Meeting of the Villanova University
Academic Policy Committee

Wednesday, March 13, 2019
11:00 - 12:30 PM
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, Christopher Kilby (chair), Rory Kramer, Eric Lomazoff, Stephen Napier, Lesley Perry, Javad Siah, Andrea Welker, Tianxia (Tina) Yang

Absent: Adele Lindenmeyr (NIA), Wen Mao (NIA), Christine Kelleher Palus (NIA), Elizabeth Petit de Mange (NIA), Michael Posner (NIA), Amanda Rappa (alternate), Ani Ural (NIA), Craig Wheeland (NIA)

Administrative Items

1) Sarah-Vaughan Brakman volunteered to take notes.

2) Minutes from 1/23/2019 approved unanimously.

New Business

3) Textbook Working Group
Christopher Kilby asked for two volunteers to serve as faculty representatives on a working group to study the University Shop (Follett) proposal for including the cost of textbooks in tuition. Scott Dressler, Stephanie Katz, and Javad Siah volunteered. Christopher indicated he would forward these names to Craig Wheeland to select the two faculty representatives. The committee discussed the importance of this proposal, including potential advantages (lower costs as compared to current textbook purchases through the University Shop; automatic coverage of textbook costs by scholarships and educational loans) and disadvantages (cross-subsidization between courses and majors; possibly higher prices than for used books or books from third party sellers; limitations on instructors' choices). Christopher asked that the representatives keep APC informed about developments. The working group is expected to complete its work by the end of the Fall semester.

Sub-Committee Reports & Discussion

4) Academic Programs Outside of Colleges
Jacky Huang (subcommittee chair) presented a table summarizing three existing cross-college programs (VIA, Minor in Sustainability Studies, Cybersecurity Minor) in terms of creation, budgetary matters, governance, course advertising, and evaluation. He noted differences concerning costs, faculty recruitment, and dissemination of information to students. Jacky pointed out that in the case of the VIA courses, the Associate Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning has acted in the capacity of chair and the Vice Provost for Academics has acted in the capacity of dean. Beyond enrollment, no evaluation procedures

are specified (e.g., a curriculum committee). Some APC members suggested different procedures for proposals driven by the colleges and proposals driven by the Provost's office. Regarding the question of communication with students about new courses, Christopher will contact the AVPTL to determine policy and practice regarding advertising of courses via Newswire versus direct emails to students.

5) Add/Drop
The subcommittee has developed an alternative proposal to extending the add/drop period: a "course preview policy" that allows students not enrolled in a course to petition to sit-in on the class for the first two weeks. This would allow them to make more informed course selection decisions in future semesters. The proposal includes strict limits on the number of students (preview plus enrolled) in a classroom to avoid overburdening instructors or undermining the enrolled student experience and the instructor's consent is required. Each student would be allowed at most one preview per semester (at least when the program starts). APC discussed a number of issues: Might preview students get priority on a waitlist if the course is full? This was tabled until such time as the University adopts a software package that can maintain a waitlist. Would this policy lead to more informed choices that enrich the educational experience (as intended) or other, less desirable outcomes (student risk avoidance, pressure on faculty to be entertainers)? That is hard to know in advance. Could instructors opt out via a class attribute that indicates whether or not the class is open for preview? The subcommittee will investigate this with the Registrar before APC votes on this proposal (planned for 4/3/2019).

6) CATS
Tina Yang (acting for subcommittee Michael Posner) presented a new charge for the CATS subcommittee for approval by APC. After some discussion, APC unanimously approved the new charge (attached). Tina further reported that in a February meeting, OPIR staff reported that less than 1% responded to "Disagree" and less than 1% responded to "Strongly Disagree" to the questions "Demonstrated cultural awareness" and "Creates an environment free of bias based on individual difference or social identify." Christopher suggested the subcommittee provide guidance regarding how responses to the Diversity and Inclusion questions should and should not be used. Finally, APC discussed anecdotal evidence that response rates have fallen and that comments have become "meaner."

7) Student Course Load
Rory Kramer (subcommittee chair) plans a detail report on the committee's work at the next APC meeting. In preparation for that, he continues to gather data from the registrar. One interesting statistic is that 1 in 10 students WX a course. While the data used for this calculation need to be validated, this is cause for concern.

The meeting adjourned at 12:25. Special thanks to Sarah-Vaughan Brakman for excellent notes!