College of Engineering

North Dakota State University
Faculty Council Meeting
Friday, October 13th, 2023, 2pm – 4pm
CME Auditorium

Attending:

CoE: Alan Kallmeyer, Marissa Nygard, Andy Dahl, Jenna Eskstein
ABEN: Dean Steele, Xuhua Jua, Leon Schumacher, Ewumbua Monono, Clairmount Clementson, Ken Hellevang, Sulaymon Esheabilou
CCEE: Kalpana Katti, Dinish Katti, Youjin Jang, Juan Le, Michael Chu, Jerry Gao, Achintya Beezbarah, Trung Le
CS: Simone Ludwig, Anne Denton
ECE: Roger Green, Ben Braaten, Qufeng Zhang, Jacob Glower
IME: Harun Pirim, Diana Lopez, Kambiz Farahmand, Mohand Aseed Osman
ME: Chad Ulven, Yechun Wang, Adam Gladen, Will Refling, Jessica Vold, Xinnan Wang, Long Jiang, Inbae Jeong, Y. Bora Suzen, Xiangfu Wu, Ali Amiri, Fardad Azarmi, Y Zhang, Ghodrat Karami, Anne Tangpong

1. Call to Order:

Meeting was called to order at 2:04pm

2. Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting

Motion to approve the minutes from March 23, 2023. (Katti, ?). Motion approved.

3. Announcements

none

4. Committee Announcements/Reports

Executive: No Report

Promotion and Tenure: No Update

Academic Affairs: (Amiri) Course Leaf just opened up yesterday. As of 10/13/23, no new course proposals were on Course Leaf. Two changes for this year: departmental AA committees no longer need to approve new courses (there isn't a check box for departmental committees). The only approval needed at the departmental level is the chair. As a request, would department chairs let you're AA representative know about the courses you're approving. This would help speed things up in the college AA committee. The departmental representatives are:

- ABEN: Xinhua Jia
- CCEE: Kelly Rusch
- CS: Kenneth Magel
- ECE: Shuvashis Dey
- IME: Lokesh Narayanan
- ME: Ali Amiri (chair)

The college AA committee is also preparing a guideline for submitting new courses and course changes. This is a 2-page guideline that will go to department chairs that should speed up the submission process.

Research and Graduate: No Report

University Senate (Gao): Updates from the President of the Faculty Senate were mailed out to all NDSU faculty. These updates are fairly complete. Senators have also reached out to faculty for input to the Senate meetings.

5. Discussions & Q&A

Dean Kallmeyer: There is a lot going on at NDSU – likewise, this meeting has been scheduled for two hours.

Leading off: Enrollment and Recruitment. Enrollment has dropped since 2017. This year, we dropped about 67 undergraduate students in CoE. The reason for the focus on undergraduates is that's where the bulk of our income comes from. Another year, another drop, means another reduction in the revenue coming into the college. It's more acute now due to the new budget model we're adopting.

Several factors are responsible for this drop, a big factor being a lower incoming freshmen class this year in CoE. There are two components to enrollment: recruitment and retention. If we look at graduate student enrollments, we dropped a modest amount this year. If you go back to 2017, our graduate enrollment has been fairly steady at about 350 graduate students per year. It's the undergraduate enrollment that's been causing our budget issues.

On the positive side, when we look at retention, the first-year retention rate in CoE is much higher than it is in NDSU overall (83% retention rate in CoE). One reason may be that we attract highly-performing students. Second-year retention is also much higher in CoE than it is at NDSU overall.

(Pryor) Some things we're doing in CoE to improve our retention numbers are as follows. We do an awful lot of outreach in the college, as well as recruitment and advertising. Many of the things we're doing started in the past few years in response to the enrollment drop that we've been seeing for the last five years. We went from a half-time outreach coordinator to a full-time coordinator. We now have a full-time communications marketing director. This relates to outreach – building the awareness of engineering and NDSU at the K-12 level. Similar things relate to advertising and recruiting. Every year we're trying to find new things we can do to increase our brand awareness and bring new students in.

This isn't just an NDSU problem – engineering colleges across the country are facing declining enrollment. The most important thing we can do as faculty is taking care of our current students: our best recruitment tool is our current students. From a more direct recruitment standpoint, the most important thing we can do is make sure that every student that comes on campus has a phenomenal experience. If a student comes to campus for a tour, there's more than a 50% chance that they will enroll at NDSU.

Another topic relates to consistency in outcomes in classes. As an example, one class (outside of CoE) has widely varying DFW rate from semester to semester. If a course is taught by different instructors, the outcomes and expectations should be similar: a student's grade shouldn't be dependent upon which semester he/she took the class.

(Kallmeyer) Returning to the budget. What is the new budget model and how it works for the different colleges?

At NDSU, our budget comes from two primary sources: tuition the students pay and the money from the state (state appropriations) that is based upon student credit hours generated. Both of those are entirely dependent upon the number of students that we have in our classes. When enrollment goes up, budgets go up. When enrollment goes down, budgets go down. There is a lag, however. Tuition is immediate while state appropriations have a two-year lag due to the state having a biennium budget cycle.

With the tuition incentivized budget model, the academic colleges get most of the tuition revenue. We do not get any of the state revenue. The state revenue goes to support all of the other units on campus (administration, auxillary, everything else). Only tuition dollars go to the colleges and colleges have to balance their books entirely upon these tuition dollars. It gets a little more complicated since all scholarships, tuition waivers, etc. all come off the top. The net result is colleges gets $278/credit for undergraduates – well under what undergraduates pay.

The way it's dispursed is based upon who's bringing the students in (the college of record) and who's generating the student credit hours (the college of instruction). The agreed upon split is 25% of that $278 goes to the college of record while 75% goes to the college of instruction.

For graduate students, it's a little different: 100% goes to the college of record. The problem there is that most of our graduate students don't pay tuition: they're on tuition waivers. That's a big factor since tuition waivers used to be covered by the university. Now tuition waivers are expensed to the college. This is actually a net negative since the amount expensed is at the full tuition rate whereas the amount credited is at the discounted tuition rate.

Differential tuition is going away – it is now called "engineering tuition" vs. "business tuition", etc. All of this differential goes to the college (100%). This is about 10% above the base tuition rate.

Here's what we're looking at for the current fiscal year (FY24).

- $16.39 million: CoE revenue based upon tuition estimated FY24.
- $19.36 million: CoE expenses based upon FY23 spending in CoE.

This gives a net deficit of almost $3 million. Last year, CoE gave up $1.5 million in two separate cuts. These were difficult cuts. We're looking at double that amount this year on top of the previous cuts. This is not pretty.

For the current year, we have a little bit of grace. CoE got a one-time $360k redistribution from the Provost. This still leaves a $2.6 million shortfall to cover this year. To put this in perspective, the graduate student tuition waiver expense for CoE is $2.1 million. It's a big expense.

So, what are we doing? To fill this hole for this year and next year:

- $1 million: Not filling open lines in CoE
- $300k: reducing operational funds

For FY25, to get to the full $2.6 million

- $320k: Make adjustments in graduate tuition waivers
- $350k: Require tuition remission in grants
- $320k: New enrollment from new programs (online in ECE, CS, masters in data science, etc.)
- $310k: Foundation funds

The Foundation funds can't solve our problems long term, but they can help get us through a few years.

(Question from Dr. Green): How much of this budget shortfall is due to declining enrollment and how much is due to the new budget model?

Pryor: Enrollment in CoE is down by 3% whereas our budget is down by about 15%.

(Kallmeyer): On the positive side, if we can turn around our enrollment numbers, this increase will show up in our budget. Also note that no-one is being laid off. We are going to lose open lines – but we're trying to manage without having to lay anyone off.

The budget is what's driving policy changes.

- Graduate Tuition Policy: The differential portion of the tuition waiver will no longer be waived at the college level. Grants or departments could cover this.
- To get a waiver, students need to be 20h/week.
- The waiver rate calculated at the in-state rate.
- Other changes are spelled out in an email sent our earlier to all faculty.
- Grants Policy: Grants above a certain level are required (of allowed) to include a tuition remission, again as spelled out in an earlier email.
- Summer School Policy: Minimum enrollments and summer-school salary caps are being implemented, again as spelled out in an earlier email.

On a more cheery side, the new engineering complex. This will be a tremendous benefit for our research, teaching, and recruiting in CoE. The ND state legislature approved an $84 million building: $70% from the state and 30% from NDSU ($30 million including interest and other fees). We're currently at $14 million in commitments.

The timeline is very rushed. The kickoff meeting is Friday, October 27th at 3:30pm in the alumni center. All faculty are encouraged to attend. The goal is to break ground in Summer 2025.

On another positive note, Dr. Bilen-Green is returning to CoE. Dr. Bilen Green is one of our finest teachers, researchers, and administrators – someone I have the greatest admiration and respect for. We are fortunate to have her returning to our college and we welcome her return.

6. Old Business
None

7. New Business
None

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50pm.

Respectfully submitted

Jake Glower
10/16/23