

Advisory Council Minutes
College of Arts & Letters
October 6, 2016

Present: Chris Long (Dean), Jon Frey (AAHD), Catherine Ryu (L&L), Jon Keune (Rel), Julie Lindquist (WRAC), Olivia Gorczyca (undergrad), Salah Hassan (Eng), Safoi Babana-Hampton (RCS), Deric McNish (Theater)

Initial Business

- Frey convened the meeting at 3:20pm
- Ryu moved to approve the agenda. Hassan seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.
- Frey moved to approve the April 7 minutes. Babana-Hampton seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.
- McNish moved to approve the September 9 minutes. Lindquist seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Dean Long's Remarks

1. On Monday October 3, Long officially received report from task force on School of Languages, recommending that a school be formed. Long will move toward creating an action committee, based around the same people who served on the task force (since they have already studied similar programs at other schools) but with additional members. Amy Klapko will post a PDF of the task force's report to the CAL website, which will be made accessible to those with an MSU NetID. Long will appoint an interim director for the School of Languages in July, to prepare for a national search for a director later next year. Long expressed an interest in increasing opportunities for faculty input and for the participation of individuals who are indirectly related to the School.
2. David Prestel will be leaving the position of Associate Dean at the end of this academic year. Long will use this opportunity to reorganize this position under the heading of Associate Dean of Faculty Development and Personnel. Oversight of grants/research responsibilities will be assumed by the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies. Long has already posted a call for applications from individuals who hold the rank of full professor and who have served as a department chair. This new position will be a 50% appointment beginning in January and then shift to 75% time in July when Prestel steps down.
3. Long recognized a need to do more to cultivate leadership across faculty in CAL. Therefore CAL will hold four workshops annually, working with invited faculty who have been identified by chairs as leaders in their departments. The first workshop will take place October 7. This program is to be conducted in cooperation with the newly formed Academic Advancement Network (AAN).
4. Long suggested the formation of a task force on academic specialists and fixed term faculty, in continuation of the discussions held concerning the bylaws change last year. This group would work to ensure that academic specialists and fixed term faculty have a positive

experience at MSU while still demonstrating a commitment to the integrity of the tenure system.

5. Long initiated a conversation concerning the possibility of reshaping the undergraduate curriculum in order to incorporate more experiential learning, with the idea of “putting liberal arts into practice.” He suggested that the current curricular requirements could be changed, either by dropping one of the two required cognates or by dropping the cognate structure altogether. He seeks feedback and input on this, as we move forward.
6. Long reminded the committee that October 28 will be the University investiture for endowed faculty & chairs. All faculty are encouraged to attend. This is part of MSU’s campaign goal to increase the number of endowed chairs. CAL is putting more emphasis on seeking large donors, to enable the kind of growth that Long is seeking. This relates to MSU’s standing in AAU; one metric is the number of endowed chairs.
7. Bill Donohue (Grievance Office) has completed a review of department bylaws concerning Reappointment Promotion and Tenure. Long plans to ask Donohue to join the dept chairs meetings in October to discuss results. Report results will be shared with chairs before the meeting. Long will then encourage chairs to have facilitated conversations around bylaws, possibly by appointing committees of faculty who will also see the results and join facilitated conversations. Long will also ask Donohue to audit the college-level bylaws.

Discussion of Dean’s Remarks

Re: curriculum changes to accommodate experiential learning components:

Ryu: will this be centered on particular courses or possibly become a part of any course?

Long: various paths – could be an aspect of a course, study abroad, or something else

- however we do it, this shouldn’t add to students’ time-to-degree
- need to have support for students, since not all can afford
- this is built into the Citizens-Scholars program already
- the general aim: to articulate value of reflective life, incl. helping them get off campus locally (within Lansing) and further afield
- Beth Judge has advocated for this for a long time
- we’re at stage now where faculty can formulate, make proposals

Hassan: so this will be curriculum requirement, replacing cognates?

Long: yes, will be component of curriculum

- cognates don’t seem to be doing what we want them to do right now

Hassan: minors now seem to cover same territory as cognates

Long: Yes. We could build an experiential learning component into the minor.

- right now, many minors that are menu-driven, rather than scaffolded/integrated
 - minors should have capstones, be directional

Babana-Hampton: How does this relate to those capstones that are in place? Would experiential learning be credit-bearing?

Long: good question; we’re still exploring how it logistically could work

- we don’t want to create too many requirements
 - esp. if it requires unpaid internships or more financial commitments

- starting point: how many students are getting experiential learning already?
 - how can we recalculate, re-identify that?
 - e.g. study abroad across the board qualifies
 - how to we encourage more students to sign on without greater financial burden?
- should explore what removing cognate would look like

Frey: we're looking at this in Art History now

- our problem with creating minors is that they detract from students signing up as majors
- need to think about value of the minor in relation to dept/faculty effort

Long: we're starting to look at this, talking with chairs

- for example, we see lots of credit hours in summers in Art History; these need to be counted

Frey: we need to be strategic about how minor is structured, to build in more robustness

Hassan: when minor was instituted, we didn't talk much about strategy

- esp. interdisciplinary programs without their own majors
- specializations (which could be double-counted) were transformed into minors (not double-countable)
- now, unclear if courses can be double-counted

Long: being new, I'm still learning about this, but seems that the specializations model was unfamiliar to too many institutions outside MSU

- basically changed the name to be more translatable
- we have too many minors that lack structural robustness
- minors can't be so flexible that it can be different for every person who does it

Hassan: if IAH counts as an intro course to a minor, this isn't adequately rigorous

Long: will talk with Beth and explore forming committee; this is a conversation many faculty clearly want

- we are exploring with Sekhar Chivukula (Dean of Undergraduate Studies) , Kirk Kidwell (IAH director), and others to link IAH to another 1st-year course
 - university-wide, targeting students who historically have higher dropout rates
 - will spin up pilot for this next fall
 - maybe 500 students, in smaller classes
 - concentrated experiences
 - experimenting with class designs, incl. hybrid classes
- Penn State did curriculum-wide revamp but that took great deal of time
 - prefer to explore here smaller, local solutions that could be scalable

Re: the new endowed chairs

Keune: how many of these new chairs were allocated to CAL?

Long: endowed chairs aren't allocated but rather are earned by the development offices within different colleges

- last year, 3 new endowed chairs in CAL
 - 1 Holocaust Studies

- 1 interdisciplinary studies, based in Philosophy dept.
- 1 in comparative lit

Council Business

Frey: It's hard to say much about Donohue report yet, but we might recommend CAL and departments consider RPT policies' effects on faculty pursuing grant writing, digital research, performances, works of art and other creative endeavors. CAC may want to have a role in moving this conversation forward.

- at a recent AAN event, Long emphasized the importance of scholars' online profiles
 - o but the question of reckoning online presence/work with RPT metrics remains
 - o Long recommended documenting activities as moving toward articles/books, as if they were seamless and didn't involve trade-offs
 - o this may cause problems for junior faculty as RPT committees aren't usually receptive to non-traditional forms of academic excellence
- Keune: Any national precedents or examples of such external metrics used by other universities?
- Frey: hard to say; recommendations to consider this haven't gotten much traction yet, and professional organizations haven't tended to take a hard position on this
- Hassan: need to make qualitative distinctions about kinds of digital work are involved: e.g., Twitter vs. online journals or creating digital resources
 - o film production/performance is also a question – how to recognize various roles alongside director and cinematographer
- Frey: don't like the feeling that getting tenure depends on articles/books alone, so that one's creative, exciting work must be held off until after tenure
- Hassan: RPT category "outreach" could capture this somewhat, depending on how this nontraditional work is presented
- Babana-Hampton: this should be addressed at the bylaws level
 - we should tie this closely to bylaws language, to perceive gaps between RPT and scholarly production more clearly
 - make this appeal by aligning such projects with the explicit mission of the department and college
 - I've had experience of projects as first directed toward producing a book/articles, but over time, recognizing that some research (e.g., oral history) is best done with a camera and editing room and not traditional publications
 - film producing/editing requires no less time or intellectual labor that book prep
- Ryu: I received a patent for my invention, 3 year process
 - but no university recognition for this
 - wanted to grow my expertise into a new area after tenure
 - received recommendation for promotion: you must establish yourself as scholar in that new field too for it to count
 - this is discouraging for scholars to take risks to grow
 - would be good for dept or college to showcase nontraditional products
 - need to help colleagues understand how to evaluate nontraditional products
- Babana-Hampton: it's difficult to follow CAL's goals and rhetoric about innovative and public humanities scholarship; this can involve using unconventional tools

- getting out of box makes it difficult for others to understand the value of a project for evaluation
- fallback option for recognition of such projects seems to be receiving an external grant as evidence of quality
- Hassan: in some departments, people rarely apply for grants
 - few grants are available in some fields, grant prep effort is huge, and the payoff is unlikely
 - grant writing doesn't look like a good time investment, so little impetus to try
 - mentoring needs to be in place to guide assistant professors to produce in ways that are recognized
- Frey: assistant professors regularly say that payoff is so unlikely that they don't try
 - can we step back from this conversation of either nontraditional or traditional productivity, and encourage RPT committees to consider a scholar's broader research trajectory, to see how grant could support work (and whether the candidate tried to apply)
- Ryu: what should we try to do structurally now?
 - with his digital humanities background, Bill Hart-Davidson's appointment as Assoc Dean of Graduate Studies may be good timing for this conversation
 - could we invite him to join a CAC meeting sometime, to share his vision?
- Frey: good idea, and will collect some comparative data for other universities who have done this well

Lindquist moved to adjourn. McNish seconded. Unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 4:44p.m.

Minutes submitted by Jon Keune