

COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCE FACULTY SENATE MEETING
3:30 p.m., 21 March 2011
B10 Ingraham Hall

1. Announcements, Updates and Questions

- a. Dean Sandefur provided a brief update on the budget reductions facing the university. The actual amount had not been determined; however, in anticipation of the likely need to reduce the overall College budget, all L&S departments and programs were asked to identify reductions that could be taken immediately, as well as reductions that would achieve a long-term 8% reduction (though he expressed hope that the actual cuts would be less than 8%). Most proposals affect changes to S&E budgets, TAs, and short-term staffing allocations; at that time, no layoffs and non-renewals were proposed. Dean Sandefur noted that due to the size and central role of L&S, the College has been somewhat insulated from severe reductions. Unfortunately, that will not be the case in the coming biennium. Reductions will be taken differentially, with priority given to the most critical departments and programs; the L&S Academic Planning Council (APC) will develop planning principles for this exercise. Those are likely to focus on ensuring that L&S carries out its undergraduate educational responsibilities (for L&S students and for all students at the university) and maintaining and enhancing the quality of our highest performing research and creative units.
- b. Dean Sandefur shared his observations about Chancellor Martin's proposal to constitute the university as a Public Authority known as the "New Badger Partnership" (NBP). Proponents of the NBP believe the university would be in a better position to drive innovation, advance economic prosperity and improve the quality of life for the people of the state. As a public authority, the university would have more flexibility to respond to budget cuts. That flexibility might be available through other mechanisms. Addressing fears that the NBP would erode partnerships with institutions across the state, Dean Sandefur noted that UW-Madison and L&S would continue to collaborate with other UW institutions. At this point, Dean Sandefur invited discussion. Senators asked if some departments might see cuts at more than 8%; Dean Sandefur said this was unlikely. When asked about the ability of departments to make long-term TA guarantees, Associate Dean Westphal-Johnson explained that the TA budget process was under way and that this should be taken into account. When asked if funds to recruit/retain faculty would be available, Dean Sandefur said those funds will likely be provided – albeit in another format – in the future. The role of the APC was clarified, and the dean explained that it would develop guidelines but would not review each of the 100 L&S units. The Associate Deans in each division would confer with the rest of L&S Senior Staff to make decisions about how to allocate the cuts across departments. Several questions had been submitted by a group of graduate students. Dean Sandefur briefly reviewed the responses that had been provided to them:
- Graduate student contracts are made between the state and graduate students; the university will honor existing contracts through the end of the fiscal year. The college and departments will also honor funding guarantees.
 - The current TAA agreement does not include language about class size, but rather, about workload, and the college will continue to work with departments to ensure that workload is commensurate with compensation.
 - Lecturers who have an appointment level that qualifies for health insurance, will get health insurance.
 - Addressing concerns that revisions to state statutes could threaten faculty governance, Dean Sandefur noted that the current draft retains UW-Madison's traditional emphasis on faculty governance; he added that it would be very unusual for a governor to remove language from legislation he sponsors.
 - Questions about how Regents are selected are addressed in the proposed legislation and revisions.
 - The advantages of the NBP focus on increasing UW-Madison's authority and autonomy in exchange for reduced financial support from the state. Reduced financial support is likely regardless of the state of the NBP.

Discussion ended with a question about whether or not the NBP is likely to be approved; Dean Sandefur responded that the university will not know for some time.

- c. Dean Sandefur provided a brief update on the *Madison Initiative for Undergraduates* (MIU). The modest MIU tuition increase allowed L&S to do a lot for undergraduate education in just two years, including hiring faculty to meet student and degree needs and to improve critical student services. Phase I of the MIU produced 17 new faculty positions; in phase II, L&S received 28 more, as well as 2 other instructional positions. With deliberations about MIU Phase III under way, L&S will likely receive more positions. This has meant a lot of work for faculty conducting searches and redesigning curricula. If the university faces additional budget cuts, however, the College will be asked to sustain the MIU initiatives.
 - d. Dean Sandefur summarized several efforts undertaken to support Graduate students. L&S obtained approval of a new graduate student lecturer rate to close the gap between TA salaries plus tuition remission, and lecturer salaries with remission of out of state tuition; as a result, it is more financially attractive for Grad Students to take positions as lecturers. The Mellon Foundation awarded UW-Madison support for a post-doc program that expands the number and type of scholars with whom our students work, broadening their experiences; another grant provides two-year fellowships to students in the humanities and humanities-like social studies who are at key stages in the dissertation process.
2. Due to an error, minutes of the L&S Faculty Senate meeting held 15 March 2010 had not been distributed. A motion to postpone approval until the next L&S Faculty Senate meeting was approved.
 3. The Report of the Faculty Honors Committee (L&S Faculty Document #283) was presented by Professor Chuck Snowdon (Psychology), the Director of the Honors Program. He highlighted several items in that report. The new admissions process has yielded more robust, high-quality applications from fewer applicants, and resulted in a greater diversity of students who are generally more committed to the program and better able to sustain good academic standing. Opportunities for departments to participate in the Honors Program continue in the form of competitive grants for offering small enrollment classes for Honors students. Senators were encouraged to help spread the word to students about the role the Senior Thesis program plays in providing opportunities for students to work with the faculty. The Leadership Trust Award provides support in the form of two semesters of in-state tuition and supplies for students who have ideas for benefiting campus. In discussion, Senators asked about potential projects for the Leadership Trust Awards. In a discussion of the tension between initiatives to lower class size and the expectation that departments deliver a large number of faculty-taught credits, Professor Snowdon and Dean Sandefur noted that Honors is considered a “high impact practice” and that departments must strike a balance between meeting the basic needs of undergraduates, while also challenging high ability students.
 4. Dean Sandefur presented the Report of the L&S Academic Planning Council (L&S Faculty Document #284). The APC provided counsel on two policy matters important to the college. First, as required by FP&P, the APC approved a policy that will help guide the college when creating, discontinuing, or substantially restructuring academic departments. Second, the APC approved a policy that holds that, “except in unusual circumstances, leaves of absence will not be granted to members of the faculty who have accepted outside offers.” Dean Sandefur noted that this policy is consistent with policies in place among peers; it is intended to help departments and programs manage staffing needs because they will be able to ask for replacement hires much sooner than if they have to wait for a leave to end. The L&S APC also endorsed the decision to alter the regular meeting times for the APC and L&S Curriculum Committee, to these major committees will not conflict with regular meetings of departmental executive committees. The APC and CC will meet on alternating Tuesday afternoons (from 1:00 – 2:30). Departments were consulted about this standard meeting time.
 5. The Report of the L&S Curriculum Committee was distributed as L&S Faculty Document 285. Professor Kris Olds, the Chair of the L&S Curriculum Committee, was available to respond to questions. There were no questions.
 6. A summary of the report on student achievement, called the “*Grade Gap/Future Gap: Addressing Racial Disparities in L&S Introductory Courses*” was prepared by the **L&S Equity and Diversity Committee** was distributed as L&S Faculty Document #286. (The full document is available online or on request to the Dean’s office.) Professor Gloria Mari-Beffa, chair of the committee, presented a summary of the report and led discussion. The report focuses on the difference in outcomes (graduation and Drop/Fail/Withdraw rates) for UW-Madison underrepresented minority students. The courses studied included courses that enroll large numbers of minority students, and which also serve as gateways to majors (Math 112, English 100, Comm Arts 100, Psych 202, Chem 103). The study controlled for academic preparation as indicated by ACT score; the performance differences persist even for students who enter with similar ACT scores. The courses studied

included a range of teaching and evaluation methods (from lecture and standardized testing to small classes with portfolio evaluations). In an effort to learn more, the EDC surveyed students about study habits and attitudes toward diversity in and out of the classroom. Although no correlation could be found with respect to time spent in study, results do suggest that positive climate, comfort in working with people who are different from themselves, and students' relation to peers (in small group and peer learning situations) may have a beneficial effect. All students reported similar discomfort in working with people who are different from themselves; there are differences in the extent to which students appear to benefit from (or find rewarding) a highly competitive classroom atmosphere; there are differences in the extent to which students are comfortable seeking assistance from others or working with others outside of class. The EDC's recommendations have been made at a campus level and is working in particular with the departments that offer the courses studies; the EDC is sharing the report widely so individual departments/programs can make reasonable adjustments at the course and program level.

The following topics were raised in discussion:

- Whether distinctions were made between students who feel more anxiety generally and students who might feel anxiety working in groups. Professor Mari-Beffa noted that assigning group work requires attention to how groups are formed, rather than allowing students to self-organize.
- The impact of having instructors from targeted minorities was not studied.
- Data were not collected in a way that would facilitate analysis of whether differences in peer relationships could predict an achievement gap.
- It is unclear whether differences between institutional size, or the public vs. private status of institutions has an impact on the ability to address this gap through admissions policies, tuition levels, scholarship funds, etc.

Professor Mari-Beffa concluded the discussion by observing that an important difference was found in students' attribution of greatest influence on their success: majority students credit *the faculty*, whereas minority students credit friends. This suggests that greater attention to classroom climate may produce significant changes for these students. Dean Sandefur and the Senators thanked Professor Mari-Beffa and the EDC for having conducted the study. Professor Gooding (Psychology; incoming Chair, L&S Curriculum Committee), noted that awareness of a problem is the most important step in addressing it.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Submitted by Elaine M. Klein, Secretary