Notes from Department Chairs Meeting, February 2, 2010

The Associate Dean, Department Chairs, and the Director of Resource Management met from 10 AM-12:30 PM in the Deanís Conference Room.

Bonnie Zimmerman, Associate Vice President for Faculty Affairs, joined us to discuss issues related to contract conditions for faculty, periodic evaluation, Personnel Action Files, and processes for scheduling Lecturers. As budget uncertainty for next year will most likely extend until the May revise, she wanted the chairs to be aware of relevant issues that could impact next yearís scheduling process.

With our current upper division impaction criteria (overall 2.9 GPA), we are required to allow all pre-business majors into upper division who have met this GPA after a minimum of 60 units completed and met all of their lower division prep for the major requirements (27/24 units). For Fall 2009, 950 new students declared upper division when we were expecting about 800 new upper division students. This created a difficult scheduling problem this semester for those students who had completed their core requirements in Fall 09 and wanted to begin taking major classes.

Jim would like for us to better control our upper division admits, but a higher GPA tends to work against SDSU students. Data from past years has shown that the GPAs of community college transfers tend to average about 0.2 points higher than GPAs for students who came to SDSU as freshmen. We have previously discussed creating individual program impaction requirements but the chairs were not in favor of that, as a lower GPA in one program could create backdoor majors.

For Spring 2010, we had fewer upper division declarants than a year ago, and took some students off the wait list since we had seats in some of the upper division core classes after registration. We took the students in numerical GPA order (2.89 first, then 2.88) regardless of their intended major. Jim was concerned that when we have room for extra students, some majors may wish to have additional majors but others may already be too crowded. With the current system, we cannot control which majors get the additional students.

To be able to control our numbers of upper division students to manageable numbers, we discussed the concept of creating increased impaction standards. Jim suggested that if we created standards for individual programs that were the same (same GPA), if there was room for extra students in a given semester, that the chairs could then determine the number of new students they wished to admit. The chairs discussed using additional criteria like the upper division writing proficiency assessment (WPA) score to combine with the GPA to create the standard. There was no consensus as to a simple fix. We will continue to discuss this in future meetings.

In a joint meeting with the Steering Committee a few weeks ago, there was a request to look at the budget from the funds generated by the grad fee. Deb presented the
most current spreadsheet, using actual dollars collected for Fall 09 and estimated FTEs/dollars for Spring 10. She also ran some projections for AY 2010-11 based on preliminary FTE estimates that Jim gave her. At this point, it appears that there is about $800K available from this year's funds, but potentially only about $250K for AY 2010-11 if the reduced number of graduate applications results in a proportional reduction in new graduate students for Fall 10. There was a discussion amongst the chairs as to how much money should be committed to different areas for next year to support initiatives related to the fee. This information will be presented to the Steering Committee later this week.

While budget uncertainty remains for next year, we are committed to trying to preserve research release time for faculty. Jim will send out the teaching load announcement to the faculty with the link to all required forms and a submission deadline date.

Bruce will be on paternity leave for 6 weeks beginning in March. Jim Beatty will assume the IDS chair administrative duties during that period. The chairs felt it appropriate that Jim represent the department in Chairs and Executive Committee meetings.

Jim reminded the chairs to submit nominations for the Alumni Award (Monty) and the Senate Excellence in Teaching Award. Due dates are February 15 for the Monty nominations and February 17 for the Senate award.