Steering committee minutes January 22, 2010

Present: DeNoble, Plice, Doran, Singh, Hadid, Tyagi, Shore (telephonic)

Ex Officio: Lackritz, Naughton (telephonic)

Invited: Reinig, Salehizadeh, Ely, Lightner, Belch,

1. Call to order at 12:40pm.
3. Ely stated that the 790-numbered courses in each department have experienced diminished demand due to students choosing the MBA rather than the MSBA degree. The possibility of moving to a college-level BA 790 course was raised. It would be intended that this would not change the individual departments’ expectations for their students, but that one faculty member would handle the overview and course administration and individual department faculty would continue to supervise the various projects. A concern was raised as to whether the supervising faculty would still get credit for the course. The committee took no action on this matter, but asked that the graduate committee prepare a proposal for the SC to react to.

4. Ely shared projections for graduate enrollments. There are now no spring admits and application deadlines have been reset by the university so that students must file their applications by February 1 and complete their files by March 1. A push by the university to reduce enrollments is evidently behind this much tighter deadline. The university has also outsourced the evaluation of transcripts for international students, so that these applicants must now pay an outside party to have their transcripts evaluated. To date, CBA has 465 applications, which is about 45% of the previous year’s total (although deadline is a few weeks away.) It was noted that applications are also down in other colleges. Naughton pointed out that this trend goes against the intention of the graduate fee, which was to increase the number of graduate students. A concern was voiced that our anticipated graduate fees may be significantly diminished next year if this trend continues, and that part of the reason for the decline might be due to the graduate fee pricing the MBA program out of the market. Doran reported on discussions in graduate council, including central administration’s expressions of flexibility on extending the application deadline if events warrant. Doran will follow up on this matter through graduate council.

5. The committee and the chairs discussed the allocation of the graduate fee. The SC has already taken up design of a process for distributing funds to faculty under a grant program, but it remains to determine how much, if any, of the graduate fee revenue will be made available to that program versus using it for other purposes. Lackritz estimated (given uncertainties) that $500k of fee revenue might be available for the calendar year, after deducting amounts totaling approximately $1million that are already being earmarked for the career center and funding related staff positions. The college’s budget will not be known before May, but if it is at the same level as last year Lackritz estimated the college will face a deficit of $900k next year. Under this scenario, there would be no money for lecturers.
other than 3-year full-time, which raises serious concerns for being able to offer next year’s schedule. The chairs indicated that this scenario would be devastating to their ability to offer classes. Various points of view were put forth on the advisability of using graduate fee revenue to overcome part of the deficit. It was noted that expectations have been created for the faculty that they would be able to receive remuneration from the fee revenue, and that the fee was intended to enable the college to do things it cannot do with state money. It was also noted that if the college uses the fee to substitute for state money, this is likely to become the norm. On the other hand, some chairs and SC members emphasized that the alternatives might be grim, including faculty losing assigned time (possibly to the extent of going to a 4-4 course load), larger class sizes, and cutting courses for the very graduate students who are paying the fee. An ensuing discussion included suggestions of a compromise position, where a portion of the fee revenue might be used for faculty grants and the rest for other objectives related to the executive order that authorized the fee. It was also stated that the departments have different needs, so that a cafeteria approach to using the revenue might be appropriate. The committee agreed that the fee allocation should be done according to the five objectives stated in the EO, and that individual SC members will work on filling out a matrix relating these objectives to specific uses of the money. In addition, Lackritz will prepare a breakdown of the items for which graduate fee revenue has already been committed, so that the SC can evaluate the extent to which some of the objectives are already being funded. These items will form the basis for continued work on this matter at the next SC meeting on February 5.

6. The draft document for the faculty-grant program was discussed, and Singh agreed to work on completing the sections that were missing. The SC members will review and edit the draft document and it will be discussed at the February 5 meeting. Reinig recommended that the criteria for evaluating grant proposals include the faculty member's track record in following through on previous grant commitments.

7. The meeting adjourned at 2:30pm.