

## **UFAC**

### **Notes from our meeting on November 12, 2001**

#### **Consulting Firm:**

The President and Provost's mention of bringing in a consultant to study where we could squeeze resources to create new programs has created a stir. The consulting team being considered is the same one that worked with University of Hartford to make recommendations to revise their programming.

In light of this announcement, Keith presented the parts of the Faculty Handbook that delineate the role of the committee in cases of termination of faculty and programs for "reasons of financial exigency" (section 4.1.1) and "for reasons of enhancing the educational mission" (section 4.1.2). The committee's role, as defined in section 4.1.2, is disconcertingly vague.

Committee members raised concerns about becoming market driven, and abandoning the traditional Liberal arts and Sciences core of our programming, given that most new programs recently discussed seem focused on technical specialty areas (e.g. GIS & BSN).

While there is an acknowledged need for academic planning and enhanced coordination between the Colleges, particularly on interdisciplinary programming (see recent decision by the CAS Curriculum committee), there is concern about "outsiders" making these decisions for us.

Evidence for the marketability of our current graduates is needed, but the feeling is that our students are very marketable, and that we need to maintain our primary focus on the liberal arts and sciences.

What's missing at the moment is clarifying to faculty why we need to hire the consulting firm! This lack of information is seen as another example of the current administration not communicating with faculty with respect. Such decisions appear unilateral without engaging the faculty - particularly from the Provosts office. Committee members - reflecting concerns expressed by others - worry that the Provost doesn't have to live with the results of the changes he introduces. It appears that there is a great deal of anxiety/anger, and a prevalent feeling that administration doesn't understand what the college is about. Question was raised

about why the Provost needs a consultant. Specifically, isn't he the consultant?

**Other issues discussed:**

Our teaching evaluation presentation to UFC. Some discussion focused on concern about the details of our report, but we really only emphasized what is in the existing handbook. We can do the Student Course Reaction Questionnaire, but think this is a college level issue. We don't think it's a UFAC issue.

Scheduling APR in COE. By bringing this issue to us, faculty jumped over the Department chairs, and the college's FAC. The concerns have been discussed with, and returned to, the COE FAC and Department Chairs.

Summer school: UFAC has received lots of emails about summer school salaries. Three key issues were raised and discussed:

1. Contract let at the end of the first week. You will not know what your contract is until you've completed a week. Historically, the prorate was always before you started teaching classes. The Provost reported being tired of hearing about faculty coercing students to enroll then drop at the end of the first week. The question from the committee is where is the evidence? And if some faculty have, in fact, been encouraging such practices, shouldn't those individuals be singled out, instead of introducing some procedure that impacts all faculty teaching summer school. Cap should be on the number of classes that students can sign-up for each term of summer school, eliminating students from signing up for more classes than they can actually take.
2. May 1st cut off. Students don't always know if they passed the prerequisite, so some folks have not made decisions yet. This date typically falls in the middle of the week of finals.
3. Salary cap - some handful of faculty do make over the cap. But what if they are major summer school income generators.

Add to all of the above:

- No raise in faculty salary.
- Sense that the risk is not shared.
- Possible impact on students graduating on time, etc.
- Summer graduate programs made a lot of money. High graduate drops in enrollment. Give students the opportunity to plan.

The questions remaining at the end of this discussion were:

1. How angry is the faculty?
2. What is the committee's specific role in these issues?
  - a. Only conclusion regarding our current responsibilities was to communicate the concerns to the administration, and try to open a dialogue with the faculty as a whole.
  - b. This action was subsequently deemed unnecessary due to the President's e-mail and the UFC's call for a Faculty Forum the day after our meeting. It appears that the President is already aware of the concerns and UFC has taken action to call the faculty together to discuss these concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

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Secretary,  
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