

Oregon Institute of Technology

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

October 30, 2017

MINUTES

Provost Gary Kuleck called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. Academic Council members present were: Seth Anthony, Todd Breedlove, David Culler for Jeff Hayen, Tiernan Fogarty, Gary Kuleck, LeAnn Maupin, Hallie Neupert, Don McDonnell for Debbie McCollam, Mark Neupert, Jeff Parady, Paula Russell, Dan Peterson, Farooq Sultan, Sean St.Clair, Terri Torres for Sharon Beaudry, Ken Usher, and Erika Veth. Brian Fox, Jamie Kennel, Dawn Taylor, and Claudia Torres-Garibay joined the meeting remotely. Laura McKinney and Jack Walker were absent.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING UPDATE

Provost Gary Kuleck stated that during the recent Board of Trustees meeting, President Naganathan shared his vision for the University regarding strategies to achieve growth as the leading polytechnic institute in the pacific northwest. Naganathan would like to nourish Oregon Tech's reputation as "industry's university" and focused on a one-year, short-term action plan to include:

- Increasing reputational capitol
- Increasing enrollment and diversity
- Providing spaces and incentives for faculty innovation and pedagogy
- Focusing on investing in professional opportunities for faculty and staff
- Improving efficacy of business operations – operational efficiency
- Expanding relations with alumni and donors – leveraging partnerships and developing new ones

The Board was very receptive and asked Naganathan to, within the next few months, work to develop a five-year strategic plan that reflects growth beyond the first year.

WORLD CAFÉ UPDATE

At the last meeting, Jim Jones gave an overview of the World Café exercise conducted at the retreat. Jones stated that the exercise was broken into three rounds. Participants went to a new table each round and were asked a question. The question was the same each time except for a slight different ending – *In context of the strategic direction, challenges facing higher education, and the department workload philosophy, what should the departments start doing, stop doing, or continue doing?*

Discussions yielded flipchart notes full of participant concepts and ideas that Jones organized into categories, ranking them by priority levels 1-4. Jones presented the findings in a PowerPoint presentation. Jones stated that in the World Café series, the next step would be to see if these priorities are the right ones to align with the strategic direction and mission. To refine the data, Maupin pulled the top 2 top priorities/concerns of the departments. Maupin found it interesting that the guiding principles below developed on their own:

#1 Workload

- No overload – possibly reinventing a workload model to accommodate that
- Balance of online and in-load
- Reduction of committee work
- Capturing forward-facing work
- Retaining small class sizes and hands-on components
- Reducing busy work
- Maintaining a high level of educational quality
- Reduction of data input requests for department chairs

#2 Academic Strategic Planning

Maupin stated that the second overarching goal was the academic strategic planning which included:

- interdisciplinary focus
- faculty hires
- number of faculty
- coordinated efforts
- reduction of silos
- innovative ideas
- broadening of thinking
- visibility

Maupin was encouraged that workload modeling is being addressed via the tool currently being developed is workload modeling is being addressed via tools that are being developed and stated that she may address the other priorities at a later date.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND VISION

Provost Gary Kuleck stated that the University's strategic plan and vision cannot be realized without input and development of strategic goals and planning from the academic departments and programs. As strategic planning is used as the basis for all decision-making (hiring, equipment, budget, operations), elements such as sound business practices, program offerings that match industry needs, and external partner relationships need to be considered.

Prior to the meeting, Kuleck sent the group two documents for discussion during the meeting:

- Strategic Planning Rubric
- Faculty Request Form 2018-19 Prioritization

Rubric

LeAnn Maupin noted that the rubric was developed by Council members at the summer retreat as they contemplated how to align the strategic plan with department resource requests and that components therein are those identified as valuable by department chairs.

Faculty Request Form

Maupin stated that the form is the same used in 2015-16 with a few minor changes:

- Many fields are now automatically populated
- A few changes to the data factsheet at the end (to be populated by administration)
- The addition of the creative works piece.

Maupin welcomed suggestions for improvement and stated that the goal is for departments to use the information to begin planning strategically.

Kuleck shared that the first section is an assessment of the strategic narrative and a focused attempt to address where departments are heading in 3-5 years. Kuleck reminded all to include justification for market demand and to focus on needs, challenges, resources, and clarity of presentation. Kuleck views strategic plans as equivalent to academic business plans and stated that they should be data-driven and evidence-based. In an effort to help departments develop effective strategic plans, Kuleck would like to meet with each chair in the next few weeks as well as to continue developing tools and strategies throughout the year.

Ken Usher asked for clarity about linking the strategic plan to new hires, especially in regards to general education or service departments. If departments have new or growing programs that require a new faculty member, how might chairs know that in advance? Kuleck replied that each department is unique and fulfills different parts of the University's mission which can factor into resource justification. Although the model is still being reshaped, justification for hires will need to revolve around fulfilling the mission.

Todd Breedlove stated that the form seems forward-thinking and geared more to new positions. Breedlove doesn't believe it fits departments such as his which aren't trying to grow or increase offerings but rather to simply survive and staff current offerings. Kuleck replied that part of the rationale could be that until a replacement is hired, the department can't continue to support a growing program. Kuleck added that the idea isn't to starve programs but to provide maintenance and to improve efficiency.

Creative Works Element for New Hires

Kuleck stated that new tenure-track hires will need to include a creative works element and believes there are faculty that will welcome both teaching and the student-focused creative aspect. While teaching is paramount, the extra little piece brought creatively will also be important and can be a great opportunity for departments when creatively linked together. Kuleck believes this will be attractive to talented, potential hires.

Breedlove asked where the creative piece would fit within the annual performance evaluation for tenure-track faculty, as individuals will all have different strengths. Kuleck responded that creative works would fall under Institutional and Professionally-Related Public Service and that departments will define and shape the requirements.

Breedlove voiced concern that when hiring, until he found the 'teacher' he wouldn't know what other creative elements a new hire might have to offer. Kuleck suggested this while this might be addressed in the job advertisement, offering incentives is critical. Incentives such as start-up money to fund or develop a project is important to attracting faculty. Claudia Torres-Garibay noted that the EERE Department's Smart Grid laboratory is not currently being utilized. Kuleck replied that developing that facility would be a perfect opportunity for a new faculty member. Terri Torres asked if start-up funds would be available to current faculty as well. Kuleck noted that funds available to current faculty would be characterized as small grants.

Ken Usher believes there may be a generational challenge when looking for individuals to do some form of creating work. Although he has seen an increased emphasis on creative work over the past 5-10 years, many faculty members nearing retirement were hired and have been promoted due to excellent teaching and other institutional service. Kuleck noted that he doesn't believe in punishing individuals who were brought in under a different model and that those who are mid to late-career won't be affected. Kuleck added that as we look to increase our brand and recognition, it will be important to encourage faculty to go beyond what has been done in the past. This can be accomplished by reducing the service component, allowing faculty more time. Kuleck stated that the goal isn't to disrupt or to destroy what is already being

done well but to acknowledged that there is an opportunity to promote the outward-facing piece in new faculty hires.

Jamie Kennel commented that he appreciates the creative work flexibility but wanted clarification on how this process will be standardized across the departments as each department will vary in their requirements and how they fit into the University's tenure and promotion requirements. Kuleck agreed that standardizing is challenging and would like the Council to have future discussions about equivalency expectations across departments. Kennel believes discussions and approval needs to happen prior to faculty being hired rather than when they are going up for promotion or review. Kuleck agreed that defining what that would look like in each department will be a charge of the Council in the very near future.

Torres asked for clarification of tenure-track and non-tenure-track – if administration has nailed down how to make those decisions and if they are made at the departmental level. Kuleck replied decisions will be made through discussions with the chairs about things such as where the department is going and what the economics look like. Breedlove requested that non-tenure track faculty position descriptions be nailed down and that questions such as advising and teaching load be addressed. Breedlove would like to have a clear path of moving faculty from non-tenure to a tenure-track should the department choose to do so.

Kuleck stated that he previously worked in systems with mechanisms to hire tenure track faculty (with economical and strategic justification) or fixed-term faculty with renewable contracts. There were two paths for the non-tenure track – fixed-term without the option of upward mobility and non-tenure track with promotion capacity. Kuleck would like to explore both opportunities and stated that tenure-track provides opportunities to hire fabulous faculty to do great things but can also lock departments into having a position. Non-tenure track provides a different kind of flexibility and in many ways can be beneficial to the department – one of which addresses workload issues as they can have a large teaching loads. Kuleck added that with a declined enrollment, each department needs to think about their economic stability and growth and decide if they want to hire tenure-track or non-tenure track positions.

Tiernan Fogarty voiced concern about the timeline. Fogarty inquired as to when decisions will be made and departments will be notified. Kuleck stated that the goal is to meet with chairs in next 2-3 weeks, before the Thanksgiving break and is hopeful that this process will happen much sooner next year.

Fogarty stated that he would like to include position specifics in the advertisements. Dan Peterson agreed that being able to lay out specific terms such as track was critical and that discussions need to happen now in order to make hiring decisions. Kuleck agreed that the timeline needs to be being moved up. Kuleck added that he views timing, job ad description, and negotiation as the top three hiring components.

Breedlove stated that he submitted an addendum his strategic plan to address updates. Kuleck invited all to do the same if they wish.

Kuleck asked that Gary be prepared to discuss strategic planning and hires. Farooq will send out five-year trend enrollment data to chairs by the end of the week to help determine whether or not hires are feasible.

The next meeting will be held November 21, 2:00-4:00 p.m. Kuleck reminded all to send agenda items to Dierdre Williams.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Valjean Newsome