Meeting of the Villanova University
Academic Policy Committee

Monday, April 29, 2019
10:00 - 11:30 AM
Fedigan Room (SAC 400)

Present: Melissa Bradley, Sarah-Vaughan Brakman, Sherry Burrell, Kathy Byrnes, Matt Clarkin, Scott Dressler, Stacey Havlik, Marylu Hill, Zuyi (Jacky) Huang, Stephanie Katz, Matthew Kerbel (substitute for Craig Wheeland), Christopher Kilby (chair), Rory Kramer, Eric Lomazoff, Wen Mao, Stephen Napier, Christine Kelleher Palus, Lesley Perry, Elizabeth Petit de Mange, Javad Siah, Ani Ural, Andrea Welker

Absent: Adele Lindenmeyr (NIA), Michael Posner, Amanda Rappa (alternate), Craig Wheeland (NIA), Tianxia (Tina) Yang (NIA)

Administrative Items

1) Sherry Burrell volunteered to take notes.

2) Minutes for 4/3/2019 approved as corrected with no negative votes and three abstentions.

Old Business

3) Working Group on University Shop Proposal ("IncludED")
Scott Dressler and Stephanie Katz reported on the first meeting of the working group. The University Shop (Follett) proposes that Villanova fold the cost of textbooks into student tuition. With the current mix of books, the hypothetical/estimated cost is $30 per credit hour. That number may change based on faculty's choice of textbook format (e.g., hard cover, paperback, electronic). Follett claims a 70% saving on textbook prices; this appears to be relative to highest possible textbook cost rather than what the typical student actually pays. Faculty could continue to select any textbook and any format. Follett provided information on Xavier University as a successful example of IncludED. [1]

APC members voiced concerns relate to: a) cost (especially that $30/credit hour may be a teaser rate); and b) academic freedom of instructors. Regarding the latter, would attempts to limit costs result in pressure on instructors in terms of their selection of course material and formats? Scott and Stephanie welcome additional concerns/questions via email; the chair of the working group will attend an APC meeting in the fall to provide an update.

Subcommittee Reports & Discussion

4) Student Course Load

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[1] Since the APC meeting on 4/29/2019, those who also serve on the working group wanted to clarify several points. First, there is no plan to charge students by credit hour; the $30/credit hour was simply the way Follett presented information. Second, this number is useful for predicting the initial cost to the university but is not necessarily indicative of the eventual impact on student tuition.

Rory Kramer (chair) presented a draft proposal prepared by the subcommittee (attached). APC members—particularly from Engineering and Nursing—noted challenges this might pose for students from their colleges taking required or elective courses outside their home college. The proposed system might also raise issues for Admissions as it might limit the number of AP credits accepted and prevent students in Nursing and Engineering from majoring and minoring outside their home college. Christopher suggested a four course load with 32 courses required for a BA is common at elite liberal arts colleges and elite research universities and asked whether there are examples of other universities—that would face similar between-college issues with professional schools—using such a system.

5) Add / Drop ("Course Preview Policy")
Matt Clarkin (chair) presented changes in the proposed policy, specifically highlighting a form that faculty would use to close their course to student preview. In response to a question, Matt indicated that course preview would not be tied to waitlist priority (which, in any case, current software does not allow) because the goal is to encourage exploration to make more informed decisions in future semesters, not to "demonstrate commitment" to garner advantage on a waitlist. The committee discussed the potential administrative burden of complete "opt out" forms in colleges where that will be very common, with the suggestion that each college dean could decide whether their college followed an opt out system (where faculty would have to complete a form to close their classes to preview) or an opt in system (where faculty would have to complete a form to open their classes to preview). There was some concern that the preview system might increase add/drop activity but this could be seen as either a negative (more administrative work, some disruption to the class) or a positive (more informed course selection by students). One APC member suggested the policy include part-time students as well and another opined that any forms should be available electronically. A revised proposal for a pilot of the Course Preview Option will be circulated and put to a vote via email.

6) Out of College Programs (OCP)
Jacky Huang (chair) presented proposed guidelines for academic programs outside of colleges (attached). Revisions since the last draft include how proposals for OCPs are put forward and assessed, how OCPs are governed and evaluated once approved, and criteria and procedures for terminating OCPs. Additional clarifying comments included that OCP majors must be "second majors" (i.e., the student must also have a major in their home college and therefore meet the non-major requirements of that college) and that at least one faculty member on the OCP steering committee must be tenured. Discussion of this proposal will continue in Fall 2019.

Final notes
7) CATS Update
Christopher Kilby reported on discussions with Jim Trainer (OPIR) regarding how and when CATS results will be reported to faculty. Christopher indicated that he believes it is APC's role to advocate for faculty interests in this regard, rather than accept the current (and proposed future) reporting limitations of the online system.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15. Thanks to Sherry Burrell for the great notes!