

Academic Committee Meeting
April 2, 2021
2:00-3:30pm
ZOOM

Attendees:

Boyle, Kevin
Carlson, Kevin
Ghandforoush, Parviz
Gnyawali, Devi
Hall, Janice Branch
Hunnings, Kay
Khansa, Lara
Maher, Jack
McGehee, Nancy
Mitchell, Elizabeth
Pandelaere, Mario
Russell, Robin
Singal, Vijay
Sumichrast, Robert
Xiang, Phil

Absent:

Bagchi, Rajesh

Recording Secretary

Brooks, Miranda

Minutes/Action Items/Announcements

Dean Sumichrast welcomed the academic committee. Sumichrast announced Ethics Week, which is March 29 – April 9, 2021. Sumichrast highlighted two events during the week: 1) Sustainability Leadership Lecture on April 7, 2021 at 5:30 p.m., featuring Omar Asali, CEO of Ranpak and member of the Virginia Tech Foundation Board, 2) Del Alamo/Hogan Symposium on Business Ethics on April 8, 2021 at 7:00 p.m., featuring David Goldman chairman of the Board of Fellowships at Auschwitz for the Study of Professional Ethics. Sumichrast also encouraged AP faculty and staff, in addition to the committee, to participate in the upcoming Deloitte's Leadership Development Programs on April 26, 2021 from 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Janice Branch Hall gave the committee more detailed information regarding the event. Sumichrast reminded the committee of the upcoming Spring Break day on April 6, 2021. Sumichrast informed the committee of a new retirement option. Kay Hunnings gave more detailed information to the committee in this regard. Sumichrast encouraged the committee to contact Hunnings with any questions.

Commencement

Sumichrast outlined commencement details and logistics. The main ceremony will be held virtually on May 14, 2021 at 6:15 p.m. where students will have their names called in break out rooms. He highlighted that Pamplin will have some in-person commencement activities this year but cautioned the committee not to organize department gatherings near the week of commencement, to prevent overlap.

Pamplin ceremonies begin May 16, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. at Lane Stadium. Sumichrast informed the committee that five or six volunteers from Pamplin are needed to assist with commencement. He offered the opportunity for up to 50 faculty and staff to attend the two ceremonies. Interested faculty and staff should indicate their preference as to which ceremony they would like to attend. Sumichrast directed the committee to send the following information to Kim Ridpath: 1) A list of faculty and staff volunteers, 2) First and second choice for attending commencement and platform, 3) A list of faculty and staff who may want to attend commencement.

Fall Expectations

Sumichrast summarized the plan for Fall 2021. Classes are expected to be in-person, with faculty and staff reporting back to the office. Sumichrast noted that some courses that were online will continue in this format, and requests can be made for some courses to be taught virtually, if this option is better for the students. These changes will also apply to Northern Virginia graduate courses. The committee expressed the need for classrooms due to lack of availability. Currently, classes 40 or larger lack available space, and had to go forward in the online format. The committee requested clarification of the Dean of Students' role, in that decisions are placed with the instructors. There is a concern that faculty should not make these judgment calls. Sumichrast assured the committee that these concerns would be brought to the Provost in an upcoming meeting.

Implementation Plan

Hall summarized the revisions of Strategic Initiative 5.6 of the implementation plan – *Build a model inclusive community*. Hall reviewed the three major areas of the plan that have been updated: 1) The goal to assure Pamplin has the infrastructure for sustainable transformation of our diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) efforts. The associated metric describes reorganizing and centralizing Pamplin's efforts to advance college performance; 2) The goal to advance the academic mission of Pamplin through DEIB. Hall identified the need to develop student cultural humility knowledge and practical skills, and to identify assessment tools to measure student cultural humility knowledge and practical skills; 3) The goal to foster an equitable and inclusive community where stakeholders have a sense of belonging. Hall highlighted the need to assess and enhance the climate for our employees and student populations and increase response rates for VT climate surveys. Hall also summarized the action plans that would help Pamplin reach the goals, metrics, and levels outlined in the implementation plan. The committee was receptive to the updates and agreed with the need to enhance these efforts. Sumichrast directed the committee to submit additional ideas or concerns to Hall.

Changing Options to Degrees/Majors

Sumichrast introduced the degrees and majors embedded within the departments in Pamplin. He noted that these options are not readily visible to students who are applying to Pamplin. Kevin Boyle shared a similar process in the Real Estate program with the committee and gave the timeline of approximately six months to complete. Sumichrast suggested the committee revisit this option at the next meeting.