

Shared Governance/Transparency Subcommittee Hearing
October 2, 2018
Notes

Present: Melissa Seixas, Chair; Kayla Rykiel; Nicole Washington (via telephone)

I. Call to Order

Chair Seixas called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

II. New Business – Action Items

Minutes from the September 11, 2018 hearing were approved.

III. New Business – Information Items

a. Introduction and Context

Chair Seixas outlined the focus of the committee, introduced the topics for discussion at the hearing, and described the process for public comment.

b. Testimony

i. Overview of General Education

Dr. Phillip Wagner at USFSM provided an overview of Gen Ed for undergraduate degree programs. Gen Ed plays an important role in campus identity and skillsets and it sets the identity of an institution with a strong academic foundation.

With the passage of legislation establishing consolidation, the Gen Ed leaders across all three USF campuses immediately began meeting to determine a path forward. Gen Ed is a key component related to student success and will have the greatest impact on students.

USF Tampa conducted a review of Gen Ed requirements in 2017, creating a program with increased rigor in courses and focused relevancy to career success. The emphasis was on integrating skills throughout the four year degree that supported student success beyond graduation. The Enhanced Gen Ed model allows for students to count major-courses toward Gen Ed requirements and increases the use of High Impact Practices (HIP).

In working through to a consolidated approach, the general education team found that programs across the campuses were not that different, but that there were several key focus areas for their work including curricular alignment, course alignment, assessment and faculty oversight and ownership.

Curricular alignment requires one Gen Ed program across all three USF campuses to help ensure student success while also protecting campus identity. There is agreement to adopt the Enhanced

Gen Ed framework with ongoing discussions regarding specifics to ensure the maintenance of campus identity. There is also consideration given to “teaching-out” of existing Gen Ed programs for students that entered the university pre-consolidation.

Course alignment will provide the need for all courses certified within the framework to be the same across all campuses. In order to do this, departments and colleges must engage in meaningful discussions to align general education offerings. The existing "cap" on the number of general education courses that can be certified must be revised to ensure all campuses have equal opportunity to participate in building the new Enhanced Gen Ed program. New processes around Gen Ed course review and approval must be implemented on all campuses to maintain consistency and uniformity.

Assessment alignment creates a comprehensive and standard method of assessment across all three campuses. This assessment could be created by Gen Ed leadership through involvement by faculty from all campuses.

The structure and ownership alignment allows for one consolidated General Education Council empowered to make overarching decisions while also maintaining campus-specific subgroups to preserve unique identity, assist in assessment and implementation, and serve as a resource to faculty. This Gen Ed Council would include representatives system-wide with individual campuses identifying and defining Gen Ed leadership locally.

Committee members inquired about the communication with advisors to ensure knowledge is shared regarding changes in Gen Ed requirements. Consistent Gen Ed leadership on each campus works to coordinate consistent communication. This works differently on each campus, but there is a structure for information sharing as it pertains to student needs.

Discussion around the impact on transfer students included two types of transfer students: (1) those with A.A. degrees and (2) students coming in with a mix of credits. A student with an A.A. degree is exempt from Gen Ed requirements. A student with a mix of credits is worked with on a case-by-case basis to allow for ease of transition.

Discussion concerning campus identity within one Gen Ed model provided that the HIPs and the courses would preserve the unique campus communities. HIPs allow practices that engage with the local community such as internships, community engaged learning and others. The courses would be approved as something of a shell (within the standards) to allow for faculty to build out the content which would encourage students to engage in communities in innovative ways.

ii. Overview of Faculty Governance

Dr. Deanna Michael provided an overview of the importance of shared governance within higher education. Accrediting agencies look for evidence of faculty ownership of the curriculum and effective shared governance creates a healthy campus academic structure. Shared governance involves collaborative efforts by participating in the identification of priorities, development of policy, and defining responsibility for ethical leadership. Within shared governance, faculty

senate functions include being the principal advisory body to administration, and playing a significant role in the appointment of academic administrators.

Drs. Michael, Boaz and Gillespie provided an overview of the current state of faculty governance on each campus. Within that overview, it was noted that there are several councils and committees with similar functions across the three campuses including the Honors & Awards Committee, Curriculum Committee and the Research Council.

An approach to a consolidated faculty governance structure is being discussed between the campus faculty senate leaders, as well as the internal Consolidation Implementation Committee on Faculty Affairs. This structure would create one Faculty Senate that would include equitable representation from all campuses, with an estimated 100 members total, and the creation of an Executive Committee. The Executive Committee would be composed of 4 elected officers, 3 members at large (representing each campus), and 12 council/committee chairs. The councils and committees would be largely based on USF Tampa's current structure but membership would be determined depending on the mission of each entity. USF Tampa's existing constitution and bylaws would serve as the base for the governance documents, with the addition of individual items from existing regional campus documents.

There are still a number of issues that remain under discussion including the number of senators from the regional campuses, the rotation of officers, membership of councils and committees and governance document review.

The committee inquired as to the existing rotation of the President of the USF System Faculty Council. In the current state, there is a one-year term for the System President, but there is an option for re-election. It was noted that they often serve two terms. At USF Tampa, the President serves a two-year term but cannot run for re-election.

There was discussion regarding the impact of potential of changing of colleges and schools on the proposed structure for faculty governance. There could be an impact on the structure as the membership of the councils is apportioned by college at USF Tampa so every department would not be represented within the councils. This is an ongoing consideration and there are options to satisfy the need for representation. There are models to review that could provide some further insight.

iii. Overview of Campus Boards

Gerard Solis, USF System General Counsel, provided a general approach for recommendations while also identifying accreditation concerns. He provided an overview of the Guiding Principles and their importance in terms of priorities and final recommendations. Another guidepost is the statutory requirement that USF will have one accreditation beginning July 1, 2020. In reaching this requirement, it is important to note that SACSCOC determines accreditation by looking at the entity in its totality.

In terms of a campus board, SACSCOC reviews autonomy and if it is determined that an extended unit is autonomous, SACSCOC may require that unit to become separately accredited.

Campus boards should not resemble boards on a separately accredited campus in that they are perceived as autonomous and impairing the control of the Board of Trustees.

Article 5 of the BOT Operating Procedures outlines campus board responsibilities. All of these are consistent with Florida law with the one statutory role for a campus board is the review and approval of annual legislative budget requests.

Discussion about student roles on campus boards noted that a student does serve on the USF BOT. At the regional campuses, students participate at the campus boards but not as voting members.

c. Public comment

There was no public comment.

d. Discussion

Members had no further discussion. Chair Seixas thanked all of the presenters for their time and participation in providing valuable information to the Subcommittee.

IV. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.