**University of Baltimore – University Faculty Senate**

Meeting Minutes: 05 December 2012

Attendance:

**Senators:** Dan Gerlowski (MSB / UFS President); Julie Simon (CAS); Christine Spencer (CPA / UFS Vice President); John Callahan (CUSF rep); Jose Anderson (Law); JC Weiss (MSB); Dennis Pitta (MSB); Catherine Johnson (Library/ UFS Secretary); Stanley Kemp (CAS); Betsy Yarrison (CAS); Dick Bucher (Adjunct); George Julnes (CPA); Stephanie Gibson (CUSF)

The meeting was called to order at 12:06 p.m. by UFS president Dan Gerlowski.

November minutes were **approved unanimously**.

The agenda was **approved** **unanimously**.

The President reported on the system budget and updated the body on matters relevant to shared governance including security. He noted that the new plan for shared governance at the university is off to a good start.

The Provost reported on the middle states report and noted that a more robust report will follow in January. He noted that the academic plan should be circulating through the schools and libraries, that the CELTT event and CAS Symposium that took place since the last senate meeting were well attended. The Provost reported that there is an exploration of how we can expand opportunities for undergraduate research. Anyone with input or ideas about undergraduate research should contact the chair of the Council on Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity, Jeffrey Ross. The Provost also shared information about academic transformation/innovation, online course offerings and the forthcoming MOOC.

Michael Driscoll, University Registrar reported on the progress of the e-catalog, the PeopleSoft advising module and centralized room scheduling.

John Goshert, Director of Writing shared lessons learned from the UB21 writing report and shared some of his ideas for change and offered a few details about current writing initiatives on campus. For a more detailed report of Goshert’s comments to the senate, please see his informal talking notes included at the end of the minutes.

Senators raised concerns about how we will keep track of the progress and changes that take place as a result of these new curricular initiatives. It was suggested that a UFS special taskforce could serve as a body to track and coordinate the changes in curriculum and report back to the Senate. Senators suggested that the Associate Provost, a member of the chair’s council and other parties with varying levels of responsibility sit on this body and that this special taskforce could share information with groups on campus outside of the Senate. It was moved that we approve in principle the creation of a Transformative Learning Oversight Coordination Committee. This motion was **unanimously approved**.

The constitution has been available for faculty vote for quite some time but to date, only 70 senators have voted. Nine of those votes came from current senators. While the response has been generally positive, approval of the new constitution requires participation from at least 50% of the faculty. The deadline for voting was extended to January 31, 2013.

The senate is appreciative of faculty and senators for helping to make campus security a campus-wide conversation.

Stephanie Gibson, CUSF Representative, will conclude her long service to that body at the end of this academic year. She encouraged interested parties to get involved with CUSF and noted that there is a CUSF meeting at UB on Monday, December 10 at 9:30am.

The Academic Policy Committee has prepared a written report. That report will be distributed to the Senate electronically by its chair, Betsy Yarrison after the committee has approved the report.

A MS in Forensic Science – High Technology Crime, a collaboration between the business school, criminal justice and health and human services was proposed to the Senate. Senator Gerlowski from the business school clarified that MSB will not commit to offering courses at Shady Grove and page 8 of the proposal should reflect that Phil Korb will staff the listed accounting courses but will not teach them as the document implies. The program was **approved** with the accepted changes from Senator Gerlowski.

The Tenure Track Faculty Appointment Contracts, Promotion and Tenure Process, Engaged Retirement and Emeritus Status of Library Faculty documents brought forth from the Work Life Committee were all **unanimously approved** by the Senate.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:58pm.

Presentation Outline: Report to the Faculty Senate

December 5, 2012

John Goshert, Director of Writing

***This set of talking notes was provided to the UFS Executive Committee as a characterization of John Goshert’s comments to the UFS on December 5, 2012. The UFS President reviewed the notes and found them suitable for inclusion in the meeting minutes.***

**Introduction**

Dan Gerlowski asked me to visit the Faculty Senate with a brief report on my first semester at UB. I split my talk into the following sections: overview of my observations and experiences, response to the UB21 Writing Group report of September 2012, general ideas for change, and some of my current projects. My hope is that with these and similar reports, I can keep the faculty community apprised of the state of student writing at UB and the initiatives that will help students improve as writers.

**Observations and Experiences**

1. There is a strong institutional commitment to embedding writing in the entire university experience. This means strengthening and effectively integrating writing courses, promoting a university commitment to writing across the curriculum, and supporting the development of writing intensive courses appropriate to campus departments and colleges.
2. There is a desire across campus for more effective communication of writing goals and values to students, writing instructors, division leaders, and university administrators. By pursuing campus writing initiatives as a collective endeavor, we can reduce disparity among writing sections and repair atomization of the instructor community; improve students’ understanding of the value of college writing; and more effectively articulate and sequence the writing experience at UB.
3. The September 2012 UB 21 Writing Group Report provides an important foundation and the necessary momentum for the kinds of program and course assessments that can productively guide curriculum design and improve student writing.

**UB 21 Writing Group Report**

What it does

1. Provides substantial statistical/demographic information: there are identifiable rates of success/failure, patterns of persistence/attrition, etc. associated with writing courses.
2. Demonstrates the importance of purposeful (rather than casual) sequencing of student progress: the more purposefully students progress through the writing sequence the more likely they are to succeed and persist in their progress to a degree.
3. Demonstrates importance of strong advising culture that can guide student progress in effective and meaningful ways: students benefit from an institutional culture that supports deliberate and sequential progress toward a degree (or other goal).
4. Emphasizes the importance of interdivisional communication: writing faculty and division leaders need to be aware of prerequisite and corequisite courses to impart a sense of coherence and purpose to students.

Steps it recommends/suggests

1. Delve into student writing products to understand curricular strengths/weaknesses: a review of culminating projects in WRIT 300 courses will provide a baseline understanding of the outcomes produced by the current writing course sequence and guide purposeful curriculum redesign.
2. Increase communication among instructors about assignments, outcomes, etc.: writing instructors need to have opportunities to communicate with each other and the Director of Writing about assignments, pedagogy, and outcomes, both within individual courses and across the sequence. Improved communication fosters a sense of collective endeavor among instructors which is passed on to students through a more coherent and purposeful writing experience, producing in turn higher student commitment to courses, and stronger writing skills and products.
3. Improve articulation and sequencing of courses: each developmental and college writing course must be internally coherent, with a sequence of assignments that builds student skills incrementally and recursively. The courses must also scaffold together so that with each successive course students have opportunities to increase writing skills and intellectual sophistication (research and argumentation, citation and documentation, grammar and mechanics, design and application, etc.) through experiences and expectations that are recursive rather than repetitive.

**Ideas for Change**

1. House writing courses/programs under one roof: remedy DVRW/WRIT disarticulation and provide a single point of contact for the university community to talk about writing and plan initiatives.
2. Develop policy and advising culture that ensures early and consecutive completion of writing courses: design distribution documents, transfer agreements, articulation of courses with pre and co-requisites to encourage sequential writing experience that effectively prepares students for progress to a degree. Consider adopting some emerging national initiatives (such as structured enrollment), with sufficient preparation to avoid bottlenecking or other negative impacts of restructuring requirements.
3. Emphasize the correlation between purposefully sequenced programs and improved student retention and success.
4. Continue to implement key recommendations of the November 2011 UB Writing Group Report to sustain and support writing initiatives. Hire non-tenure line full time instructional faculty and associate writing program coordinators (post-doc or visiting assistant professor) to anticipate and respond to growing student population and provide adequate administrative support to an integrated writing program consisting of developmental writing, college writing, writing across the curriculum, writing intensive courses, interdivisional and interinstitutional communication, etc.. Improve the ratio of full time to adjunct instructors, and increase adjunct compensation at least to regional and peer institution parity to improve instructor retention and commitment to the program.

**Current Initiatives: Points of Institutional Contact**

1. Beginning in fall 2012, develop a communication network of division faculty, deans, Gen Ed Committee, Library faculty and staff, Provost’s office, CELTT, etc.
2. Beginning in fall 2012, prevent disarticulation of writing experiences by beginning curriculum redesign and working toward a clear sequence of scaffolded courses. Start with WRIT 300 pilot in spring 2013 and plan to work our way through the program.
3. Beginning in fall 2012, work with HR to improve instructor hiring practices with a formal application, screening, and interview process.
4. In addition to individual instructor support, build an instructional community through monthly adjunct meetings to informally increase articulation of assignments, outcomes and expectations. Meetings have been held in November and December 2012 and well attended. In order to become a fully integrated part of adjunct work in the program, these meetings should be compensated at a reasonable hourly rate.
5. Develop graduate student instructor program for UB’s MFA students, and perhaps grad students in other programs as appropriate. Piloting in spring 2013 with two instructors teaching two sections of WRIT 101 each, this program will take advantage of graduate students’ embedded institutional commitment and active interest in professionalization. Orientation and pedagogical support for MFA student instructors will ensure that WRIT courses are not taught as literature and/or creative writing courses.
6. Perform a baseline assessment of student writing. A UB 21 Catalyst grant is currently under consideration to fund collection and review of culminating projects from WRIT 300 courses during summer 2013. This baseline assessment will provide the foundation for ongoing program review. By understanding current outcomes of the writing sequence, curriculum revisions can be made purposefully.
7. Communicate effective writing practices to the campus community. Activities include co-facilitating the summer faculty writing seminar in August 2012 and presenting at the CELTT Teaching and Learning Day in November 2012.