 (Klemp)
2. Provost update? (Kate Burns)
3. SOFAS changes
4. Committee voting options; committee changes; senator responsibilities
5. Probationary students in online classes
6. Other

Minutes:

Present: Devin Bickner, Aaron Weinschenk, Joan Groessler, Mark Klemp, Clif Ganyard, Patricia Terry, Christine Vandenhouten, Steve Meyer, Laura Nolan, Lea Truttman, Ka Yang, Harrison Thiry

1. Minutes from 3-1-2023 were approved.
2. Changes to the SOFAS position description that were submitted by the Provost were discussed. S. Meyer reported on his meeting with the Provost and Associate Provost that he was asked many questions about the specific job requirements. To quote Steve, "It was an interesting, strange discussion." Devin reported on his conversation with Kate. A discussion followed with some conjecture on confusing or still un-edited portions. UC members remain steadfast that SOFAS should be a faculty member and the university is spending a lot of time on very small changes that will not benefit the university. Devin shared that the Provost is willing to meet with the faculty again.
3. Probationary students in on-line classes – the UC was asked to consider a proposal by a faculty member that students on probation not be allowed to enroll in on-line classes because they have a higher risk of failure in an on-line setting. UC members discussed ethical and logistical problems associated with limiting any group's access to classes, even though the issue of student success was well understood. It was agreed that UWGB needs more support for student success. Joan provided some updates on how probation is handled and mentioned that mental health is an issue of concern for many students on probation. Concerns with our current advising model and faculty feeling disconnected with students – especially as more on-line education is promoted were discussed along with the difference between students with mental health issues or underprepared students versus students who simply chose not to put forth any effort. Harrison Thiry provided the student perspective, especially some general mental health numbers. As a solution, Clif advised that there be a conversation (not necessarily by the UC) about what activities different areas of campus are doing to improve student success and how those could be improved.

4. Kate Burns joined the meeting and gave some enrollment updates. She put on our radar that UW System is modifying some processes for new program development, such as timing of NOIs communicated to other institutions. UW System is looking to shorten the RAI document and make more explicit a codified process for handling/mediating objections. The goal is to make the process faster. UWGB (Provost's office) will need to line up UWGB processes with System ones.

She then opened the floor for questions. There were questions and information sharing about UWGB's new program development processes and working within System

Kate brought up her up-dated SOFAS position description, particularly what should be faculty versus staff. There were questions about how faculty-staff responsibilities would be divided with Kate providing some clarification. Specific clarification was asked about the Instructional Academic Staff in #15 the ombudsperson, which Kate answered, while admitting she has not completely thought things through. Joan requested that #6, #7, and #9 in the position description be kept as faculty SOFAS roles or at least shared. More questions about maintaining the physical office, compensation, and assigning responsibilities not included in the position description list, but performed by SOFAS, were asked and mostly answered. Kate sees compensation for the faculty SOFAS role as being less than the current in terms of course reassignment and summer pay. Concern was shared that wording in the position description could be changed to reflect a more active role than support role. Kate shared that she is using the old position description and can reconsider wording. Harrison Thiry shared from the student perspective that proposed changes will not impact the student experience, even though student:faculty ratio was given as one reason for the re-organization. The compensation issue was passionately discussed. Kate will work on an updated version of the position description before our next UC meeting in 2 weeks.

After Kate left, conversation continued briefly.

Going back to the discussion on probationary students and on-line classes, it was suggested that we request more information for students who are on probation and what course modality they take. Before we send Sam S. a request for data, we will clarify via email the exact questions that we want to ask. With the right data, we might be able to suggest pro-active changes.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia Terry