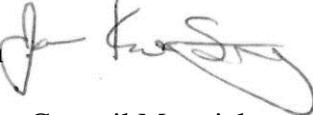




COLLEGE OF
Letters & Science
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
The Heart of a Great University

5 August 2016

TO: Steven K. Smith, Secretary of the Faculty

FROM: John Karl Scholz, Dean 

RE: L&S Academic Planning Council Materials

CC: Elaine Klein, Associate Dean for Academic Planning, L&S
Jocelyn Milner, Associate Provost and Director, Academic Planning and Institutional Research
Amy Wendt, Chair, University Committee

Attachments:

1. APC Review, Final Report 5/27/2016
2. College of Letters and Science Academic Planning Council Operating Procedures (July 2016)

Thank you for your reminder concerning the periodic review of Academic Planning Councils. I'm pleased to share with you the attached report, which was prepared by a group of faculty and staff who have recently completed their terms on the L&S APC. They have made several excellent recommendations about how best to manage the council's work, which is substantial and important.

I have also attached the current version of the L&S APC Operating Procedures (updated with technical changes in July 2016).

Additional information about the council's work can be found online, in the L&S Administrative Gateway:

- council membership and operating procedures (<https://kb.wisc.edu/ls/page.php?id=19956>);
- logistics about the council's work and contact information (<https://kb.wisc.edu/ls/page.php?id=19987>); and
- meeting notices, agendas, notes, and annual reports to the L&S Senate (<https://kb.wisc.edu/ls/page.php?id=27288>).

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact me or Associate Dean Elaine Klein.

Office of the Dean

College of Letters & Science, The Heart of A Great University

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APC Review. Final Report 5/27/2016

Submitted to the Dean of Letters and Science by Harry Brighthouse (Philosophy), Anna Gemrich (Spanish and Portuguese) and Matthew Turner (Geography).

Background.

FP&P requires that each Academic Planning Council conduct a review of itself once every five years. Here is the exact text of FP&P:

b. At intervals which shall not exceed five years, the elected faculty members of each council shall review its structure and functions to assess its effectiveness as a faculty voice and its compliance with Faculty Policies and Procedures 3.08. The self-study report shall be submitted to the Dean, the faculty of the school or college, and to the University Committee.

In February the Dean requested this committee to review the L&S APC in Spring 2016.

Process.

The Committee met with the current members of the APC, with the Dean, with the observers, and with Associate Dean, Elaine Klein. It also sent out a survey to all members of the APC and the observers to gather anonymous input that might not be forthcoming in a time-limited meeting. The central purposes were i) to gauge how, and how well, members of the APC, observers, and the Dean believe that the APC functions and ii) to generate ideas about how to improve its functioning.

Discussion.

We want to start out with some observations about how the APC has functioned over the past several years, drawing on our own experience and the input from the members and observers.

First, FP&P prescribes an advisory role for APC. The agenda is set by the officers in South Hall, and, typically, APC members respond to that agenda. Program review constitutes at least 50% and probably more of meeting time, and a good deal more than 50% of the reading and preparation members do for meetings. APC is representative in the sense that it is elected by faculty and academic staff, but it is not adversarial, and while individual members may have particular interests, knowledge and expertise which they bring to bear on the deliberations, it seems to be generally acknowledged that it would be inappropriate for them to press the interests of a particular unit, or a particular division. APC members generally treat discussions as deliberations about what is good for the college, not opportunities to represent particular interests within the college.

Second, we observe that the materials APC members have to read in preparation for APC meetings are sometimes voluminous and often complex. Nevertheless, they are provided in a timely way and there is a general feeling that members are informed well in advance of the likely workflow.

Third, it is inevitable that APC members are generally less knowledgeable than the Deans and other members of senior management about the situations in particular departments and the workings of the college. It is also inevitable – and, we think, desirable – that the Deans determine the agendas and provide guidance. Given the potential for conflict in a forum of this kind, it is also notable that neither the Associate Deans nor the Dean expressed concern that they are criticized excessively or unreasonably, and all emphasized that they find APC discussions to be illuminating and useful. APC members likewise did not express concerns about being constrained by the agendas or conduct of meetings to express their views.

Some dissatisfaction was revealed by the survey. One comment concerned time use in meetings; there is a tendency to focus more on items that are listed earlier in the agenda, to the detriment of items that are listed later. Program reviews take a long time to prepare, and discussions are often quite brief, especially if a review is scheduled late in a meeting. While we recognize that the submission of program reviews is not uniform across the year, scheduling too many reviews within one APC meeting creates problems. It can lead to an unevenness of APC review across programs within a meeting's agenda. Two options for addressing heavy program review workloads are to either expand the length of APC meetings or increase the number APC meetings. It is this committee's view that adding additional meetings (with a specified upper limit of programs within a single meeting) is preferable (see recommendation 3).

A second area of concern expressed by some APC members is the large volume of material to review before meetings without guidance for issues to look for. This reflects not only the steep learning curve of how to read a program review (self-study, external review, and response) for first-year APC members but also the sense that it would be useful to know earlier some of the background and context about programs under review that is currently presented to the APC by Associate Deans immediately prior to APC discussions. Members are not necessarily asking for full summaries of program reviews prior to the APC's reading of program review documents, but rather they are asking for the necessary contextual information about the program and its challenges (from an L&S perspective) to help orient (not shape) the APC reading of program reviews. To address these concerns, this committee recommends allocation of an early APC meeting for orientation (see recommendation 1) and when possible, the provision of contextual information about programs by Associate Deans prior to the APC's reading of program documents (see recommendation 2).

APC members and observers generally expressed an interest in increasing opportunities for the APC to provide feedback on policy issues facing the College. These expressions can be divided into two types: i) concerns that policy or strategic visioning issues are raised at the end of meeting with very little time or prior notice for APC members to provide effective feedback; and ii) an interest in expanding the opportunities for APC members to provide feedback (both in terms of meeting time and range of topics). Most comments fell within the first category. Still, the Dean and some APC members expressed interest in expanding the consultation of the APC on a range of strategic and policy issues. This committee encourages such an expansion if it supports the APC's advisory function on an "as needed" basis from the perspective of the Dean. We recognize that for some issues, the APC may not have the expertise, in-depth understanding

or sufficient knowledge of political contexts to effectively provide meaningful advice. In such cases, the time spent bringing APC members up to speed on such issues may not be warranted. Still, we recommend that if APC feedback is sought by L&S administration, these discussions would be most effective if conducted in meetings when program reviews are not scheduled (see recommendation 4).

Recommendations.

While there was a great deal of agreement – among APC members, observers, and the Dean – that the APC fulfills its central functions well, several suggestions emerged from the process that we believe could improve its effectiveness.

1. An orientation for new APC members.

One valuable finding, was that whereas the Dean and the observers expressed confidence that APC members have command of the issues at stake in meetings, and make useful and insightful contributions, the members of the APC themselves were less confident in their own effectiveness. Most APC members felt that the first year (or more) on the APC involves a very steep learning curve. While all new APC members have some idea of what APC does, as in any organization veterans (including, in the case of the APC, the observers) operate with a wealth of knowledge that newcomers lack. For this reason, several members thought a short orientation might have enabled them to contribute more effectively, better, and sooner. An orientation could be devised by veteran or recent members of the APC along with staff members, and could include a primer on the job descriptions of senior staff, description of some of the major issues that have recently been discussed at APC, and a discussion of a recently-accepted program review.

2. Where possible, a briefing from the relevant Associate Dean concerning upcoming program reviews, during the APC meeting that precedes it.

Program reviews are often lengthy, and the sheer volume of reading for each meeting makes it difficult to identify the parts of the review that might require more scrutiny. Sometimes reviews are written in a way that does not make fully transparent the most significant challenges faced by the program in question. A short briefing from the Associate Dean about the review in question prior to reading the materials would help APC members zero in on the most important issues. APC members agreed this would be useful, but also thought it might be excessively demanding for Associate Deans, who already do an excellent job clarifying the reviews at the beginning of our discussions within meetings. During our conversation with the observers (including the Associate Deans), the committee was impressed that Associate Deans did not seem to think that this represented an undue burden on them.

3. Any meeting should discuss program reviews from no more than 2 units.

APC members found it difficult to have command of all the necessary details when more than 2 units were discussed in a single meeting. Although including 3 units in the same meeting is rare, some members suggested it limited their ability to provide useful feedback during those meetings.

4. A meeting should be scheduled each semester to be dedicated to discussion of key strategic matters.

Because L&S has so many programs, and because in the period starting 2013 APC has been clearing a backlog of reviews, less time has been available for important strategic matters that could benefit from APC member input than would be ideal. Program reviews tend to take the bulk of a meeting, and strategic issues concerning the college tend to get crammed in at the end of a meeting. This makes the focused contemplation that generates good and useful ideas difficult. The sense of the committee was that attendees find this frustrating. At the same time, most of the feedback we got indicated we do not spend too much time on program reviews. Reviews take a long time to produce, and scrutinizing each one carefully enables us to give better feedback, as well as prepares us better to understand subsequent reviews.

Of course, strategic issues do not arise once a semester at exactly the time that an extra meeting could be accommodated. However, scheduling a meeting dedicated exclusively to those issues might, we think, relieve the pressure on other meetings somewhat. It is understood that holding a meeting each semester focused on policy matters may require adding 1-2 additional meetings a year depending on program review demands on APC time.

5. Introduce a specific template for the self-study segment of program review, to be designed by the senior staff in consultation with some current (and perhaps former) members of the APC.

Self-studies vary enormously in the level of detail they provide, the kinds of detail they focus on, the order in which they present the details, and the additional information provided. Important details are sometimes buried, deliberately or inadvertently, by the authors. External reviews and the introductions by Associate Deans often help with this, but it is demanding to expect reviewers always to be attentive to the specific details that might concern APC members. It would be easier to read self-studies and master the details if they followed a fairly strict template, perhaps even including word limits. It would also save time in meetings by making it easier to find relevant details during APC meetings.

APPENDIX: FP and P 3.08, concerning the structure and role of APCs.

3.08. SCHOOL AND COLLEGE ACADEMIC PLANNING COUNCILS.

The faculty of each school or college shall establish an academic planning council with which the dean shall consult on school or college programs and budgetary planning. The council shall advise the dean on such matters and present departmental, school, or college views and opinions.

A. MEMBERSHIP. Since considerable variance exists in the size and method of administration of each school or college, the size of each council, the term of membership, and the selection process may vary. Each school or college shall, however, adhere to the following provisions:

1. The dean shall be a member ex-officio.
2. All elected and appointed members of each academic planning council shall be faculty or academic staff whose primary responsibilities are instruction, outreach/extension, and/or research or be academic associate deans.
3. Except as provided elsewhere for the Graduate School Academic Planning Council, at least two-thirds of the membership shall be university faculty elected by the school or college faculty and shall hold no substantial administrative appointment beyond the departmental level.
4. Except as provided elsewhere for the Graduate School Academic Planning Council, at least one member shall be academic staff from the school or college.
5. The process of selection should foster representation of the major divisions of study within a school or college.

Changes in procedures for nomination or election of faculty members shall be approved by the school or college faculty, and transmitted to the University Committee.

B. PROCEDURES. Except as provided elsewhere for the Graduate School Academic Planning Council,

1. Each council shall be chaired by the dean or his/her designee. At least three times per semester, the council shall meet and the dean shall consult with it on such matters as program review and future development or contraction of academic programs within the school or college. The dean shall schedule an academic planning council meeting within a reasonable time if requested to do so by at least one-third of council faculty members.
2. Each dean shall consult with the academic planning council, and the academic planning council shall advise the dean in developing strategic plans and long-range planning for the school or college.

In addition, the council may consider any other factors relevant to the capacity of the school or college to fulfill its mission.

a. Each school and college council shall adopt rules governing advance circulation of council agendas, how items may be added to agendas by a council member, how appropriate summaries of council meetings shall be made available to the faculty of the school or college and how the faculty of the school or college shall be notified of the council membership. These rules and any subsequent modifications shall be filed with the University Committee.

b. At intervals which shall not exceed five years, the elected faculty members of each council shall review its structure and functions to assess its effectiveness as a faculty voice and its compliance with Faculty Policies and Procedures [3.08](#). The self-study report shall be submitted to the dean, the faculty of the school or college, and to the University Committee.

3. Each dean shall consult with the academic planning council, and the academic planning council shall advise the dean on program decisions likely to affect promotions to tenure or nonrenewal of probationary faculty appointments. When advising the dean the council shall give appropriate weight to:

- (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.

b. Academic planning councils shall afford the affected departments an opportunity to present their position during the course of the discussions

College of Letters and Science Academic Planning Council Operating Procedures

Consistent with *Faculty Policies and Procedures 3.08*, the College of Letters and Science Academic Planning Council articulates the following operating procedures that facilitate its work for the college.

- A. **Membership** consists of *ex officio* and term members. In addition, a number of *ex officio* observers serve as advisors to the council.
1. *Ex officio* members include the dean and the chair of the L&S Curriculum Committee. The dean also appoints a member of the University Staff Issues Committee to serve *ex officio*.
 2. *Term members* include both faculty and academic staff.
 - a. Two members of the faculty from each of the college's three divisions are elected by the faculty to serve three-year terms.
 - i. Elections are held in the Spring term and are overseen by the dean's office. Elections are conducted using the UW-Madison online survey system; results are kept on file in the Dean's Office.
 - ii. Nominations are solicited from the L&S Senate, from current and former members of the Council, and from Chairs and Directors of all L&S departments and programs. Any current member of the faculty may nominate herself/himself for any open seat.
 - iii. Results are tabulated at the end of the Spring term, so winners can factor this college service into her/his responsibilities for the subsequent academic year.
 - b. Two members of the academic staff are elected by the academic staff to serve three-year terms. One seat is reserved for a member whose duties are primarily (but not necessarily exclusively) instructional; the other is reserved for a member whose duties are primarily (but not necessarily exclusively) focused on research.
 - i. Elections are held in the Spring term and are overseen by the L&S Committee on Academic Staff Issues (CASI).
 - ii. The CASI invites nominations from all members of the L&S academic staff. In addition, nominations are sought from chairs and directors of all L&S departments and programs.
 - iii. Results are tabulated at the end of the Spring term, so winners can factor this college service into her/his responsibilities for the subsequent academic year. To the extent possible, terms are staggered to ensure continuity of membership over the years.
 4. *Ex-Officio Observers* include, but are not limited to, the academic, research, and administrative associate deans of the college; the director of college relations, a representative from the International Institute, and the APC staff liaison. Additional observers may be added to this group at the discretion of the chair, in consultation with the council and the associate deans. These observers are available to answer questions and may participate in discussion, but do not vote on matters before the council.
 5. *Additional or interim members* may be appointed at the dean's discretion (e.g., to expand the council so it can address special questions, to complete elected members' terms).

B. Operating procedures are as follows:

1. **Meetings.** The council meets from 1:00 – 2:30 p.m., on the first and third Tuesday during the Fall and Spring terms. Additional meetings may be scheduled within a reasonable time upon request of one-third of the council members, or by the dean.
2. **Chair.** The dean serves as chair of the council. In the event that the dean is unable to serve as chair, the dean may ask one of the academic associate deans to serve as chair, providing that no item under discussion pertains to a department or program that reports to that associate dean. In the event that such discussion is unavoidable, the acting chair may appoint a substitute for purposes of participating in discussion, and will not participate in any formal vote that might be taken as a result of that discussion.
3. **Business.** The business of the council includes review of academic programs and departments; review of plans to assess student learning; issues related to creation, contraction, or reorganization of academic programs, departments, and centers within the college; strategic planning and questions affecting the broadly conceived mission of the college; consultation regarding university matters upon which the dean is asked to comment on behalf of the college; and other questions as they arise.
 - i. Items for APC consideration may be submitted to the council by contacting the dean, the associate deans, or the dean’s staff liaison to the council.
 - ii. Council members may add items to the agenda in advance of the meeting by contacting the dean, or by requesting an addition during a meeting, with the proviso that to provide adequate notice to the public of the discussion, the item may not be discussed until the next meeting.
 - iii. Materials submitted for APC discussion are reviewed by the dean, the relevant associate deans (and/or the dean’s senior staff), and the APC staff liaison to ensure that technical questions are addressed prior to their presentation to the council (e.g, proposals to create new centers, institutes, or certificate programs must address all elements required for council approval; proposals involving budget or personnel resources are reviewed as to the college’s capacity to enact those changes if approved). Proposals that have an impact across the college will be circulated for comment; the dean has discretion to determine if they should be circulated prior to or following APC consideration.
 - iv. For tracking purposes, each item is assigned a reference number consisting of the final two digits of the academic year and a number reflecting the order in which it was received (e.g., APC 07.10 indicates the tenth item discussed in the 06-07 academic year). A record of items discussed and reference numbers is maintained by the staff liaison; when complete, materials are filed in the dean’s official department/program files, located in 102 South Hall.
 - v. The dean prepares the agenda in consultation with the associate deans and staff liaison. Agendas reflect items that are for discussion only and items that require council approval.
4. **Meeting agendas** are posted online approximately one week in advance of each meeting. Meeting materials are provided to council members via a link to the Academic Planning

Council Box. Materials distributed in advance of the meeting are available on request.

5. **Notice of the open meeting** and a copy of each meeting's agenda is provided by posting hard copies outside room 108 South Hall.
6. **Meetings are conducted** by following the agenda. The chair may, with the consent of council members, change the order of items to address last-minute conflicts in scheduling or to accommodate guests of the council. The chair will invite *ex-officio* observers or guests to lead discussion of items in which those individuals are most expert; generally, academic associate deans will lead discussion of items pertaining to any department or program for which that associate dean is responsible. In the event that the academic associate dean would be in the position of leading discussion of an item regarding her/his own department, the dean may lead discussion instead.
7. **General Public Observers**, if present, may contribute to the discussion if recognized by the chair.
8. **Voting.** The chair will request a vote on any item requiring formal approval by the council before it can be forwarded to another entity (e.g., the University Academic Planning Council, the Graduate Faculty Executive Committee). These items include, but are not limited to, requests for permission to plan or implement new academic programs (majors); requests to substantially redirect or alter academic programs; requests to establish new certificate programs or formal options within a program; renaming a program; discontinuation of a certificate, program or degree; establishing a dual degree program; establish, rename, restructure, or eliminate a department; establish or eliminate a center or institute; establish or eliminate a Subject Listing. The council may also vote as a means to direct the dean or associate deans to take a particular course of action, or to formally indicate the council's perspective on an issue under discussion.
9. **Notes.** Notes are taken by the L&S Administration staff. These notes are circulated in draft form to council members, and may be revised or amended by members prior to adoption as approved by the council. Notes are posted online, following approval by the council.
10. **Annual Report.** Each Fall, the dean submits a formal report of APC activity to the L&S Faculty Senate. Reports are prepared from the notes of each meeting and consist of formal actions taken by the council, as well as a brief summary of key issues that were discussed by the council.
11. **General information** about the council, its members and procedures is made available to the college via the *L&S Administrative Gateway*, an online compendium of policies, procedures, and guidelines for most business conducted in the college.
12. **Contact Information:** For information about the L&S APC, please contact the L&S Dean's Office or the Associate Dean for Academic Planning, Elaine M. Klein (elaine.klein@wisc.edu or 265-8484).

Version Record:

First approved by the L&S Academic Planning Council, 25 November 2006

Revised 6 November, 2012

Technical corrections to update committee names and contact information, July 2016

**FROM: FACULTY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON**

(As approved by the Faculty Senate on 15 May 1978, with subsequent amendments as of 2 May 2005)

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