

**CALS Academic Planning Council**  
6201 Microbial Sciences Building  
October 3, 2023, 1:00-2:30 p.m.

**Attendees:** Samer Alatout, Francisco Arriaga, Bradley Bolling, Todd Courtenay, Sheldon Du, Glenda Gillaspay (Zoom) Mehdi Kabbage, HuiChuan Lai, Patrick Masson, Ivan Rayment, Sean Schoville, John Shutske, Daniel Smith, William Tracy, Zhou Zhang

**Ex Officio:** Irwin Goldman, Louis Macias, Paul Mitchell (Zoom), Angie Seitler

**Guests:** Megan Ackerman-Yost

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

*Group introductions*

**2. May 16, 2023 meeting minutes for approval**

*Minutes were approved and will be posted on the APC website.*

**3. Our processes this year**

- *This year, APC will meet once a month. While in-person attendance is highly encouraged, a virtual option will be made available to those who cannot attend.*
- *APC is instrumental in approving Academic Program Reviews, however last year Dean Gillaspay used the group as a source of invaluable input when discussing sensitive and important subjects brought up by the college and topics generated by the group.*
- *Agenda and minutes will be approved by consent. Council members are encouraged to come forward with revisions and suggest agenda items prior to the meeting.*
- *CALS hired Jane Duffstein as Assistant Dean for Student Recruitment & Outreach. Jane will be working with various stakeholders to improve marketing and recruiting students in the college.*
- *The college is looking for more consistency and stability with the number of students.*
  - *This fall, CALS has enrolled 50 more first-year students compared to last year, while the overall number of students on campus has declined.*
  - *Transfer students are down a little bit, but CALS does not have many transfer students (from 111 in 2017 to 60 this year).*
- *CALS hired Heather Gayton as an Outreach Manager, who works for the Rural Partnership Institute. She will help impact student recruitment in rural areas.*
- *The college plans to hire another person to help with student recruitment by targeting the high school population.*

- *There is a shift in personnel in the External Relations to accommodate hiring someone with marketing expertise.*
- *Dean Gillaspy noted that after observing three academic reviews last year, she finds the process not robust and very time consuming. The use of external review teams can be more efficient.*

#### **4. College updates**

- *Chancellor's hiring initiative*
  - *Chancellor Mnookin wants UW to play a big role in solving global grand challenges. Campus is considering investing resources in hiring around 150 faculty to make progress in solving these challenges. Unofficially, areas under consideration are environmental sustainability and artificial intelligence – both spaces that CALS can make significant contributions.*
  - *In the light of this initiative, CALS has held series of Zoom sessions with department chairs and faculty: Artificial Intelligence, Sustainability, and Democracy and Citizenship session, and two research listening sessions to plan and be prepared to respond strategically to the Chancellor's initiative.*
- *Program reviews coming up this year include programs in the departments of Nutritional Sciences and Community & Environmental Sociology. At least some of these reviews will be done by an external review team, but the APC will have the same governance role as with the regular process.*
- *There is an ongoing search for The Vice Provost for Libraries and soon there will be a search for the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education.*
- *The Dean of Graduate School, Bill Karpus, is proposing that the Graduate School move out of the Vice Chancellor for Research Office. These potential structural changes could have a great impact on CALS.*

#### **5. Academic Program Updates**

- *Paul Mitchell, Interim Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, prefaced this item by talking about the changes in the Academic Affairs office and the goal of collaborating with the departments and improving internal communications.*
- *Assistant Dean for Academic Programs & Policies, Megan Ackerman-Yost, talked about the best practices in developing curricula or courses that positively impact college including:*
  - *When thinking of revamping or redeveloping curricula and programs, and/or making innovations in teaching, please connect with Academic Affairs early in the brainstorming stages of the process and stay connected throughout the process. This is to avoid obstacles and complete the process in a timely manner.*

- *Curricula can be developed through the redesign of existing programs or through the development of new programs. It is important for the faculty in the department to be on-board with changes as well as new programs.*
- *Here are some ideas to consider when reviewing existing programs:*
  - *Think critically about your objectives and how they are met through your coursework. How well do the objectives accurately represent what all graduates of your program should know or do to receive that major? Consider how you assess your program objectives to measure the degree to which the learning in your course requirements meets those objectives. Effective assessment shows avenues for program improvement, which is a great selling point for the program.*
  - *Adjusting coursework to meet objectives more accurately or efficiently can help students understand the program goals better and see themselves in your program. This can also decrease the total credits for your major and supports increasing the frequency the courses are offered.*
  - *Consider whether all your course requirements are necessary and sufficient to meet your program goals. It used to be common to require courses because they were admissions requirements for medical/graduate school, but admissions requirements are now more variable. If you have courses in your program that are more for certain career paths rather than general degree expectations for your field of study, consider whether these would be better discussed in advising. This can open majors up for students who have different career goals.*
  - *Have a plan in place to regularly teach all the required courses for your major to ensure on time graduation.*
  - *Teach popular and critical courses frequently to prevent bottlenecks.*
  - *Allow for double (second) majors and more certificates through the above actions (providing program flexibility where possible, ensuring required courses efficiently meet objectives, considering the total credits of your major/program, teaching courses regularly, etc.). We see more students with two, three majors and students with multiple certificates. Programs that allow some flexibility for when courses are taken, and particularly programs that provide a major “core” and more flexible options for major depth, allow students to customize their degree through second majors and certificates.*
- *Course*
  - *CALS departments should consider playing in the Ethnic Studies space. Every UW-Madison undergraduate has to take an Ethnic Studies course, and CALS only teaches three. Currently, students often choose fairly random courses for this requirement but would prefer to take courses that tie more into their interests. Offering Ethnic Studies*

*courses that relate to the fields of study our students are pursuing would make this requirement more meaningful. Departments are encouraged to think about how to make the most of the ethnic course. College and the ODEI will help.*

- *Consider a lower course number (below 200) for courses meant to be taken by first-year students. Lower course numbers can also be more attractive for broad introductory courses and show up earlier in the search engine for students.*
- *Think about the prerequisites of under-enrolled courses, and whether there is an audience for the course that cannot currently take it. Consider whether the course's usefulness for students would be harmed by adjusting the intensity of the course or teaching just-in-time background material.*
- *New, fun, or experimental courses should be offered during the academic year, when students need to attend full-time and have a tuition plateau from 12-18 credits. Offering critical courses during the summer can help students progress faster in the major or open up flexibility for taking other coursework.*
- *Consider whether there are opportunities to work with other majors to provide support courses—for courses that are geared toward CALS students, are there avenues to open them up to other students.*
- *CALS does not discourage double majors, but we have to keep in mind majors that are relatively close together.*

**The following is an updated list of expected APC items:**

- *Improving advising & marketing*
- *Cross-cutting programs in the college (Biology, Global Health, Agroecology).*
- *Optimizing the relationship with L&S and Engineering to make CALS more competitive with students.*
- *Staff and other non-faculty as voting members of a department*
- *Teaching mission and impacts on the student experience: active learning, flipped classrooms, other potential impacts of increasing course sizes.*

The meeting adjourned at 2:34pm.