Notes from Department Chairs Meeting, March 17, 2009

The Associate Dean, Dean, Department Chairs, and the Director of Resource Management met from 10 AM-noon in the Dean's Conference Room. Kathy Krentler attended as a guest for the first hour.

Josh Lyon (ABSC) was invited to the meeting. Josh is leading a student initiative to put in an undergraduate excellence fee. Cal Poly SLO has a fee. Josh and some of the student leaders thought that an excellence fee could help the CBA in areas in which resources are either not currently available or fall short. We discussed how this might be able to come about, and there are several steps, which would include a student vote and approval by both the President and the Chancellor. We encouraged him to identify the issues of greatest concern to the students, seek advice from stakeholders at Cal Poly SLO, and investigate whether President Weber would support such an initiative before too much work is done. The chairs, Gail, and Jim had some suggestions for possible strategies to make this successful, and Jim volunteered to meet with Josh and his committee to help with any necessary details from the CBA's side. Josh said he would talk with each of the chairs on their views as to uses for such a fee. The chairs thanked Josh for his initiative.

Kathy Krentler also has been involved with this proposal and came for this part of the meeting. After this discussion, as part of a larger discussion on the importance of AACSB reaccreditation, we continued a discussion with Kathy on how we could get faculty support for AACSB-required assessment (assurance of learning) activities.

The chairs have been discussing the evaluation of lecturers and their professional growth activities. It is important for AACSB that all lecturers meet the standards of being professionally qualified (PQ). This has been communicated to the lecturers on multiple occasions and on the letter sent to the lecturers requesting materials to be included as part of their periodic review, they were requested to submit a current CV or documentation as to their progress to being PQ. There is a new optional evaluation form this year for the lecturer review, and there was a discussion as to how the chairs should deal with a situation if the lecturer failed to submit a CV or any evidence of progress towards achieving PQ status.

There was a further discussion on creating a similar form for lecturers to the Schedule B that faculty fill out each year to show their progress to academically qualified (AQ) status. Jim and the CBA AACSB reaccreditation committee will work on developing a common form to make it easier for the chairs to assess the progress of the lecturers towards achieving PQ status. It was also suggested that Jim develop a scorecard to track faculty and lecturer progress to achieving AQ/PQ status.

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Jim will also work on a form which lists appropriate activities for lecturers to be considered to be classified as „participating.‰ Chairs can also suggest appropriate activities. We all agreed that we want participating faculty to be doing something to advance the strategic mission of the CBA.

The Deans and the central administration agreed that it would be prudent to hold a 5% reserve in the 2009-10 budget should mid-year reductions be required next year. This is being factored into the current scheduling that the chairs and Kelly are doing for Fall 09 and soon for Spring 10.

In the capstone meeting from the IDS Department review, in a discussion about assigned time, the Provost and Ethan made a comment to Gail and Bruce that CBA tenured/tenure-track faculty only teach about 21 students (21 FTEs ° this would be equivalent to 105 total students in 3-unit classes) per semester, and this is about the same as what tenured/tenure-track ratios are across the other colleges. As we have been dealing with student faculty ratios (FTEs/FTEFs) in the college of over 30:1, Jim asked Kelly to generate the data for both Fall 08 and Spring 09 class schedules, which showed our ratios for tenured/tenure-track/FERP faculty to be 22:1 and 23:1 across the college for those two terms.

Jim has been having discussions with the chairs about workload credit for large classes. It was suggested that a policy would be appropriate. Jim drafted a policy which allows for faculty to justify their request for excess enrollment credit based on number of students above 120, mode and level of instruction, number and nature of written assignments, availability of graduate student support, use of instructional technologies, and other criteria specific to the discipline.

There has been a problem this semester with the scheduling of group exams, in which there is a common time for students in all sections of a course to take the exam at the same time. While group exams are allowed by the university, they can only be scheduled M-F after 4 PM. When this happens, even though it appears in the class schedule, students often enroll in a class that is scheduled during the time period of their group exam for a different course.

This has created some tension this semester as faculty teaching the group exam are reluctant to allow students to schedule a makeup exam, and faculty teaching the class which conflicts with the group exam don’t feel a student should be missing class to take an exam in another course. While we have asked the Provost if we could schedule group exams on Saturdays, at this point, she has not approved this request. Jim is going to take the stand that faculty members who desire group exams should through professional courtesy either reach agreement with other faculty on conflicts or should be accommodating to students who are enrolled in other classes. Otherwise, group exams will only be allowed on Fridays.