College Task Force: Phase Two Charge

The overarching charge to the task force in this second phase of work, broadly writ, is to arrive at an understanding of how our colleges can be effectively and efficiently run so as to best free our faculty to engage our students, our communities, and our academic and professional disciplines. Our institutional shared governance model is emerging as an increasingly sound and effective set of structures; we need to ensure that our college administrative structures are organized and function accordingly as well. In this sense, the charge of the task force is to determine a more effective and efficient set of administrative structures for our colleges.

You have all very effectively accomplished the first phase of your larger charge by clearly articulating the pros and cons/advantages and disadvantages of our current two-dean model and a potential single-dean model, resulting in the decision to stick with two deans for our three colleges. Your charge for the next phase of your work will be to examine how to best approach the administration of four broad areas: 1) Annual evaluations and their needed/inherent connection to 3rd year review and our tenure and promotion processes; 2) Course scheduling and curricular planning over multiple years; 3) Academic programming to serve our distant students; 4) Academic advising at the college level through our professional advisors and in the majors through our faculty.

Your deliberations in these four areas in this second phase should focus on whether our criteria and processes and/or organizations and structures for each of these areas are meeting the needs of our students and our faculty, our larger institution. Building from the understanding of what deans need to do, how they function, which you built this past fall, considering these questions will entail a examination of the functions and the accompanying processes to determine if we are both as effective and as efficient as we need to be for long term institutional sustainability. I would suggest that for all four of the areas I’ve noted, that the primary criterion for building effective administrative structures revolves around ensuring sound and consistent accountability.

For instance, how can we best ensure that annual evaluations point to 3rd year review and the larger administration of the tenure and promotion process? How efficient and effective are our administrative processes for all of these? How does our organization of these tasks and our administrative structure help or hinder these processes?

Relative to course scheduling and curricular planning, how does the way that we administer these tasks at the college level help ensure that we are making the most effective use of our precious faculty time and expertise (instructional capacity), according to both our students’ need to make good progress toward graduation and our understanding of best instructional practice?

Given that academic programs for all students, no matter where they are, should be controlled by the program faculty as part of our larger academic enterprise and not walled off behind a separate administrative structure, how effectively have we integrated our distance programming across our curriculum? How can we best provide administrative support and coordination for distance programming within our academic colleges?

Finally, how well does our current academic advising organizational structure serve our
students’ needs across the advising continuum, from new student/undecided advising to major advising to graduation? Is our academic advising for all students—regardless of their location—meeting student needs relative to our faculty’s understanding of major and minor requirements?

A broad boundary condition in your deliberations should be that these structures need to be slightly more cost effective than our current ones in all three colleges. The cost effectiveness should primarily be gained from resources residing in the colleges but may also be suggested from resources in other administrative areas related to our academic enterprise. In any case, the primary charge of the task force is not to save $250,000 but rather to recommend effective and efficient structures for our colleges, while being mindful of and realistic with respect to our available resources.