

University of South Florida St. Petersburg campus
Department of Journalism and Digital Communication Faculty Meeting
Friday, Feb. 4, 2022

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Casey Peterson
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Eli Murray
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Deni Elliott
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Solitaire Kelly

CF: Let's jump in. Deni, update on what's happening on the self study front.

DE: As part of the self study team, I am in charge of external data. I'm also writing executive summaries and Peterson and I will make sure it reads like a single voice. I've been collecting external data and the timing is good because we don't have separate institutional research people here – One USF has people who do everything around this. This is the first time they've been working on an external accreditation outside of SACS. Been working closely with Joe Boyd who primarily works for SACS accreditation but has been shuffled into a position of helping me with our data. We've agreed on March 15 for a deadline to populate the self study document with all external data. (For example, number of full time students enrolled, number of majors/grad students, full time/part time faculty.) I also need to know the page where our department statistics are linked.

CP: I will email you the link.

CF: Let me talk a bit about the internal data collection. The departmental level data we will be using comes from a variety of different sources, and we will be asking you all for various elements. If we have our material gathered by the end of March/beginning of April, we will be in good shape to write the report. We will be looking for updated CVs, syllabi, assessments of learning, noteworthy assignments/classroom experiences, student publications, alumni accomplishments, student/alumni awards/honors, significant changes in assessments/measurements of learning outcomes. The focus on qualitative and quantitative assessment will be important.

DE: As you update your CVs, it's a good idea to check the academic analytics page to make sure it's correct in terms of your publications. There's a link to report problems/correct the page.

CF: Joan, how about advising?

JE: First let's talk transfer students. Yesterday, COMPASS had an event to match transfer students with advisors over coffee. Of all of my majors, Digital Communication was the only one that showed up. They were very interested in internships. Also, had many appointments with Digital Comm students interested in study abroad. And, everyone is focused on "finish in four," but now we have "finish in two" for transfer students and we have been doing outreach for them. Thanks also to Casey P for his efforts on our Advisor I search committee. The search revealed some issues with information on the website.

JE: CF, any updates on VIC 3001?

CF: That's an agenda item for later but briefly: we have had a couple of conversations with colleagues in Zimmerman School, and the crux of the challenge is that the course is taught and required in our program and in a couple of programs in Zimmerman. Some time ago the course became a gen ed course and around then Zimmerman stopped teaching the class. We've been teaching a lot of Tampa students, but we haven't been teaching it to the gen ed standards they developed. We'll delve deeper into this today. Part of this dovetails into curriculum development: one challenge is that curriculum development is currently locked down across the board.

JE: I appreciate how challenging this is since we've always taught this course. Just keep Advising informed so we can keep students aware of the latest information. We've offered the course every semester including summer, so students have come to rely on the course. Just keep us up to speed.

CF: Next, let's hear about the new faculty search.

MW: At the end of last year we lost faculty but gained the opportunity to do strategic hires. We've made progress toward that in terms of STEM and science communication. We hired Natacha and are now hiring for science writing and data communication. We have a pool of 5 finalists and are finishing up with research and teaching presentations. On Feb. 11 we will come up with finalists, meet as a faculty as the whole and bring them to the dean. We have another search just launching for the instructor position. The ad is just being posted and will go until March 1, hoping to have the search completed by early April. Ultimately, who we hire is in the candidates' hands so we don't know if they'll accept jobs if offered. At this point, a very strong pool of candidates.

EW: Will everyone be able to start in fall?

MW: That's the hope/goal.

CF: The upcoming virtual visits are teaching demonstrations with times for students to interact with the candidates so make your students aware of the opportunity.

CF: We distributed a survey to our students to understand their experiences on the fall 2021 semester. Response rate wasn't great but we got 22 students to respond. I wanted to highlight some responses. We asked students if they're able to find the courses they want in terms of content or delivery modality. 77% said yes, 22% said no. Common barrier was that classes were full. Modality was about the same. We asked if they felt that they were making progress to their goal, and a majority said yes. We asked if they felt supported by faculty, and 2/3 said yes.

CF: The big one is modality. The takeaway is that students have a variety of ways they'd like to engage with their classes. In particular, 67% are definitely or somewhat interested in hybrid models, but 27% are not interested at all in hybrid classes. We also asked about high-flex classes, and 73% are interested, 13% not interested at all.

CF: I'm not sure what to do with this information, but to observe that students are interested in a variety of class formats. Student learning styles differ, some students work and are unavailable for in person classes, etc. We should keep tabs on what this means in terms of curriculum development and think about where we are on the front lines of online class delivery.

EW: If we do this in the future, we should do it at a time when we have a better response rate. Mixing grad and undergrad involves different types of students.

CF: We did ask their program and can flesh it out with the data but it's a small sample size.

EW: Also, the survey went out at the height of Omicron. If we ask the questions at a different time we will get different answers.

CC: Whether we like it or not, the online class cat is out of the bag. Now, it seems like students are going to want capitulation when they miss class. The university needs to make an investment in the technology to make high flex work.

MW: The trend to online will continue, but I think the high-flex format will be popular because it gives students the option. Whatever the university decides, we should trend toward online.

CC: Our department is best suited for that given our experience and technology.

CF: Update for full time faculty on annual evaluation. Feb. 28 – finish self narratives; March 21 – departmental committee reviews/rates; March 28 – chair reviews/ratings. Deadline is March 31. This will all be done via Archivum, which is very email-driven. If you don't have anything from the system by early next week, let's follow up to see what the holdup is.

CF: Dean Eisenberg sent out a note calling for input regarding what the department is feeling about investment needs going forward. Budget committee has been tasked with coming up with a new budgeting model to go live on July 1, 2022. Committee focused on themes ranging from resource generation, resource allocation, administration, F&A, productivity, operations efficiency and reporting. Looking for feedback on two fronts: (1) adequacy of infrastructure to support work and (2) areas in which the college should seek additional funds for investment in the future.

CF: Let's start with infrastructure. Processes, central services that affect us most. In terms of investment, Eisenberg has an idea of long term deficiencies in CAS. We're in a weird position because we're part of CAS but we are also on the St. Pete campus, which has its own budget. I hear talks about moving to a place in the future where the separate budgets are collapsed into one. Four investment items already identified: (1) new faculty hires; (2) support for research in terms of lab space and startup funding; (3) competitive salaries for faculty; and (4) competitive support (i.e. travel, etc.).

EW: This is a great opportunity. One position I've been thinking about is an external outreach position, someone who coordinates internships, relationships external to campus (Poynter, for example), outside grants. This could be revenue generating, and could help us reach out to minority students.

CF: Our former development officer, Debbie Reed, is now at Poynter.

MW: I second Elliott's thought. If we can make an argument that a particular person or activity could increase admissions, it would help. Question: is this going to lead to USFSP not administering its own budget?

CF: That's unclear. The timeline on the St. Pete and Tampa budgets merging has been vague since the beginning of consolidation. It's a frequent topic of conversation, but as we know consolidation comes with a lot of sticky political considerations. Now, it's been basically a net positive for us because as tight as St. Pete's budget is, it's even tighter in Tampa.

MA: I would echo Elliott's suggestion for a staff position. We met to discuss the instructor line, and we dropped a lot of responsibilities for that position. We talked about an additional staff position to handle

the NNB website, and other administrative tasks. Can we request another faculty position? It's a long shot, but we went from a lot of full time faculty to less than half full timers with more than half adjuncts. It's a long shot, I know.

MA: Also, I don't have access to a lot of tools to teach more complex things like social media monitoring. Can we get access as a department to, say, Hootsuite, and give it to the students?

CF: There's a good connection for a potential new hire to work with NNB. It's a good way to avoid the idea of this person being more of a college-level assistant. In terms of our strategic plan, we do have another hire coming up we'll gear up for in the fall to replace Deni's position.

MA: I wasn't aware of that. Is it official that she's retiring?

CF: The plan is she will do a research leave in the fall and retire in December. We have the line request to replace the Poynter Jamison Chair and are talking more about an ethics-focused faculty member.

CF: On the other analytics and tracking tools, I'll check on those. If you have any other ideas, send them my way.

CF: Let's circle back to VIC 3001. Monica, this is your course so I'm happy to get your thoughts. The crux of the issue is resolving the gen ed requirements attached to this course. We had a brief conversation with them in December and they want to keep the designation. There are a number of assessment expectations, but it's difficult to get details on what they require.

MW: Even when MMC 3602 was a USFSP gen ed, changes happened so frequently.

MA: Who's teaching viscomm this semester?

CF: Natacha is teaching the main section.

MA: I don't know how she's teaching it now, but when I was teaching it until recently, it was taught as a skills course to give students basic digital skills they need to continue in our program since it's a pre-core requirement. It was supposed to be a sequenced course to prep students for higher level visual courses. Also introduced students to basic Adobe design skills (InDesign, Lightroom, etc.). When we consolidated, we talked with Zimmerman about separating the courses, changing the course number in our program so we could keep it as a separate course. I started an application to do change our curriculum, but it got frozen when the university decided there would be no changes.

CF: You identified a new class?

MA: Yes, with a DIG prefix in the State Course Numbering System. There's a lot of these that we could change our courses to. Changing the course number would make it specific to us. We can decide if we want to keep offering VIC 3001 as a gen ed course. OR, we could decide we don't want our students to learn visual skills and align the syllabus to Tampa's gen ed curriculum and teach our students the visual literacy skills in later courses.

CF: The possibility of teaching VIC 3001 as a gen ed and requiring the new DIG course is intriguing.

MA: At the time, we identified several courses we wanted to change the name and designation. A bunch of 4936 special topics classes could fit into the new DIG codes. Our web design class was supposed to become a DIG class, for example. I've been looking at courses at the university level, and a lot of units in

Tampa have begun to offer courses with the DIG prefix. One of their art programs, for example. I know they say no revisions are allowed to programs, but I have a hard time believing that.

CF: From my understanding, Curriculog is frozen until summer. But it sounds like we have a land grab going with these DIG classes. It seems like it's an advantage to be first, since we'd take ownership of the class. Let's follow up on that paperwork and think strategically about curriculum changes and shifts toward this DIG code.

CF: Let's talk about online courses. Now, all new online and pandemic-shift online courses now must go through a review process. Managed by Innovative Education, which is based in Tampa but our folks are now part of. "Legacy" courses may not have gone through a review but have shown success. The order of priority is that these pandemic-shift classes go through review first.

CF: Based on our current catalog, VIC 3001, MMC 3602 and JOU 3346C (Multimedia Reporting) are all online. The latter is the only new-to-online, even if it's in its third semester. We want to continue to teach the class online, and if we're going to, it needs to go through the review process. This will be our first time working with Innovative Ed. This review entails a course reduction and is a semester-long process. Innovative Education has a lot of exciting capabilities for assisting with course development. We also need to think about how we're going to line our other courses up for the process, which doesn't need to happen all at once. MMC 4936 can be online, but it's actually a lot of different classes.

CF: For DJD, it's an entirely different beast – pretty much all online.

CF: We will be able to get a couple of courses per year into this review process. There are some constraints given Innovative Education's size and number of courses to review. Begin thinking about this for your own classes, and in the spring we will be able to put forward classes after we submit Multimedia Reporting in the fall.

MA: I read through the material on course development. My first question: The material didn't make it sound mandatory. Is it?

CF: My understanding is that it is.

MA: My only concern is the course ownership part. Ownership of the course is shared between the faculty and the university. I'm not sure I'm comfortable with the provision. If we go through this process, we give up ownership of our course? It doesn't say how the department will use the course. I'd like more information.

CF: That's something that was highlighted in a conversation with Erin Sutcliffe in Innovative Ed. If a faculty member were to leave the university, they can take the course and do what they want. But the department can also offer the course as it was made. How it's used in the department is up to the department: they can work with new people to teach the course, but there is some flexibility. They also said that there's no way to do the process without agreeing to the joint ownership proviso.

MA: That's not reassuring. There's nothing to keep a department from taking a course and giving it to anyone after the original faculty develop the course.

CF: I will check on whether it's mandatory and the degree of ownership.

CZ: Just a comment: The online Advanced Reporting class was tough to teach in that modality. These courses are heavy on working with students and giving feedback. That should be taken into consideration when creating the best content and format with Innovative Education.

CF: One trend is offering multiple sections of a course with different modalities.

CP: Monica, the university will likely counter the ownership issue with the fact that you got a course release.

MW: Monica is right that we should see the fine print. I own the copyright to many of my books, but it doesn't give me the right to go out and print them on my own. You may have ownership of the course, but what rights do you have to do with the course. My question is do they have standards like QM? I'd like to see them so I can meet as many of them before the course goes in.

CF: They work with brand new online courses and also classes that have been online for a while and just need a tune up. If we can finesse existing courses ahead of time we can go into a streamlined development process.

MA: The last sentence of the course ownership section: department can share, in whole or part, with other assigned instructors of record. Nothing will stop the university from giving another faculty member the course you spent years developing. There will be no consequences if that happens – basically making it legal.

CF: I will look into the ownership issue and get some clarity as to whether there is an opt-out option.

CF: Let's spend a few minutes beginning a conversation about a request from Jim Gary in the Provost's office that departments improve and elaborate on the annual evaluation portion of their governance documents. What are the expectations of evaluation? Expectations are often unwritten and not welcoming to new faculty or faculty from underrepresented minorities. They need to be more specific, citing goals for the upcoming year for each faculty member and a conflict of interest statement in terms of spouses and partners not evaluate each other. A points-based system that reflects research, teaching and service can inform the evaluation. We are probably in the position as most departments in terms of a broad method of evaluation, so we will need to talk about how we will add specificity to the process.

MA: Do we need to do this for this evaluation?

CF: No, this would be a change to our governance document we'd vote on and then it would go into effect next year.

CF: Any regular business updates?

CP: Thanks for your syllabi.

CF: Good of the order?

-No-

CF: Monday, Feb. 7 is deadline to apply to graduate. If working with ARPs, encourage them to apply.

CP: Li Zhang teaching presentation at 3:30.