Minutes of the Meeting of the Faculty Delegate Assembly of Hunter College

March 19, 2008
Room 1203, Hunter East
1:10-3:00 PM

1. Call to order. The meeting was called to order at 1:22.

2. Approval of the minutes of February 20, 2008, FDA meeting. The minutes were approved.

3. Presentations by representatives from two work groups of the Middle States Re-accreditation Process

a. Presentation by Prof. Jason Young, co-chair of the Faculty Work Group (Group 4). Prof. Young offered a Powerpoint in which he discussed the following points followed by recommendations addressing the problems that the group has uncovered.

> * Faculty staffing. The work group is reviewing the extent to which Hunter is following the rules of hiring and firing as specified by the CUNY bylaws. To this end the group has looked at department chair reports and department self-studies.

> * Other things that the work group has looked at: the education level of full and part time faculty at Hunter and the student/faculty ration. The latter, which is 25:1, suggests that Hunter is understaffed and that its faculty is overworked.

>> -- Recommendation by the committee: Understaffing is a serious threat to the educational goals that CUNY has set. More faculty need to be hired to meet these goals.

> * Obstacles to faculty productivity: The main obstacle is course load. Hunter's course load is among the highest of schools of its type. It's often higher than schools whose main mission is teaching rather than research.

> * Grant availability: Faculty are sometimes unaware of which grants are available or which are worth applying for.

>> -- Recommendation: Although Hunter does provide some assistance for grant application, the college needs to hire a person who can offer advice about grants. The kind of research guidance that the Gender Equity Project provides to women in the sciences should be available to all faculty.

> * Faculty service to the community: This service counts towards tenure and promotion.

-- Recommendation: In the light of dropping faculty willingness to attend committee meetings, the administration needs to provide greater incentives to faculty to attend such meetings.

* Teacher effectiveness: Currently there are two sources for judging the effectiveness of teachers: student evaluations and peer evaluations.

-- Recommendation: Student course evaluations should be converted digitally for improved student access.

* Teaching support for faculty: There's a range of support: The Teaching and Learning Center, The Technology Resource Center, Writing across the Curriculum, and the library. The problem is that many faculty, especially new faculty, aren't aware of these services.

* Recommendation: The faculty should have the equivalent of OASIS, a place where they could go to learn about all teaching support services available.

* Recognition of teaching: Hunter only gives one college wide award for excellence in teaching, the Presidential Award. The other teaching awards are poorly publicized

* Recommendation: There should more opportunities to recognize teaching excellence.

b. Dean Madlyn Stokely and Prof. Mary Lefkarites, co-chairs of Work Group 5, Student Engagement and Progress, addressed the group.

* Group 5 has four sub-groups; it doesn't yet have any recommendations. All four groups are currently collecting data. Preliminary findings: (1) Advising is uneven across the college; uneven among departments. (2) We're not clear enough about why students come to Hunter in the first place. We need to be clear about this before we can understand why so many leave. Do many come with the intention of transferring out? (3) Student satisfaction is high with regard to some programs. (4) Web-based information has helped students get access to a lot more information, but there's still considerable room for improvement. (5) Registration is cumbersome to students. We're currently constrained by SYMS, but CUNY's new computer system should help.

* Prof. Tony Doyle spoke briefly about the work that his sub-group on retention (group 5.b) has been doing.

* A faculty member pointed out that there is often an inconsistency between the

courses listed in the catalog and what the department actually offers, which is frustrating for students.

* Prof. Sandi Clarkson mentioned that the dean of Arts and Sciences has put together an advising handbook. The handbook could be useful to Work Group 5.

* A discussion ensued about the costs and benefits of being in contact with students through email. Dean Stokely pointed out that all who give advice to students over email need to be careful: you can't be sure that the person you think that you're in contact with actually is the student in question.

4. Old business. There was no old business.

5. New business. There was no new business.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:52.

Respectfully submitted,

Tony Doyle