

CALS Academic Planning Council (APC) Self-Study Review 2019-2020

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Summary of Recommendations:

- Retain the current structure of proportional representation to APC among faculty divisions, Extension and staff. Note, however that the rotation schedule for representation to APC should be updated to reflect changes such as mergers of departments within the College.
- More clearly communicate APC activities back to departments.
- Establish policies for selecting substitute representatives in situations where elected representatives cannot attend meetings for several months or more. Recommendations are provided for selection of substitute faculty divisional representatives, Extension representatives, and staff representatives.
- Define and clarify the role of APC as an *advisory* body to decision-making in the College.

Report of Subcommittee Activities:

The Self-Study Subcommittee of the CALS APC was established in October 2019. The Subcommittee was charged to:

1. Review the FP&P charge to UW college APCs and assess how CALS APC is serving those goals.
2. Review the impact on CALS APC of recent/proposed departmental restructuring, and make recommendations for future structuring of APC.
3. Review processes for substitutions for CALS APC members on extended leaves (e.g., sabbaticals).
4. Prepare a report of findings.

The Subcommittee reviewed the FP&P charge to college APCs as well as the comprehensive CALS APC Self-Study Review of 2013-14. We convened meetings with Dean Kate VandenBosch and the Associate Deans, as well as with the full CALS APC committee (Appendix 1). Associate Dean Karen Wassarman and CALS HR staff provided extensive demographic information on CALS departments and centers (numbers of faculty, staff, etc.). The Subcommittee took a hiatus from its work during the COVID-19 campus shutdown (March – Aug. 2020). This report and its recommendations are the product of Subcommittee discussions of the information gathered.

Recommendations for representative structure of APC:

The APC Self-Study Subcommittee considered a number of options for allocating representation on APC. The previous study subcommittee (2013-2014) had exhaustively considered this issue. It should be noted that differing points of view exist, i.e., whether the APC should be analogous to the US Senate where each department gets 1 representative, or the US House of Representatives where the number of seats is proportional to the number of people in a department/group of departments. Methods of grouping departments, the number of divisions, and the overall optimal size for APC were all considered. Input was gathered from APC members and a review of documents provided for the self-study by CALS HR.

Specific concerns expressed were that allocating one representative per department may stress smaller departments who have fewer faculty to draw on for twice-monthly meetings. Additionally, allocating one representative to each department was seen as unnecessarily increasing the size of APC and could make it difficult to meet quorum. Allocating representation to departments organized into divisions is one way to protect faculty time while encouraging effective meetings.

The downside for an APC representation based on divisions is the potential for insufficient communication back to departments, especially when a particular department is not itself represented. The Self-Study Subcommittee, however, noted that each department has a representative at the Chairs' meeting. It was further noted that not all department meeting agendas allocate time for an APC report (even when the department provides representation to APC) and that the role of APC has changed since the last review such that the primary focus for APC is curricular/academic reviews (primarily CALS-level matters) and not one of weighing in on faculty positions (primarily department-level matters). Overall, the Subcommittee considers that the current structure of proportional representation strikes a balance between representation and faculty workload, so changing the system of representation is not warranted at this time. As the role of APC is better defined (see *Recommendations regarding advisory role of APC*), future self-study efforts should revisit this conclusion.

The Self-Study Subcommittee also considered whether more qualifiers are needed for APC representatives (and substitutes), such as % appointment in CALS for divisional representatives and % Extension appointments for Extension representatives. The subcommittee felt additional qualifiers are not necessary and could hinder participation.

The Self-Study Subcommittee supports the current distribution of representation among CALS divisions with the following recommendations:

- The current distribution (October 2019) of departments among divisions should be modified to reflect the combination of Animal Science and Dairy Science departments, and the rotation schedule among the departments in that division modified accordingly.
- Opportunities to enhance communication of APC activity back to departments should be considered. One method would be to include a summary of APC activities in regularly scheduled eCALS communications.
- Consideration should be given to weighting the rotation of representation among departments within divisions, based on faculty head count or FTE. Because the role of APC has itself changed since the last self-study, we provide no definitive

recommendation at this time. As departments become better informed re APC activities, however, this is a point for future self-studies to address.

Recommendations for substitutions for extended absences:

Substitutions are required in situations where an APC representative is unable to regularly attend meetings for several months or more due to sabbatical or research leaves, personal reasons, or other conflicts. In the case where a faculty division representative is unable to fulfill their duties, the faculty representative should work with their department chair to identify a substitute faculty member from within the department. If unable to identify a replacement within the representative's own department, the other department chairs within the APC Division should be contacted to provide a substitute. The former option is preferred, as it will maintain the rotation schedule of representation within the Division.

In the case of the Extension representative, the Associate Dean of Extension should be asked to identify a substitute.

For Academic staff representatives, the CALS Committee on Academic Staff Issues (CASI) shall provide a short list of nominations from which the Dean will select a representative. This process allows the Dean to consider other department representation on the APC.

Recommendations regarding advisory role of APC:

The role and composition of college level Academic Planning Councils is defined in FP&P Section 3.08. In brief, the APC's are charged with advising the deans on school or college programs, strategic long-term planning, and budgetary planning. Further insights into the role of APC's can be garnered from the list of factors the council should weigh in providing advice (Section 3.08.B.3):

- 1) The anticipated responsibilities of the department and of the school or college for teaching, research, and public service of high quality;
- 2) Existing and potential budgetary commitments in relation to present and anticipated resources of the school or college;
- 3) The effect of the proposed program decision in strengthening the capacity of the school or college to carry out its mission;
- 4) The goals of the university's affirmative action programs.

The APC Self-Study Subcommittee probed these roles and how well the CALS APC is fulfilling the advisory goals. Relatively recent changes in how faculty positions are allocated, as well as establishment of a distinct CALS Equity and Diversity Committee, altered the typical activities of the CALS APC since the last review. The Self-Study Subcommittee appreciates that both changes have had positive impacts on CALS. These changes also offer an opportunity to re-envision how APC can advise the dean on both budgetary and diversity issues.

The college-wide strategic planning exercise and ongoing annual strategic planning requirements at the department level have also substantially decreased the APC's role in long-term planning. The APC has repeatedly revisited the question of whether there is a role for APC in reviewing or advancing these strategic planning activities. These APC discussions have rejected the idea of the APC reviewing each individual departmental plan.

In consultation with the deans and current APC members, the Self-Study Subcommittee identified two primary advisory roles of the APC: 1) program/center review and academic program development and 2) review of policies for instruction, research and extension.

A significant portion of APC service is dedicated to Program and Center reviews. These 5-year and 10-year reviews, depending on the maturity of the program, play a key role in oversight of the CALS instructional, research and extension missions. The APC votes on whether each review is complete, an important task, but one which could likely be streamlined. A second significant aspect of the APC evaluation of reviews is to assist the dean to identify and clarify recommendations emerging from the reviews. Establishing a process for CALS to follow up on program/center efforts to address the recommendations, prior to the next long-term review, would strengthen the value of APC effort. Absent this process, APC members expressed concerns that their efforts have negligible tangible impact. Asking programs/centers to report progress back to the APC could provide incentives to act on the recommendations of the dedicated committees that conduct these reviews. The Dean is additionally urged to consider the process of department/center reviews and their value relative to strategic planning as the advisory role of APC is clarified going forward.

APC representatives expressed widespread concern and frustration with how the APC is used for development of College policies. Overall, APC members do not feel that the Committee is engaged in policy development. Rather, information flow seems to be unidirectional: policies tend to be rolled out for Committee approval, and pushback from the Committee is oftentimes met with resistance and defensiveness by College Administration. Consequently, APC members can feel that their contributions are not appreciated, leading some to question whether service on the Committee is of value. The Self-Study Subcommittee recommends that APC and College Administration develop a mechanism (full APC discussion? subcommittee?) to define and clarify the role of APC as an *advisory* body to decision-making. That information should be incorporated into the outdated "Introduction to CALS APC" document (Pfatteicher 2016) and communicated to CALS department chairs.

Appendix 1

Discussion questions used for meetings with:

- 1) Dean Kate VandenBosch and Associate Deans (Feb. 18, 2020)
 - 2) CALS APC (March 3, 2020)
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1. How well does the APC advise the Dean's office on:
 - a. Developing strategic and long-range plans

 - b. College program review and academic program development

 - c. Budgetary planning and allocation

 - d. Development of policies re instruction, research and extension

 - e. Diversity initiatives to ensure excellence

2. Are any of these primary function(s), any secondary, i.e. less important or relevant? Does the APC need to increase relevance to the Dean's office in any of these areas?

3. How well does the current membership structure provide representation?

4. Given the various ways in which the Dean communicates to departments and gathers input, in what ways is APC meeting the needs of the Dean's office for information; in which way is APC's input duplicative or no longer needed?