

Eastern Michigan University  
College of Arts & Sciences  
College Advisory Council

Special Meeting

Minutes

July 11, 2019 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.  
212 Pray-Harrold (Dean's Conference Room)

Present: Sheerin (P&A), Heller (Dean), Kindred (CMTA), Molloy (Art), Ensor (SAC), Greenwald (ENVI), Pressly-Sanon (AAAS), Graves (BIO), Evett (COSC), Stype (Econ), Clark (G&G), Dove (PSY), Higgins (H&P), Dumitrascu (Math), Cass (M&D), Jones (WGST), Pernecky (AD), Baker (AD)

- I. Call to Order – Meeting was called to order at 3:32pm by Chair, Jenny Kindred
- II. Approval of Minutes (April 18, 2019) – There was a motion to approve the minutes from this meeting, and the minutes were approved by a vote of 8-0-4.
- III. Presentation – Dean Heller

Dean Heller called this summer meeting of the CAC to bring us up to date on the college business. This is a condensed version of what was presented to the department heads earlier this summer. All colleges have been asked to think about how we might reorganize in order to accommodate the new reality that we will be an institution of about 14,000 students as of Fall 2019. This was predicted, but it happened at a much quicker rate than what we thought it would. Today she would like to discuss a process for reorganization. No steps have been taken thus far, but, moving forward, we want to make sure we are aligning our process with our mission and vision to keep the college on track.

The Dean acknowledges that change is scary, and people experience change as loss because sometimes it is. But, as an optimist, she sees change as opportunity. There is a lot of ambiguity in place right now as colleagues decide whether to take the buyouts or not. When colleagues take the buyout, we don't know if they will be replaced and this ambiguity is difficult. It is very difficult to change the structure of institutions as well. People are often resistant to change – they become suspicious about the reasons that are driving the change. Why is it necessary? Whose interests will be served by the change? There are many stakeholders in a complex institution.

There will be many constraints in this reorganization process. There are 18 distinct departments in CAS and each has its own departmental culture. We have to have communication about this that honors each of these separate entities. There are many internal constraints at work in this process. For example, we have to work with declining faculty morale issues. In addition, resources, time, and our dependence on other parts of EMU are also relevant in this discussion. There are also many external constraints that we have to deal with in this process. These include university budget, stagnant state support, institutional

policies, enrollment shifts, upper administrative pressures, the economy, market competition, and public discourse on the value of public higher education.

Some people might ask why we should even be talking about reorganization and many reasons were given. The Dean has been doing research on this in order to answer this question. Some of these reasons are abstract and some are very concrete. Reorganization is becoming necessary in order to accommodate changing conditions. It is also becoming necessary to reduce costs, concentrate on new priorities or programs, consolidate programs, to facilitate collaborations and make better use of talent and expertise. We also want to improve our competitive advantage in the higher education market.

It is also important to note how we will determine our success in this endeavor. According to the dean, success will be determined if all stakeholders are considered and heard. In addition, if we remain true to our core mission and values, serve our students in the best way possible, develop flexibility, make space for everyone, use data to inform our approach, and set a timeframe for decision making and change. Conversely, we will know that we have been unsuccessful if we don't have a clear process, we leave people out of our process, we fail to communicate with all stakeholders, or we take actions that conflict with our values and mission.

The Dean then described a keynote address given at a conference she previously attended. The address is on youtube – Frederick Lawrence's "The Nature of the University." The gist of this keynote address is that the university is its *mission* – *not* the human constituents. As such, we are all responsible to serve the mission – that is where the authority lies at a university.

The presentation then took a turn, and Dean Heller began discussing more specific data that reflects our reality in CAS. More specifically:

- \*We have been losing the equivalent of a science department per year (12,803 SCH)

- \*The lower our SCH, the lower our budget.

- \*The current fall SCH is down 12.1%

Note: The downtrends are in our lower level and general education courses mostly. The upper division courses and grad classes are not declining as quickly.

Dean Pernecky then went over what all is included in the discretionary expense budget and how those amounts have been declining from fiscal year '15 to fiscal year '20. In sum, the discretionary budget has declined from 4.1 million in '15 to 3.1 million in fiscal year '20. One takeaway from this data is that 60% of our discretionary budget is now spent on GA stipends.

Dean Heller paused the presentation at this point and pointed to this revelation about the GA stipends as an example of how perhaps this may be untrue to our mission statement. In other words, we have cut undergraduate travel and other undergraduate programs extensively, despite the fact that we say we value this in our mission statement. Some discussion about this point then ensued, namely centered around the balance between undergraduate and graduate education and the role of community colleges as well.

The Dean also discussed the increase in the amount of faculty travel requests this past year. Because there were more requests, the Dean's office overspent in this area. Dean Heller said

that the Dean's office cannot overspend in this way again so some change will need to be initiated in this area as well, but again, she wants to make sure that the way this is done is consistent with our mission and vision. The Dean said her office will be looking for input on this as well. Some of these questions will be among our first CAC agenda items in the fall.

More specifically, this process will begin in September via a website where suggestions will be taken regarding this restructuring process. Then the suggestions will go to CAC for vetting. Some of these decisions can be thoughtfully done and can take time. Others are more urgent and need to happen right out of the gate in the fall.

- IV. Discussion – Discussion was integrated into the presentation portion above.
- V. Adjourn – the meeting was adjourned at 5:07pm by Chair, Jenny Kindred