Minutes

Tuesday, March 11, 2014
Sterne Library, Room 174
10:00-11:30 a.m.

Members Present. Martha Bidez, Catherine Danielou, Elizabeth Fisher, Nicolaas Geurs, Cynthia Helms, Maria Hopkins, Karen Kennedy, Elizabeth Maples, Jacqueline Moss, Betty Nelson, Pamela Paustian, David Rogers, Grant Savage, Donna Slovensky, Jonathan Waugh, and David Yother.


Guests. Tracee Synco and Nancy Wingo.

Dr. Moss called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Executive Director’s Report. Dr. Bidez introduced Dr. Tracee Synco, Executive Director for Retention Initiatives from the Office of the Vice Provost for Student and Faculty Success, as a guest. New Staff Introductions. Chris Blackmon begins April 1, 2014 as the new Canvas Success Manager, coming to UAB Online from the medical side of campus. The search committee for this position included faculty from the Division of eLearning and Professional Studies (eLPS), School of Business, School of Health Professions, and School of Nursing. Samira Laouzai, Instructional Designer, joined the Canvas team on March 15.

Canvas Rollout Update. The Canvas Success Site launched on February 1. Currently, faculty throughout the university may build course shells and practice using Canvas in their Sandbox before going-live with coursework. Faculty will continue having access to Blackboard through August 22, and department Instructional Technology administrators through September 12. After that time all work in Blackboard will be archived and a copy provided to each user. Discussion followed about learning to use Canvas in time for the summer semester which begins on May 5 for some faculty and June 2 for others. A request was made to set a deadline of April 15 for Canvas course completion by faculty who will teach during the session beginning May 5, in order to have courses taught at a quality level without interruption. The School of Dentistry will be the first to implement Canvas due to their academic year beginning July 1.

Dr. Bidez shared first-hand the ease of using Canvas by stating that she built-out approximately one-half of her Advanced Safety in Engineering Management course shell in three hours one afternoon. Two faculty training sessions per school are scheduled during March and April, conducted by Dr. Fisher and Samira Laouzai. Three schools currently use training modules in Canvas—Collat School of Business, School of Nursing (SON), and
College of Arts and Sciences. Canvas instructors will return to UAB for campus-wide training in April, dates to be announced. During that time, trainers will assist Canvas administrators in each school as they transition from Blackboard to Canvas. One-on-one assistance will be available to faculty during the transition phase.

Committee members discussed devising New Student Orientation totally online rather than in-person as a requirement for registration. Questions raised by committee members included immunization records which can be resolved with Undergraduate Student Admissions and registration fees. The SON waives the online registration fee for their students. The possibility was mentioned of creating a registration module specific to each school.

Potential UAB-Pearson Partnership Update. Dr. Bidez summarized that Pearson bought EmbanetCompass as part of their focus on advancing the state of online learning. Arizona State University, Rutgers University, and the University of Florida are some of the schools that have partnered successfully with Pearson. About 12 months ago, Pearson approached UAB vetting Mr. Richard Margison, Deans, and Department Chairs. Pearson drafted a portfolio of at least 40 totally online degrees, both undergraduate and graduate. Their strategies include doubling enrollment, using coaches to help with retention (90% retention rate in Year 2), and providing online tutors to students 24/7/365—a SACS requirement. The financial model for revenue-sharing based on tuition costs is UAB 50%, Pearson 45%. The Provost’s tax is being eliminated. UAB is paying an additional $100 per online course for tutoring. For programs that opt-out, students will receive all of the Pearson services but without the tuition fee-share benefit. The master course model includes 25 students per section, 1 master teacher and 7 teaching assistants. The Pearson model is faculty-driven and school-driven. Instructional design is excluded so schools will provide this component. Degrees and academic certificates will be offered online. Within each degree, only one concentration/track may opt-in. Pearson has four strategies: recruitment, retention, student resources, and faculty resources. UAB brand awareness will increase significantly which Dr. Shirley Salloway-Kahn, Vice President for University Development, has agreed to support. Momentum is high for the UAB-Pearson partnership. President Ray Watts will make the final decision.

Discussion among the committee included accounting for teaching activity for a master teacher and teaching assistants, using adjunct faculty as teaching assistants, and basing activity on each of the school’s policies rather than having a blanket policy.

Strategic Plan Update. Dr. Moss summarized the Strategic Plan timeline: The day-long retreat occurred last fall; Working Groups met during December and January; the Steering Committee met on March 5; and the Academic Advisory Council (AAC) has the final Strategic Plan today.

Implementation Plan Discussion. Dr. Moss reviewed the meeting schedule of the AAC and Standing Committees as recurring on alternate months. Members of the AAC should communicate with committee members their role of being conduits for initiating information. For example, Disability Support Services may propose a policy to the Policies and Procedures Committee (PPC), the conduit for online policies and procedures implemented across campus, which would be communicated to the Council for approval. The Strategic Plan will flow efficiently using this communication strategy. Both SACS and the school accreditation body are considered with policies and procedures proposed by the
university. The Steering Committee discusses Strategic Plan goals for standing committees with regard to relevance and priority. In order for the eLPS Strategic Plan to move forward, responsible persons indicated for each goal need to assist the Steering Committee.

President Watts views eLPS as an investment for the schools within the university, the university as a whole, and the community at large. Dr. Bidez participated in the President’s Strategic Plan meeting on March 7, where the eLPS Strategic Plan was disseminated broadly as part of the Provost’s Strategic Plan. Mr. John King, Business Officer in eLPS, is working on the “significant financial investment” portion. Year 1 of the financial model represents the fall of 2014. Schools may opt-in to participate in the Pearson partnership by faculty speaking with their deans. Dr. Bidez will follow-up with deans by email the information shared at today’s meeting.

**Recommendation:** Dr. Moss asked that Nancy Wingo, Chair of the Enabling Technologies Committee, be added to the AAC. **Action:** Nancy Wingo was added to the AAC.

**Reports from Committees.** Dr. Moss asked Ms. Nancy Wingo to provide a brief overview today and a full presentation at the AAC meeting on May 13. **Enabling Technology.** Ms. Wingo shared that the Enabling Technology Committee (ETC) met with BioSig, an authentication software company. The pro’s included that the authentication works for tablets, phones, etc.; no one has cracked the system; a 99.9% uptime is reported; and the White House chose the software for identity theft protection. The cons are that the package is clunky. Implementation with Canvas is being resolved. Ms. Wingo will poll the ETC for feedback about recommending BioSig to the AAC.

**Word on the Street.** Deferred due to time constraints.

**Outgoing Message.** Dr. Moss asked that Council members share the Strategic Plan with their school leadership in order to determine how and where they need to be involved. Dr. Bidez stated that she has distributed the Strategic Plan with the Dean of each school. Drs. Moss and Bidez thanked every member for their participation in our finalization of the Strategic Plan.

Dr. Moss adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.