October 21, 2011

University Planning Council

Minutes for October 21, 2011

Present: Catherine Frank, Eric Gant, Katja Greeson, Archer Gravely, Julie Heinitsh, Gregg Kormanik, Erica Abrams Locklear, Ted Meigs, Patrice Mitchell, Kevin Moorhead, Gary Nallan, Dave Peifer, Anne Ponder, Christine Riley, Robert Straub

Absent: Buffy Bagwell, Keller Berry, Melissa Burchard, Jane Fernandes, Bill Haggard, John Pierce

 Guests: Bruce Larson, David Todd, Volker Frank, Ed Katz, Mark Harvey, Norman Richards

UPC met on October 21 from 3:00 to 4:43 pm in Highsmith Union 222.

1. Chancellor Ponder reported on attending President Ross’s installation and noted that his inaugural address articulated a framework within which UNC Asheville fits ideally in a number of ways. She noted that we were recently visited by Mr. Lyons Gray, a former state legislator and member of President Ross’s leadership team, to discuss efficiency and sustainability issues. Chancellor Ponder reported that Mr. Gray was most impressed with UNC Asheville’s work in these areas.

2. Dr. Larson updated UPC on the SACS Compliance process and timeline. On September 12, our compliance report was submitted on schedule. This report will be reviewed by the off-site peer review team during November 1-4. We should receive feedback on our compliance report during the month of November, and we will have four-six weeks to respond and submit the Quality Enhancement Plan. The on-site review will take place during the last week of March 2012. The SACS Commission on Colleges Board of Trustees will take action on our reaffirmation process in December 2012. UPC members voiced concerns about the more than $500,000 proposed five-year budget for the QEP project. Dr. Larson reported that the cost is in the right range compared to the QEP projects of other institutions of similar size. UPC members were also concerned that the QEP would be funded by taking away resources from other existing programs. Dr. Katz noted that a lot of the QEP costs are geared to faculty development and that we were not too far away from covering these expenses using existing faculty development funds. The Chancellor and Senior Staff will receive a full draft of the QEP project by November 1.

3. Drs. Katz and Harvey discussed the undergraduate research benchmarks with UPC. Dr. Katz suggested that the wording of the UGR Strategic Plan goal be changed from: “UNC Asheville will be the leading undergraduate research institution...” to “UNC Asheville will be “a leading undergraduate research institution...”. He also proposed that the UGR benchmark on the number of projects involving sustainability be listed under both the UGR and sustainability benchmarks. UPC approved these changes. Dr. Katz reported that in 2010-11, we had a target of providing 77 non-ENVR courses with integrated sustainability content and the actual figure was 93 sections. The number of UGR projects focusing on sustainability issues increased from 37.5 (two-year average) in 2008-09 to 45 in 2009-10. Due to the loss of grant funding, this figure declined to 19 in 2010-11. A $281,000 grant to support sustainability projects has been funded by the State Energy Office. These projects include one Energy Fellow and 20 current students and recent graduate interns working on both campus and community based projects.
4. Mr. Todd and Mr. Richardson made a proposal to change the energy consumption (BTU) per building square foot benchmark target. The current target is defined as below the average for the previous five years. There are two problems with this target definition. (1) it does not measure what the Strategic Plan identifies as its goal [to “build on our statewide leadership and recognition for environmental stewardship”]; and (2) this kind of measurement is skewed by changes in buildings and building purposes. For example, the new Zeis Science Building is a heavy energy user due to laboratory environmental and safety and regulations. Additionally, the addition of the new Sherrill Center will add to the problem of benchmarking against historical usage. Mr. Todd suggested that a more appropriate benchmark target would be to compare our energy usage to the state-mandated minimum level of 108,597 BTU/SF figure. UNC Asheville’s actual usage is far below this state target, which has been the basis for our statewide recognition. UPC approved this change. Our success in exceeding the state energy targets is the result of unified technology, ambitious campus goals, a long-standing campus commitment to sustainability, and our talented staff. Mr. Richards gave UPC an overview of campus energy management procedures, recent equipment upgrades, and sophisticated temperature control systems. Dr. Moorhead suggested that we consider an additional benchmark, the percentage of campus energy use produced by alternative sources. The Environmental Sustainability Workgroup agreed to consider this.

5. As part of the on-going discussion of social sustainability, each UPC member was asked to describe any specific current questions or concerns, and had a brief conversation on how to best communicate on campus. This topic will be carried forward to our next meeting on November 18th.

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