Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
November 29, 2016, 4:00 P.M. GBB 123

Call to Order
Chair DeBoer called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.
Roll was not called for the listening session. There were numerous senators and faculty at large in attendance. The only item on the agenda was a discussion of Program Prioritization with Interim Provost Beverly Edmond

## Communication

Chair DeBoer introduced the Program Prioritization Listening Session for the Faculty Senate. Senators will be given priority to ask questions and are requested to sit in the front several rows of the room. In general the meeting will follow Robert’s Rule of Order so everyone is given a chance to speak once and then if time allows can speak a second time. Please introduce yourself for the record. The meeting will end promptly at 4:50 p.m. Tomorrow there are two additional sessions, one at noon for Staff Senate, and another in the evening at 6:00 p.m. for ASUM. There is also a campus-wide dialogue co-hosted by the shared governance groups tomorrow at 4:00 p.m. in the UC Theatre.

### Interim Provost Edmond

It is her intention to listen to your comments and concerns and is amenable to having additional listening sessions if needed. Colleagues who have undertaken program prioritization recommend to use this time to deal with concerns, lay the groundwork, and get buy in to have a better process. Logistically she would like to lay the foundation for what will happen in the next 12 months or so.

Senator Ahishek Chatterjee, Political Science: At the last Senate meeting the President indicated that the decision to proceed with Program Prioritization had not been made and was open for discussion. Then a few weeks later it had been decided. What changed during that time?

Edmond: There was a discussion at the President’s Cabinet. She believes the intent was to have the discussion at that level regarding whether to move forward on the academic and administrative services side. The Cabinet determined that it was a good option for the University, but should involve listening to concerns with how to structure the process.

Senator John Hunt, English: Will there be a mechanism to submit written comments and questions?

Edmond: The Provost’s Office will be happy to set up a website that allows you to submit ideas, concerns, and suggestions. They have not yet talked a lot about how to manage the process. This will be a good way to ensure that members of the campus community that cannot make the listening sessions can provide input.

Hunt: The PPP seems to be a massive exercise in pure mathematical reasoning. You identify what is important, you devise metrics to measure it, gather the data, enter it into a computer and it identifies winners and losers. But there is not anything purely objective about it. When you identify what is important to measure you inevitably have to make a value judgment. So if you are measuring research activities, for example, and decide that grant dollars are an important metric then you are skewing favorable results towards the hard science and against humanities. How can you possibly keep self-interest out of the process at every stage? Presumably any committee set up to design program prioritization will be composed of faculty members from various disciplines. In an environment that is going to pit winners against losers. Inevitably faculty will represent the interest of their disciplines. How do you develop a formula that fairly represents the interests across campus?

Edmond: This is the challenge. Part of the process will need to be to consider both the quantitative and qualitative factors. Candidly there is subjectivity in making any kind of value judgment. This happens day to day as we complete administrative tasks. This process will try to have a framework to guide decisions that is fair, equitable and as valid as you can get. This is where the collaborative and hard work comes into play. It will likely not be possible to be 100% objective. But if we talk about the concerns related to skewing the balance then that is built into the process.

Hunt: The administrators on this campus or on any campus already have a good sense of strong and weak programs. And a good sense of the different kinds of measurement of value. He is very skeptical in the value of this type of mathematical modeling. It seems like a veneer for the administration to hide behind in making difficult decisions that they can easily make without the number crunching.

Edmond: She disagrees somewhat with that conclusion. It is not desirable to leave the decisions or even process design to the discretion of the administrators. She believes the collaborative work has value. Hearing from the campus and openly designing the framework is a good process, but understands the comment.

Senator MaryAnn Bowman, Social Work: How will the workgroup to design the process be formed?

Edmond: That is open for discussion. She welcomes your thoughts on forming the makeup of the workgroup.

Senator Susan Caro, Mansfield Library: This is going to be an expensive and time consuming process. Is there any specific evidence that it will yield successful results? Will this be successful in terms of finances and the overall outcome to campus?

Edmond: She doesn’t know that it has to be expensive. She believes it can be built in a way that is sensitive to our economic situation. In building the model and identifying how the outcomes will be directed, answers the question of whether the process has value. There are lots of institutions that have gone through the process that attest to the results. Some are within the state and talked about their experience at the Workshop. Her previous institution in Georgia had mixed experiences. Some institutions were very skeptical and not happy with the outcome. There are examples of institutions that felt they designed a process that worked for them and there are others where the process did not work.

Alex Bulmahn, Physics and Astronomy: You say you don’t think it will be very expensive, do you have an estimate. And where will the money come from in the current stretched thin budget.

Edmond: The process has not yet been designed, so it is difficult to estimate the cost, but it doesn’t have to be an expensive process. Whatever resources are needed will have to come from the resources that we have.

Senator Samir Bitar, Modern and Classical Language: He really wants to understand why the administration feels we need this process.

Edmond: We have shrinking resources and will likely not receive any increase funding from the state. So we must evaluate how to support our programs to the best extent possible.

Ione Crummy, Modern and Classical Languages: How is program prioritization different from the Academic Alignment and Innovation Program (AAIP)?

Edmond: We are going to decouple the two, but certainly learn from what was done in the AAIP. We will take some suggestions to do some of the things we didn’t do. For example, focusing very specifically on programs, but first defining what a program is. And using other strategies to ensure we get the best outcomes of process. It will be different in a number ways. We will not repeat the same analysis as the AAIP, but learn from it.

Senator Diana Lurie, Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences: She is a little confused. Our contract has specific language for cutting programs. How is this process going to be different than what is outlined in the contract?

Edmond: What comes out of the process is determined by how it is structured and what you identify as the outcomes. If any of the outcomes interface with the requirements of the CBA, we will yield to the CBA and make sure we do not violate the terms of the contract. But program prioritization is a bigger exercise. It can identify areas for growth as well as discontinuation. It is not simply a process of cutting programs. So in terms of faculty, the CBA must be followed as well as the standards in higher education for tenured faculty rights. So meshing all these things has to be a part of how you implement the process.

Senator Greg Larson, Communication Studies: As we start this process of deliberating and trying to figure out what this is going to look like, are there parameters of where we need to go? Is there a sense that we have to get some place? Could the outcome of all this work be that we don’t cut any programs? Is everything on the table or are there certain parameters?

Edmond: There has been no charge that we have to get to a certain place in terms of a certain number of programs being discontinued. She is not operating with that mandate. Once we understand what prioritization is about, then we design the approach for the institution and determine the desired outcomes. For example, some institutions have tiered programs- tiers for growth or for discontinuance. The criteria by which programs become tiered are also part of the discussion. Reallocating, reconfiguring and realigning are all possible, and would need to be vetted as part of the process.

Darrell Jackson, Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences: How will graduate programs be evaluated? Will it be strictly by enrollment? How will they be prioritized?

Edmond: That’s the question. How should we look at graduate programs, at the general core, and etc.? She does not have a set idea about how to structure the process. She is open to the faculties’ suggestions. The criteria need to be vetted in a collaborative fashion. This will not be a top down mandate.

Senator Allen Szalda-Petree, Psychology: If we were to start down this process. When would the development phase start and how long will it take?

Edmond: The range of time recommended for doing the ground work is between 9 to 12 months. Incidentally, as interim Provost she would help build the foundation for the new provost to implement the actual process. There is no mandated deadline from OCHE or anyone else. When there has been adequate time for all the stakeholders to provide input, the information will be garnered to determine how to proceed.

Senator Bill Holben, DBS: The external expert review reports submitted as part of the 7-year program review could be a resource for this process. It seems that many of the recommendations from these have not been acted on. He respectfully suggests reviewing them.

Edmond: We have had the discussion among the MUS chief academic officers with regard to how the academic program review process would interface with program prioritization. One institution offered that it had tried to blend the two. The intention is to be sensitive and inclusive of what has been done in the past.

Holben: What is under the umbrella of the program prioritization review? Does it include the various centers and institutions, administrative structure, and etc.? How pervasive is it? It is not just academic units.

Edmond: It is not just academic units. It will include administrative structures and programs as well. But we will need to discuss how to structure the review to get a sense of what will be involved.

Senator Jule Banville, Journalism: Is retrenchment part of the discussion? Or are we staying away from that word all together.

Edmond: There has not been any discussion about cuts. If this would lead to that the language in the CBA will be followed.

Senator Brady Harrison, English: Has the announcement made by the President at the Budget Forum last year been pushed aside? Is this truly a beginning conversation? Or is this process just to realize those announcements?

Edmond: There needs to be some consideration to the AAIP process previously conducted. The question is how should we look at the AAIP process and outcomes relative to prioritization? This should be answered through the collaborative process.

Senator Linda Frey, History: What kind of data is going to be collected and from what period of time. Data from this year, for example, is not representative of the past 10 years. So we need to be cautious with the metrics. She understands that metrics are much more effective in estimating administrative costs that to compare diverse academic programs. Academic programs include values that cannot possibly be measured in a numeric way and doesn’t make sense for our vision of the university.
Are we waiting for the Strategic Planning Coordinating Committee (SPCC) to make its recommendations (April), or will we develop the methodology simultaneously?

Chair DeBoer indicated that the Senate asked for a draft from the SPCC in February. The final draft should be going to the President April 1st. The Strategic Plan should be used to develop the metrics.

Frey: Are we waiting until February then to move ahead to develop the methodology?

Edmond: The next 9 months is intended to figure out all the pertinent concerns and issues in moving forward to then design a methodology. This will work quite well with the strategic planning timeline. It is recommended that institutions complete strategic planning so prioritization can be connected to the results of the strategic planning process. We are not developing the methodology yet. The data and metrics are part of the conversation and challenge. How do we create a set of indicators that we are comfortable with? The categories could be weighted. There are lots of ways to structure the metrics framework. The conversations are intended to prevent as much subjectivity as possible. She hopes that we can even change how we describe the process. This has to be a process developed by the collective in order to work. She has heard some anecdotal support from a few faculty members, because despite having challenges, it does have the potential of using our limited resources in a better way. She understands that faculty and staff are concerned about what it will mean to them and their departments. She will also be talking with faculty at other institutions that were able to garner support for the process to learn how this might happen at UM.

Professor Doug Emlin, DBS and Strategic Planning Coordinating Committee: The Committee has been working for months and collecting data from the campus community and the businesses that hire our students in order to put together and clarify the vision. The Committee reviewed the prior strategic plan and departmental assessment plans so that it is not reinventing the wheel. There is potential for fortuitous timing. Although the Committee isn’t there yet, there is a good chance it will recommend program prioritization. So this is a good opportunity, the challenge is to do it right. It is not as simple as grant dollars. There is a lot more to it. He read the Dickesens’ Book. There is a lot of thought from other institutions on how you assess the value of programs that includes a lot of components – history, productivity, international recognition, and scholarship. There is a chance to use the strategic plan to guide the process and help set the metrics. He has been here for 18 years and doesn’t see how the university can survive without doing something like this. Business as usual and cutting every year is not going to work. You have to be bold and reallocate with a process that is transparent and fair. So here is our chance to shape the process.

Senator Neyooxet Greymorning, NAS / Anthropology: How will prioritization be brought to the element that got us to this place, which is a steadily declining enrollment? How are we dealing with this issue? What is being done to stabilize the downward spiral?

Edmond: She agrees that we need to look both at the administration and academics. From her own experience in coming to campus in June, the first thing she observed was the creation of an Enrollment Management Unit and the hiring of a Vice President that had the experience and expertise to build the unit. This model has been in many institutions for some time. The old model of admissions as a small unit without a scientific and strategic enrollment process has not served institutions well. If you have an enrollment management issue, and do not embrace best practice strategies to solve the problem it will not turn around. We now have embryonic enrollment management. V.P. Crady is using his knowledge of the field to address the administrative structural, policy, financial, and marketing issues. The University has taken a major step to address the problem. Enrollment trends are evolutionary. You need someone to evaluate the data. We have to talk about enrollment management at a different level, not just recruitment. It is retention, persistence, and completion. You must look at the totality of the enrollment population at this university. Only a small piece of the pie consists of first-time freshmen. The focus has to be on persistence and retaining those students that are here. This happens with a lot of labor intense thoughtful activities.

Professor John Sommers-Flannigan: Thanks for having a listening session. His response is a little cynical because his experience over the past 5 or 6 years is that the administration has not been sensitive or transparent. He suggests hearing back from the administration as we move forward. It often feels like our input goes into a black hole and never comes back or is even acknowledged. The more transparency there is with the process the better it will be.

Edmond: It is important to know that your comments are heard. Given our reliance on technology, she tries always to respond to electronic communications. This is very important. Frankly her professional reputation is on the line. She takes her professional integrity very seriously. She is here to listen and to help guide a process that is as fair as any process can be. Transparency is her commitment and her actions will demonstrate this. It is her intention that everyone understand where we are going and that if you have questions you receive a response. This could be a part of the website interface that will be set up. She will ensure there will be responses, even if it is: “I don’t know yet”.

Senator Samir Bitar, MCLL: He truly appreciates Interim Provost Edmonds approach. It has been his experience that the “we” doesn’t exist. He has been at UM for 17 years as an adjunct faculty member. He is the founder of the Arabic program. In the past years all the decisions were made without consultation. No one has asked for his input. How will the university address this big fissure?

Edmond: She will do what is necessary to make sure what she says, is the way things operate with her. She cannot control anything beyond that. If she cannot encourage a “we-ness” among the faculty than that is the way it is. Speaking from experience as an individual that advocates change, you can either be a part of the solution or the part of the problem.

Bitar wrote to Interim Provost Edmond and received a response and was pleased. Thank you.

Edmond: She wants people to understand that she has been a social science faculty member in a graduate program and understands the struggle. She is not unaware of the caste system that exists in higher education. This should to be addressed to ensure things are as fair as possible.

Senator Andrew Ware, Physics: He suggests the Senate request a presidential fellow (someone other than himself) to lead this effort. It will take a long time because it is challenging. One of the issues with the previous strategic plan is that it was hard to quantify the goals and the themes. How do you compare creative works with scientific research? There are only a few things that can be counted. And departments don’t count their majors the same way. Some units do not classify students as majors until their junior year. It is difficult comparing across departments and programs. It is a challenging effort, but it can have good outcomes if we buy into it and take our time to develop the process.

Edmond: She appreciates having this time to discuss the issue with the faculty. She believes another listening session may be in order because she did too much talking. She wants to hear ideas from the faculty, who know the institution better than she does. Her goal is to provide the campus community with the opportunity to identify all the components that need to be addressed. Thank you.

## Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:52 p.m.