Department Council Minutes
Department of Educational Policy Studies
November 08, 2019, 10:00 am-12:00 pm, 7-152 Education North


Guests:  S. Key

Regrets:  D. Kapoor, I. Martyniak, L. Shultz

Minutes:  C. Mosimann

1.  Call to Order

2.  Approval of Agenda Dated November 08, 2019
Motion:  It was moved by D. Da Costa, seconded by D. Hunter, that the agenda be Approved.

CARRIED

3.  Approval of Minutes Dates October 18, 2019
Motion:  It was moved by J. Sousa, seconded by J. da Costa, that the minutes be approved with a request from S. Auger to confirm the names of graduate students in attendance before publishing.

CARRIED

4.  Presentation & Discussion, Dr. Scott Key, Director, Professional Learning Unit
S. Key presented on the Professional Learning Unit (PLU) with the following points discussed:
● PLU Reports to the Dean with the governance structure still being determined.
● Currently offering two degree programs, the Master of Education in Educational Studies (MES) & Master of Education in Health Sciences Education (MHSE), a Graduate Certificate in School Leadership, and Continuing Professional Learning (CPL, equivalent to a professional development program).
● PLU is exploring additional graduate certificates with the goal to ladder certificates into graduate degree programs.
● PLU operates on a cost-recovery basis and aims to attract new students to the UofA who would not otherwise attend (i.e. not diverting students from other programs in the UofA).
● PLU is expected to contribute to the net operating revenues of the faculty, especially in the context of the new budget cuts.

Questions and Discussion:
● It was asked if there has been discussion with UAlberta International to offer short courses to school leaders. Response: Meetings are in progress and they are exploring offering an MES cohort in Japan.
It was asked what the overall aim of the PLU is in regards to the number of offerings. Response: PLU aims to do many things well, especially in the context of offering graduate certificates. It was noted that departments may want to reconsider their degree programs as MES has students willing to pay cost-recovery tuition for a more accessible program.

It was asked what the vision is for Continuing Professional Learning. Response: A faculty-wide conversation is needed to assess current offerings and ensure consistency in delivery. It was noted the Faculty of Extension offers professional development.

It was asked if graduate certificates will be cohort based. Response: A cohort model is being discussed and in the short term may have more open enrolment for some offerings.

It was asked what changes will happen for faculty members and sessionals in regards to teaching in PLU degree and certificate programs. Response: PLU teaching will be invitational with no requirements to instruct. It was noted that there is finite teaching capacity within the department so there will be limits on how many PLU courses can be taught.

It was asked when a faculty member is on sabbatical what portion of their salary is returned to the faculty. L. Prochner responded that he was not certain and would need to obtain that information.

It was asked what the completion rates are for the MES and MHSE degrees currently offered. Response: MES completion rate of around 95%, MHSE has a comparable rate, though as the MHSE is offered less frequently than MES it is harder to track.

S. Key reiterated that revenue generated by PLU is intended to cover expenses that would not otherwise be covered, which aligns with the stated aims of the provincial government. The PLU aims to increase the number of new students by offering desirable programs.

5. Business Arising
None reported.

6. New Business
None reported.

7. Motions
J. Sousa presented on the proposed calendar changes.

Motion: J. Sousa moved, J. da Costa seconded, that Department Council approve the calendar changes to include the Graduate Ethics Training Requirement and the Professional Development Requirement in the University Calendar.

CARRIED

8. Information Items

8.1 Library Report
D. Feisst presented the Library Report.

8.2 Undergraduate Studies Coordinator’s Report (attached)
N. Steinhauer presented the Undergraduate Studies Coordinator Report. There was discussion regarding student attendance, professionalism, and conduct. Additional discussion on the topic of Elementary Education’s course outlines including statements on Attendance, Disruptive Behaviour, Equity and Inclusive Language Policy, Code of Student Behaviour and Academic Integrity.

It was noted these statements are voluntary and discussion is ongoing. There is desire for a professionalism statement in the future.
• It was noted that the Code of Student Behaviour contains requirements for students in professional programs to follow codes of conduct for professional organizations. It was also noted that there are no explicit rules for students while taking department courses.

• It was asked if specific incidents prompted this statement. Response: This came out of the undergraduate review and is not based on a specific incident. It was noted that there are issues with student attendance and student conduct in regards to guest speaker.

• It was requested to bring this topic forward at a future Department Council meeting.

8.3 Graduate Coordinator’s Report (attached)
J. Sousa presented the Graduate Coordinator’s Report with two topics of discussion.

According to FGSR, all incoming doctoral students must complete the professional development requirement as of September 2020. We are currently creating a process to track the completion of this requirement with a target date of April 2020.

It was asked what is/isn’t being done to satisfy the requirements of the graduate programs. Response: The masters program is broadly seen as a professional program that students take for the purposes of professional development. The doctoral requirement is less structured and more individual.

A draft document of the "Principles and Guidelines for Supporting EDPS Cohort Program Delivery" was circulated to the specializations for feedback. The final document presented today incorporates the feedback and will be in effect as of January 2020.

• Concern was expressed that time given to solicit feedback from specializations was insufficient, and that this version has changed from the original proposal.

• It was noted that this document goes through Department Council and not the Graduate Affairs Committee, as it is not an academic topic.

• It was asked who is adjudicating if a submission meets criteria. Response: Proposals go through the chair; it was noted this falls under administrative responsibilities. It was noted by L. Prochner that multiple proposals have not, to date, been received, therefore there is no submission prioritization process at this time.

• Concern was expressed that a significant increase of students in a specialization (resulting from a cohort) would adversely impact the supports available to students. L. Prochner stated the department would not admit more students than it is able to teach, with the potential for hiring additional instructors should there be a substantial increase in qualified students.

• Concern was expressed that Guideline No.11 could become a recruitment "bait and switch" for cohort students to be moved to another program. Response: Cohort students would still be Educational Policy Studies Students and informed of course and program information well in advance.

• Questions were asked regarding the cohort number of 12 students, and of the consequences if the number falls. L. Prochner advised the cohort proposal makes the best use of finite teaching resources and noted a cohort aims to meet the needs of a group with the goal to keep the students together.

• It was asked, in regards to Guideline No. 9, how tuition will be used to pay for sessional instructors. L. Prochner responded, noting the full cost of sessionals should be covered by tuition, which is not possible at the current rate. The new budget model and the provincial government has called for tuition increases.
• It was asked why there is only one cohort (Principle No.8). Response: as some faculty members will teach the cohort multiple cohorts will limit teaching capacity. It was noted that historically only one cohort per year is run, cohorts increase the administrative staff workload, and currently only one cohort can be handled by the department.

• Concern was expressed that the cohort model as proposed in the document will limit and hamper innovation within the department. L. Prochner responded, noting the complexity of programs requires written principles and guidelines for a cohort and this document attempts to address stresses in administrative responsibilities.

• Support was expressed for removing Principle No.8 with a comment that the decision on the number of cohorts should rest with the chair and administrative team.

9. Chair’s Report
L. Prochner delivered the Chair’s Report, including reminders that Fall Convocation is November 20 and lunchtime budget conversations are coming up. Noted the main Chair activities are undergraduate renewal work.

Concern was expressed that DAC working groups have had little work until recently despite signups occurring several months ago, and that the rush may negatively impact the work. L. Prochner responded, noting the timeline for January is to accommodate Calendar Changes, and advised he will take the concerns back to DAC.

10. Announcements
C. Karsgaard delivered EPSGSA announcements, including thanks to S. Carpenter for facilitating a workshop and D. Hunter for volunteering to start a writing group. C. Karsgaard noted the GSA is working on displays around the department to highlight student work.

Meeting Adjourned
12:00 noon