Faculty Senate Minutes – December 6, 2016

Members Present: Rachna Prakash, Patrick Alexander, Kris Belden-Adams, Patrick Curtis, Brice Noonan, Esteban Urena-Benavides, Randy Wadkins, Chris Mullen, Aileen Ajootian, Tossi Ikuta, Feng Wang, Mark Van Boening, Lei Cao, Mary Hayes, Katie McKee, Peter Reed, Mark Walker, Andrew O'Reilly, Paul Loprinzi, Zachary Kagan Guthrie, Vivian Ibrahim, Jarod Roll, Alysia Burton Steele, Scott Fiene, Antonia Eliason, Stacey Lantagne, Dennis Bunch, Eric Lambert, Michelle Emanuel, Christina Torbert, Vishal Gupta, Sumali Conlon, Sandra Spiroff, Sara Wellman, Thomas Peattie, Mary Roseman, Chalet Tan, Meagen Rosenthal, Travis King, James Bos, Breese Quinn, Ben Jones, Nick Prins, Javier Boyas, Marcos Mendoza, Rosemarry Oliphant-Ingham, William Sumrall, Rory Ledbetter

Call Meeting to Order

- Call to order at 6:31
- A quorum is present

- **Approval of November 6, 2016 Minutes**
  - Approved
- **Discussion of Academic Analytics:** Associate Provost Noel Wilkin
  - Academic Analytics (AA) provides metrics for the assessment of faculty and departments that may be used to recognize achievement and support development.
  - Presentation
    - AA is a tool that might be helpful to the university as a tool to improve research and scholarship
    - UM 2020 Objectives for institution:
      - Increase individual and collaborative research, scholarship, and innovation.
      - Increase the role of graduate students in research and innovation activities.
      - Enhance its capacity for research and scholarship.
      - Engage in a disciplined investment strategy supporting research and scholarship.
      - Capitalize on the University's small and diverse scholarly community.
    - This tool has some potential to help us, but it is not the only tool. AA also emphasizes that it is one tool that could be used, but should not be the only tool
    - Provides objective and reliable data to support decision making
    - External data, not available to all institutions
    - Allows comparisons across discipline, departments, institutions

- Includes, publications, citations, books, awards, citations in conference proceedings
- 11 of 14 SEC universities are using, an extensive list of other universities (~400 across the country)
- Departments are using AA to develop and recognize faculty (ex. who among faculty is eligible, and could be successful, for a national award?)
- Hiring and retention planning – how do we keep good people?
- Analyze retirement of faculty, and where could the department go in the future (with respect to funding, recruiting etc.)
- Assessing vulnerabilities and strengths within departments for collaborations (especially for federal funding)
- Funding trends
- Counter offer policy can be evaluated using this program
- Build a faculty roster
    - Catalogue, public information, national faculty roster
    - Grants, conference proceedings, citations, books, journal publications
    - Grouped departments, disciplines, schools, centers, University systems, nation
- Limitations:
    - Book chapters – especially for hardcopy only books (the program searches the internet to identify material). They are currently working on beta-testing a new way of capturing this information.
    - Co-PIs on federal grants (have NSF, NIH, USDA)
    - Citations in and to books,
    - Federal sub-awards
    - Industry funding
    - Foundation funding
    - Patents
    - Other creative works
- Press
    - Rutgers articles (2015/16)
        - Can't be used in tenure and promotion decisions – AA agrees with this idea

        - Not be used to solely determine the composition of the faculty, graduate or undergraduate curricula, or grant writing (i.e. direct areas of research based on analysis)
        - Must distribute data to individual faculty – UM Administration agrees
    - Rutgers only provided unit level data
    - Rutgers Administration lacked transparency around the issue
    - Rutgers have signed back onto the program
        - Will be setting up faculty access
    - "Program must be implemented with care and sensitivity" – from AA
- Reliable, comprehensive, comparative information
    - Allows us to have access to information about other institutions strengths and weaknesses
- It is not intended to replace other sources of information
- Cautions:
    - Not a rankings machine – not allowed to talk about our rankings publicly
    - Not a score for individuals
    - Focuses on recent performance
    - Does not do as well for humanities or the arts
    - Does less well with measuring the impact of the research
        - Can be done to a certain extent with citations, but that is not perfect
- Ex. Showed the analyses that are possible
    - Allows for granular comparisons across departments and tailor to the needs of our university
    - Allows for some modeling about retirements and decisions about how we would be hiring to refill those positions
    - Identify units that are under-recognized.
    - Can identify press and publications that are best in whatever particular discipline
    - Help us to identify our peers at the departmental level and discipline

        - Allows for the identification of potential collaborators
- Questions
    - Q: What are the costs of program vs investment to university?
    - A: Let me start by saying in the past 5 years we have contributed $14million to start-up packages. We are currently making that decision based on the interview and a review of the candidates CV.

      The program will cost roughly $100,000/year – there are current conversations with UMMC and MS State to see if we can get a better deal. There are still lots of steps going forward (i.e. IHL approval).
    - Q: Resource allocations, aren't the units that are not represented in this program harmed by this?
    - A: There is no one size fits all for any department. The decisions made around resource allocation are based on the needs of the departments. The short answer is that they are not harmed now, and there is no expectation that they would harmed going forward.
        - F/U – Couldn't they be harmed because there aren't data that could be used?
        - A: Funding allocations are based on principled arguments for funding from department chairs.
    - Q: Would infrastructure be included?
    - A: As it stands right now it is not included, but it could be used to make an informed inquiry
    - Q: The potential exists for punitive action; how can you insure that this doesn't filter into larger decisions?
    - A: It will have to be a collaborative effort to ensure that the data is being used appropriately.
        - F/U – If the decision makers lack context and have a number to stand on that backs up a misconception, how do we mitigate against that?
        - A: It is the debate about having more information, and not knowing what to do about it.
    - Q: Have the deans agreed to not use this in tenure and promotion decisions?
    - A: They have agreed in principle. Though they are still trying to figure out how it would be used. Mechanisms would need to be developed within the community to make sure that the data was not being used inappropriately.

- Q: Who decides which are the top ten journals?
- A: It is dynamic program that can be tailored by the department or based on individuals. These will be identified by chairs most likely, but in conversation with faculty.

  It is giving the departments a way to look at publically available data in a more meaningful way.
- Q: Concern is with using the data in a potentially inappropriate way?
- Q: Where does the data come from?
- A: They are crawling the web and online publications. We are already in the program, but are not able to see it.
    - F/U – Do we still have to do SAP?
    - A – As of now yes we will have to do that, but we could explore that in the future.
- Q: The accuracy issue, very few people could see the data and when they could see it, it was not accurate?
- A: Yes, it has been largely fixed. AA supports faculty access to the data, so that changes can be made. They also want people to understand that the data may appear on the program differently than we understand it.
    - F/U – Regarding the criticism about not using for tenure and promotion, and determining the composition of the faculty. You said that it could be used in that way?
    - A – This is one source of data that can be used to help make decisions about hiring, but this will be based on the needs or desires of the department, not solely on the program itself.
        - F/U – could the provost office use this information to make decisions?
        - A – Everything that the provost's office does is built on trust, and everyone in that office understands that this is one tool to help make decisions.
        - F/U – With all of the changes in the administration, we don't know if we trust or can trust all of the new administrators?
        - A – We need to work to build that trust. This program provides the opportunity to have access to data that can be used to make decisions.
            - F/U: We are worried about how people we don't know are going to use this to make decisions?

        - A: We will need to develop programs that hold people accountable.
- Q: We are not afraid of data, but are worried about simplistic data? This is not increasing access to the data, but narrowing our attention to flawed data that gives a simple number (ex. counting publications that are printed in pay journals).
- A: This program does not become the only way that decisions are made. This program gives us information that we don't currently have. It can help with strategic planning. But is dependent on the department.
- Q: Is this a public resource that politicians or IHL can have access to?
- A: The university grants who has access to this product, neither politicians nor the IHL will have access to it.
- Q: Does the university expect to increase salaries for faculty that perform well on these metrics? Could this program be used to close departments, fire staff, is the university prepared to offer a public statement that no department could be harmed by the use of this program?
- A: I would hope that no decisions are made based solely on this program. This is one way to add data to the decision-making process. We want to work with departments to help administration understand whether or not this program would be helpful or appropriate to them.
- Q: These tools don't include post-docs? Only faculty?
- A: Yes
    - Q: Since we hire mostly recently graduated faculty (Assistant Professors), would AA be helpful in this situation?
    - A: It could be used to make an argument to hire associate vs. assistant. But this wouldn't be able to tell you which faculty member to hire.
    - F/U – Many times we would like to hire at the associate or full level, but the monies are not available?
    - A – It is difficult to know right now, but it could be used to drive those decisions in the future.

- Q: Does the program account for access to resources within each of the departments that we could be comparing to?
- A: No, but this program can start the conversation about resources and how they could be allocated.
- Q: To what extent are teaching loads taken into consideration within the program? What happens to the data if we no longer want to part of the program?
- A: The program owns the data (including our corrections/modifications), because it is publicly available data. They would just have the right data if we decided not to renew.
- Q: Would there be a chance to walk through a simulation with the program to see how it works?
- A: That's a good idea, they are willing to come and talk to us about it. I would also be happy to work with departments to develop policies to ensure that the program is used appropriately within the department.
- Q: What is the overall error rate within the program?
- A: I don't know the answer, but it would be dependent on the engagement from other institutions. But we could ask about that.
- Q: Is there a particular reason why we are considering this at this point?
- *A: Secretary's note: Provost Wilkin goes back to the objectives that started the presentation*
- Q: How does adopting a program like this benefit the fine arts?
- A: Yes, this program focuses on more research, that is a fair comment. We need to work on how the university can wrap its arms around creative endeavors and allow it to be recognized and successful.
- Q: It sounds like this program is doing some things that the chairs are supposed to be doing?
- A: Chairs have a difficult job, and are managers helping to foster success. Chairs have to work in three areas – administration, manage resources to the best degree they can, leading the department to be successful (what could we do, how might we move to the next level of productivity)
    - F/U – Will department Chairs have access?
    - A – Chairs here will have access, and faculty will have access to the reports and be able to see the material.

- Q: Institutional Research is not currently “overstaffed” how will they manage to train all chairs? How can we prevent chairs that lack technological knowledge from being at a disadvantage?
- A: Admittedly IR is not overstaffed, but as we become a more data driven institution they are going to help us push out report generation across the university. We will also continually evaluate their staffing needs. It is possible right now that chairs can present inequivalent data on behalf of their departments.
- Q: Do you see a negative in this?
- A: I share many of the concerns that you all have. Perhaps I have more faith in our administrators to make the right decision. Issues of data accuracy do concern me.
- Q: The biggest concern that I have is that this program has taken over in other institutions. The more powerful this program is the more likely that people will come to depend on this out of sheer laziness. I think what should happen before this is implemented is that a structure needs to be put in place to ensure faculty involvement from the beginning.
- A: One of my other concerns is that this is too easy. An important part of our culture as an institution is engaging with faculty. I worry about dictating how it would be used, but agree that we should have a structure in place to ensure faculty are constantly involved.
- Q: How do they collect the data? This program does not list my specific discipline?
- A: I don’t know the answer, but it is something that we to ask AA.
- Q: Is the database English only, or does it accommodate other languages?
- A: I don’t know the answer to that, but let me check.

- **Committee Reports**
  - Academic Instructional Affairs
    - No report
  - Academic Conduct
    - No report
  - Finance & Benefits
    - No report

- Development & Planning
    - No report
- Governance
    - No report
- Research & Creative Achievement
    - No report
- University Services
    - No report

- **Old Business**
    - Academic Freedom Workshop – Val Ross will hold a workshop to explore First Amendment rights and academic freedom. This will take place early in the Spring semester.
    - University Council – Heads of all groups will meet early in the Spring to discuss the formation of this body with particular emphasis on goals and limitations.

- **New Business**
    - Update on Childcare initiative – Laura Antonow has accepted the position and will be devoting 50% of her time over the next 2 years to development of a 5-year plan. She will visit with us during our January meeting.
    - We are down a representative on the strategic planning committee and we need a faculty representative
        - Asking for volunteers – William Sumrall
    - Recognition of Provost Stocks for his service as Provost

- **Adjournment**
    - **Adjourned at 8:20**