Notes from Department Chairs Meeting, September 4, 2007

The Associate Dean, Dean, Department Chairs, and the Director of Resource Management met from 10:00 AM–noon.

James Tarbox, Christine Schurkus, and Cheryl Rietz joined us from Career Services. Christine is the new CBA liaison. Cheryl works on a program with disabled students to set career goals.

As of the morning of the meeting, we were at 3080 FTEs, well above the college target of 2830. The major increase of FTEs has been at the 200 level courses. In Fall 2006, there were approximately 250 more pre-Business freshmen than in Fall 2005, and this translates to approximately 200 more pre-Business sophomores this fall. We cannot account for why we had a demand for 400 additional seats in ACCT 201 (rather than 200), but there is a concern about the impact of this on our upper division declarants a year from now. Jim, Kathy Krentler, and Sandi Williams are going to meet to discuss possible solutions to control our numbers of upper division declarants, and Jim and Gail will dialog with Ethan Singer and Sandra Cook to explore options.

This will also create an effect on the pre-business courses for Spring 2008. Jim has been working with Kelly and the chairs to estimate the necessary additional seats. We have used almost all of our allocated room space.

The chairs as a group are concerned about crashing and the amount of faculty time (and their time) that is spent talking with students who want to get into specific sections. Some faculty have sought technical solutions to remedy some of the problems associated with the crashing system at SDSU. IDS 290 uses an online crash system in which students go to a website to give the relevant personal data and preferences as to which sections they wish to enroll. Accounting 201 used Survey Monkey to create their crash lists this semester.

A year ago, Jim had a graduate student working on developing a database system for the entire college, in which students could post their information [units completed, major, filed for graduation, which section(s) they wanted, etc.] and faculty could then download the information from each course. However, the student did not complete the project. When Jim found out the Associated Students (AS) and Enrollment Services were working on a system for the entire campus, he was able to work with the AS President to provide his input so that the CBA needs would be met. Bruce just recently learned that university-level efforts to build an online crashing system have been abandoned. He is currently looking for a student who could build an online crashing system as an independent study project. If a prototype was successful for one of the departments, it could then be expanded to the entire college. Faculty could choose to opt out of the system, but those that wish to use it could instruct students to register on the system. The chairs agreed that a one-stop online crashing system could reduce the amount of instructor and class time that is lost each semester to the archaic crashing system currently in use at SDSU.
Related to our enrollment issues is a record number of ALI “Semester at SDSU” students who wish to enroll in CBA classes. Jim has had multiple conversations with Kristin Miller from ALI, who heads up this program indicating that there was a shortage of available seats in most of the classes, and provided advice as to what courses might be available. He also emphasized to Kristin that the students should sign crash lists but should not bother faculty. However, some of these students have apparently been overaggressive in their efforts to get into some of these classes. While it is too late to do anything this semester, Jim, Kathy, and Sandi are going to meet with Kristin and her staff to see if things can be worked out for future semesters.

The chairs suggested that if we can develop the crashing system described earlier, that these students should register their desired courses on the system. But, the aggressive behavior towards faculty must stop.

Gail and Jim asked Bruce to share with the chairs his building of the IDS alumni database and IDS alumni newsletter. Bruce decided he needed to be able to communicate with his alumni, and the university alumni database is not directly accessible by the chairs nor does it contain reliable alumni information that is separated by degree earned. Last Spring, Bruce set up an alumni registration link at the IDS home page, and so far, over 300 alumni have registered. Bruce stated that he currently has a student building the system from scratch on a Rohan account using MySQL and offered to share the technology for the development of alumni registration database with the other chairs, once the system is rebuilt (he is converting software platforms). The chairs agreed that alumni data is useful and that the university system is inadequate to meet our needs.

Bruce distributed a 12-page newsletter which highlights activities of the IDS department during the past year, a featured alumni section, and articles on several faculty, the IDS outstanding student from 2006-07, and the Aztec Business Alliance. The newsletter will be sent to all alumni registered in the IDS alumni database and is available online via <http://www.sdsu.edu/ids>www.sdsu.edu/ids.

The agenda for the CSU Trustees meeting will be posted on Friday, September 7, which will include the proposal for the graduate fee. If the fee makes it through the meeting, the chairs discussed taking an active role in developing the criteria for distribution of faculty grants which will be made available from the monies that are collected from the fee.