Department of English Council Meeting: Friday, February 8, 2019

Attendance: Dwight Atkinson, Chris Cokinos, Marcia Klotz, Kristin Little, Manuel Muñoz, Jeff Schlueter, Aurelie Sheehan, Stefan Vogel, Susan White

Meeting began at 2:30 in ML 453

I. Approval of minutes

   All approved minutes for last Council meeting, 1/18/19 [at end of meeting].

II. Professional & Technical Writing Major Revision

   Aurelie described Ann’s changes to major, mainly adding Journalism and eSociety classes to the electives list and regrouping those electives per suggestion from Amy Kimme-Hea. Additionally, a minor has been added. UGCC has approved the revised major/minor and Ann requests Council approval.

   Written summary distributed: The core of the major and the writing and language courses are as we discussed at the department meeting last fall. The revision is the restructuring of the electives: instead of just a general list, like we had in the fall version, we’ve got them organized by specializations so students can be strategic and develop expertise areas with their electives. After our department vote last fall, the college advised us to reorganize the electives into “specialization areas” which are not formal categories for transcripts, but rather ways for students and advisers to strategically navigate electives and expertise they can claim. We were also encouraged to partner with Journalism by including relevant courses as electives, so we’ve had a preliminary conversation with Journalism, and they’ve indicated interest in collaborating in this way. We’re still waiting on official approval. The iSchool also approved the use of their e-Society courses.

   Chris Cokinos made a motion that Council approve PTW revisions to the electives and the addition of the minor. Council requests that the minor is put in front of the department for a vote of approval via Qualtrics.

   Marcia seconded the motion.

   Discussion was requested.

   Council voted unanimously in approval of the motion.

III. CT Faculty Annual Performance Review proposed constitutional changes

   Kristin distributed amendment and explained how it came to be and its purpose, which is to codify APR practices for CT faculty that have been honed over last three years. She and Dev have
already collected the 10 signatures needed to bring to Department. This discussion was for friendly suggestions only to improve amendment (not presented for Council approval).

Kristin noted that the APR Committee for CT Lecturers needs to be large to spread the workload around equitably. The proposed process is modeled after the TT/TE process but takes into account the fact that some CT Lecturers are on one-year contracts, meaning that service expectations can vary from year to year.

Discussion about using specific language to note that the membership of the CT Lecturer committee will be composed of CT Lecturers, elected by CT Lecturers.

Discussion about designating “Unit Head” or “appropriate Unit Head.” One of the takes from last year’s Task Force is to anticipate that processes might not always go through the Writing Program, so language that is flexible is better.

Discussion of who will review outside-of-WP lecturers and who would determine the size of the committee.

Further discussion about changing “Writing Program Director” to “Department Head” or “appropriate Unit Head,” but no official motions offered.

Kristin thanked group for input. She will discuss recommendations with Dev and give to Aurelie to present to Department after revisions as necessary and the collection of signatures on the new document.

IV. Voting Mechanisms for Departmental Committees: Annual Performance Review and Promotion & Tenure

Aurelie brought up concerns that were offered at Department meeting about the plurality voting style that is now used for APR/P&T committee voting via Qualtrics. She said she investigated this by having discussions with Lee and others. The plurality/Qualtrics style voting has been in place for the last three years. Before that, when voting was done in person, the Department used simple majority style voting as per the constitution, with a system of elimination and multiple rounds of voting. To determine how to go forward, she brought the matter to Jon Reinhardt, our parliamentarian. She read his message on the topic:

RRO recommends instant runoff or preferential voting for electronic voting situations where open-ended re-voting is not possible, but it also says (Chapter XIII §45) "It can be used only if expressly authorized in the bylaws". So, I think we shouldn’t do it until we change our constitution to allow it, after we discuss the merits and drawbacks of both systems.
She asked for Council’s advice on the matter.

Manuel thought that Jon’s rationale was sound.

Chris C. made a motion that the Department continue to use the plurality/Qualtrics electronic voting mechanisms this year and do a thorough investigation of both voting methods for next year, and at that time codifying procedures in the bylaws.

Marcia seconded the motion.

Discussion was requested.

Council voted unanimously in approval of the motion.

Council was adjourned at 3:30.