

University Response to the External Review
of
Language and Communication Programs
May 8, 2008

A meeting was held on Monday, May 8, 2008 in room 104 Roy Hall with the following individuals attending: Dr. Thomas Hanson, Dr. Steve Horton, Roni Ramirez, Dr. Lisa Abney, Dr. Julie Kane and Dr. Virginia Crossno. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Departmental and University response to the external review of the Language and Communication programs conducted by Dr. Dan Jones in October, 2007. Dr. Lisa Abney, Head of the Department of Language and Communication provided a status report on the departmental response to recommendations made by Dr. Jones. Following her report, Dr. Hanson provided a report on the university's response to those recommendations specific to the administration. These are:

Recommendation

1. Evaluate funding patterns for the library to determine whether the current budget is sufficient to sustain the quality of the collection. Consider appointing a special faculty task force to examine these issues.

University Response

The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Affairs has implemented a study of Library expenditures to determine what areas of expenditures should continue and which areas could to be considered for a reduction or elimination. The Library Council represents faculty and administrators and the group meets regularly to work on issues related to the library. Recommendations are made to address various issues including the library budget. This may include shifting funds currently available to areas of need and/or increasing funds in critical categories.

To address the issue of purchasing additional books, a one-time special allocation of \$50,000 was designated for purchasing additional books and publications. All the requests from faculty in the Department of Language and Communication Department were honored.

2. Survey faculty and students about the quality of the campus bookstore service to determine the extent and validity of concerns expressed during the site visit. Should the survey indicate problems in this area, consider appointment a task force composed of students and faculty to advise the bookstore and the administration on solutions.

University Response

The university has taken action on issues regarding the quality of bookstore service. These are:

- Improvements have been made on bookstore services by awarding the contract to Barnes & Noble
 - Providing the option of students purchasing textbooks online
 - Investigation of approved methods for purchasing books using vouchers
3. Continue to make the renovation of Kyser Hall a high priority in the planning and budgeting process. Communicate frequently with the university community, in both formal and informal ways, about the obstacles that the university faces in funding capital improvements.

University Response

Renovations to Kyser Hall continue to be a high priority for the university. As funds become available renovations will be made. Utilization of the building for faculty and classes makes it impossible to close the building entirely, therefore plans are to renovate one floor at a time. All options and possibilities are being considered by the university.

4. Consider allocating additional funds to support the professional development of faculty in the Department of Language and Communication.

University Response

The University recognizes and supports professional development activities of faculty and makes every effort to provide funds to all departments. However under budget constraints, allocations are not at a desired level. Funds that become available will be shifted to this category.

5. Consider funding new faculty lines in composition/rhetoric, communication, and Spanish. Provide faculty clear guidelines on how to justify their case for additional lines.

University Response

The university is currently filling all existing faculty lines that are vacant. There is a freeze on filling new faculty lines. After July 1, 2008, consideration will be given to those requests for new faculty lines that are aligned with the University priorities.

Other

6. The issue of technical support is in the narrative prepared by Dr. Jones; however, he did not include it under the University category of recommendations. The group assembled to discuss the university response considered it important and therefore included it in the discussion.

University Response

Improvement in technical support is being achieved due to the recent administrative reorganization, moving Information Systems from the area of Academic Affairs to the newly created area of Technology, Research and Economic Development. Enhanced technical support throughout the university will be improved because of the abilities and experience of the staff in this new area.

7. Another topic of discussion was the consideration of developing a way to recognize departments completing a favorable review of their academic programs. The group agreed that this should be done and plans be made to submit proposed plans to the group and the President for final approval.