**Minutes of the Spring All Faculty Meeting**

January 29, 2015

Classroom Building 203

Chair Rod Rice called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM. Thirty-one members of the faculty attended.

**General discussion of issues**

Dr. Rice brought the meeting to order and identified the three main agenda items: common examination scheduling, student travel policy, and system general education review.

***Common Examination Scheduling****:* Dr. Rice described the common exam scheduling problem and outlined possible solutions suggested at the 8 January Senate meeting. The primary issue is an evening scheduling conflict which creates an overlap among Chemistry and Math common exams and Music classes and rehearsals. Possible solutions presented for faculty consideration included the following: doing away with common exams; leaving the schedule as is; asking instructors to reschedule exams for those students who miss classes to take the exam; finding alternate times for music classes and rehearsals; and moving common exams to another time slot. Among the alternatives, faculty in attendance clearly preferred the latter (see discussion below).

*Question*: Who has the power to change policy?

*Answer*: The Provost must propose policy changes to the executive council.

*Question*: Should we have common exams?

*Answer*: Faculty teaching courses with common exams like common exams because the exams ensure course integrity and uniform testing processes, prevent cheating, use classroom space more effectively, and can accommodate ADA requirements, even though finding space for the number of ADA students in large courses is an ongoing problem. However, as a number of faculty pointed out, in the future, better testing facilities will be needed.

*Question*: How many students are in the music courses?

*Answer*: Music courses are not extracurricular in nature (EX: MUS 117 satisfies a Goal #4 Humanities requirement) and currently enroll 175 students. Historically, these courses have been scheduled from 7-9:00 PM on weeknights in order to accommodate student schedules, part-time faculty, and community musicians who accompany the band and choir. The Music schedule that now exists predates the current common exam schedule.

*Question*: How much flexibility do music and athletics have with regard to common exam scheduling?

*Answer*: Music, probably not much; athletics, perhaps for the sports with fewer participants, but almost none with the larger sports.

*Question*: How do other schools do common exams?

*Answer*: A variety of ways: using mornings, Saturdays, and with appropriately-equipped testing facilities. Research shows, however, that students do poorly at 7:00 AM and do not like taking early exams. Also, under the current schedule, an early morning time (7-7:50 AM) does not work for ADA requirements. If morning times were the sole alternative, Math would probably go to online testing. Saturdays don’t work well because of athletic schedules.

*Question*: What about split scheduling? Could some test takers start at 6:00 PM and others at 7:00 PM?

*Answer*: Possibly.

*Question*: How will the new schedule affect common exams?

*Answer*: Exams could be moved up one half hour.

*Question*: What about one day for all common exams, e. g. common exams only on Monday evenings, but with two times 5-7:00 PM and 7-9:00 PM?

*Answer*: A strong possibility.

The faculty recommended the following actions to address the scheduling problem:

1. Affected groups will work out a patch for this semester.
2. Dr. Feiszli will send music course rosters to the Math and Chemistry Departments.
3. A committee consisting of the Academic Affairs committee of the Faculty Senate and respective representatives from Math, Athletics, Chemistry, and Music will be set up to consider long-term solutions to common examination scheduling problems.

***Student Travel Policy***. Dr. Gilcrease, Chair of the Faculty Senate Student Affairs Committee, presented the following proposed addition to the Minimum Progression Standards in the *SDSM&T Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog*:

* While on academic probation, the student is not allowed to participate in university–sponsored travel (including but not limited to sponsored travel with sports or design teams or sponsored participation in professional conferences).

The addition was proposed to address inconsistencies in the application of student travel eligibility among academic departments. Although the Athletic Department has done an excellent job in applying and monitoring a uniform travel eligibility policy, other programs on campus have not been as consistent. In some cases, students have missed consecutive weeks of classes, some upwards of 20% of total course meetings, and in a noteworthy case two years ago, one student requested three weeks travel during spring semester.

*Question*: Is the Minimum Progression Standards section of the *Catalog* the most appropriate place for this addition? Perhaps it would be better placed near the current Excused Absences for School Sponsored Events section?

*Answer*: Possibly. The Student Affairs Committee should consider that option.

*Question*: How does one find out which students are on probation?

*Answer*: Athletics has their Compliance Officer get the list from the Registrar. The group advisor can get the information.

*Question*: Should total travel be addressed differently from probation issues?

*Answer*: Probably, but total travel is much more difficult to address. Also, twenty years ago (approximately) policy was adopted to allow some travel.

*Question*: What about unexcused vs. excused absences? The instructor can make students perform extra work for unexcused absences.

*Answer*: The proposed policy applies to what are considered excused absences.

*Question*: The NCAA has slightly different probation standards for freshman. Can probation be considered differently for freshman? The NCAA standard is 1.8 for freshman probation (and not really considered until after freshman year).

*Answer*: Possibly, but current standards do not appear to have been a hindrance.

*Comment*: Methods for faculty and Department Heads to identify the amount of student travel and student travel eligibility need to be determined and disseminated. Although not all traveling groups are overseen by departments, the excessive travel issue may be best addressed through the Provost. Specific travel guidance from the Provost to the Department Heads may prevent inconsistent application and abuses of the policy.

***General Education and Institutional Graduation Requirements Review***: Drs. Feiszli and DeVeaux, the SDSM&T representatives to the Board of Regents System General Education Review Steering Committee, provided an update on this committee’s work thus far. The last general education review of this sort took place 15 years ago. The current review will span a two-year period and is designed to gather campus input related to the purpose and value of the general education curriculum in order to analyze strengths and weaknesses and recommend improvements or changes where necessary.

In conjunction with the General Education Review, the BoR has committed the state system to participating to the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) Phase II Program. The primary focus of WICHE Phase II is course transferability. Currently at SDSM&T, departments evaluate transfer courses individually. WICHE Phase II (Interstate Passport Initiative) proposes a more outcome-focused evaluation to provide inter-University course transfer among WICHE members, a significant switch from the current method of accepting transfer courses. Two SDSM&T faculty are serving on the WICHE Passport Humanities team (Drs. Antonen and Van Nuys) and one on the Science team (Dr. DeVeaux).

Dr. Rice adjourned the meeting at 5:15 pm.