

Meeting: Faculty Council Executive Committee with Provost
Oct 28, 2010
Notes by Brian Foster

We talked at length about the response we will make Friday, October 29th, to the MDHE about degree programs with low numbers of graduates. Brian Foster explained the process we have been through, distributed a spreadsheet (and some definitions of the columns of the spreadsheet) that summarized what our response will say.

Most of the discussion focused on Column 10, which indicated which degree programs will deal with the low numbers of degrees by some kind of reconfiguration. A very helpful discussion addressed the kind of process would be likely to lead to creative and productive ideas for realignment. Below are the main points that emerged from that discussion.

1. We need to notify chairs of units in Column 10 in advance of any public release of information.
2. We need to consider what our goals are. This will be a very difficult discussion, but at some point it will be necessary.
3. We need to consider incentives for individual faculty to engage in discussions and pursue actions to achieve the reconfiguration of programs. Some ideas:
 - Course load reduction for those who engage in leading discussions or serving on very time-consuming committees
 - Buy-out funds to departments for course load reductions
4. We need to have a general faculty meeting asap to get out information to all interested faculty on the content and underlying rationale of our response to MDHE.
5. The faculty meeting should be followed by a series of faculty forums—meetings that will accommodate all interested faculty. These would be rather general discussions done on the model of our budget forums and the faculty forums that were held as the Mizzou Advantage was being formed.
6. Hold smaller meetings of faculty and others who would be interested in particular ideas of consolidation, merging, or other reconfiguration in particular academic areas. A good idea would be for the Office of the Provost to provide light refreshments, coffee, etc. for such meetings. The precise way to form the groups needs more discussion. Two interesting ideas were (a) to have chairs play a major role in forming the groups, and (b) include some people who have been through similar consolidations that already occurred on campus (e.g., the Plant Group, elimination of departments in Journalism). Such meetings might benefit from the assistance of professional facilitators.

7. Invite faculty to write concept papers, which could be the basis for the forums (say, two or three papers for one forum) and/or the small discussion groups. Maybe we could provide some incentives to do this and/or to champion an idea that is under discussion—e.g., released time to compensate for the significant investment of time to write the paper and champion the idea.

The discussion at the Executive Committee was open, thoughtful, and very helpful. We need to discuss these ideas carefully and get an agenda in place in very short order.