

## **BRIEF NOTES**

### **Letters and Science Academic Planning Council**

**February 3, 2015, 1-2:30 pm, 101 South Hall**

*Approved 2/17/2015 by those in attendance at the meeting*

Chair: James Montgomery

Members Present: Angela Powell, Brian Hyer, Clark Johnson, Jennifer Noyes, Anna Gemrich, Matthew Turner, Jan Edwards, Dan Kapust, Harry Brighthouse

Members Absent: Diane Gooding, J. Karl Scholz

Observers Present: Greg Downey, Gerry Essenmacher, Kimbrin Cornelius, Susan Zaeske, Elaine Klein, Devon Wilson, Nancy Westphal-Johnson

**1. Approval of Notes, January 20, 2015.** Notes approved by members present at that meeting.

### **2. Academic Program Review.**

**(a) Art History.** SZ led discussion. Art History is nationally well-regarded, with great strengths. Like arts and humanities programs nationally, their enrollments are declining. The department has made several changes based on their last review, including increasing focus on global curriculum and creating more entry points into their undergraduate major. This external review encouraged the department to update course titles and descriptions, continue their work with Education Innovations, and focus on scheduling courses in a way that best works for students. Graduate issues identified in the review include graduate funding, and time to degree. The review also identified tension in the relationship with the Chazen. SZ also noted the department has difficulties cultivating future leaders. In conversations, committee members expressed concern about the time to degree for the doctoral program. Members agreed time to degree can be caused by a number of issues (for example, faculty mentor's responsiveness students' work, funding issues, course scheduling issues, or students taking good professional jobs and delaying completion), and asked the department to further investigate causes. Committee members also asked the department to clarify whether they have taken action on the issue of course scheduling conflicts for students. If so, they would like to know more about the department's procedures for ensuring schedules for required course overlap minimally, and how the department has decided who will teach what, and when, in a way that is fair and serves students first.

**b. History.** SZ led discussion. She noted History is one of the top-ranked programs, though rankings are slipping. They also face the nationally declining enrollments in the arts and humanities; given upcoming retirements and an anticipated "challenging" budget situation, the department is very concerned. Graduate funding is a major identified issue for the department. Though work is still to be done to address this, they have taken the step of significantly down-sizing the graduate program, and now only admit students they can fund. In conversation, members had concerns that the graduate students were isolated, especially in smaller units, and suggested that the department consider focusing on this (perhaps by offering department-wide colloquia or other community-building activities). Members also wondered if the department had considered scenarios of how they will proceed with a likely reduction in faculty numbers. SZ noted if they eliminate subfields, they risk falling in rankings. Members were impressed with the self-study of the undergraduate program, and in particular, with efforts to assess student learning, noting it was perhaps the best seen so far by the APC. The motion to accept the report was approved by all members.

**c. History of Science.** SZ led discussion. The curriculum sits at the intersection of natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities, with faculty in L&S (about 5.5), and SMPH (4.5) The undergraduates in the two majors have about 25-30 students each and 15 combined graduate each year. The programs are top-ranked. One of their most significant challenges is size, the faculty acknowledge they cannot continue as such a small unit. And, with no advisor or additional staff, all administration falls to one classified staff member or faculty. Other identified issues include graduate funding, and advising/professionalization of graduate students. The external review mentions three potentials for merging, though the departmental response noted faculty most interested in merging with History were not interviewed. In conversation, members noted it may not be realistic for faculty to expect the programs to remain the same indefinitely in the case of a merger. SZ noted the two departments have not yet started conversations. History of Science has concerns about being a small area in a large department. Members discussed the options presented by the review, and noted that only one (merging History) appears to address the issue of size. Members agreed to revisit the conversation at a future meeting.

**3. Information Sharing: UW Budget.** Links were included on the agenda to latest UW-Madison and UW-System statements on the budget. JM led discussion. He noted the governor has proposed large cuts and changing the System to a public authority. However, we are at the beginning of a long political process, and either of these proposals could be modified significantly. In the long run, the public authority changes could benefit UW, but enough funds must be available to get us through the short run. In discussion members gave examples of their recent hires and early associate professor already looking elsewhere, and that UW Madison's future lives with our early-career faculty.

Meeting adjourned 2:33 pm

Notes submitted by Kimbrin Cornelius