Academic Senate Research and Professional Development Committee - AY 2009-10 Report

During the 2009-2010 Academic Year, the committee met each quarter every other week for about one and a half hours.

This report briefly describes the main issues discussed in the committee meetings.

Resolutions Submitted

- The committee proposed a resolution on Faculty Participation in DigitalCommons@CalPoly, which was accepted by the Senate on Feb. 9, 2010.
- The committee also co-sponsored a resolution with the Faculty Affairs Committee on Program Suspension, also accepted by the Senate on Feb. 9, 2010.

Charges from the Senate Chair

The committee addressed the following charges it was given by the Senate chair at the beginning of the Academic Year:

- Establish procedures for dealing with complaints regarding research initiatives and partnerships
  - This has been incorporated into our "special procedures" document, which was approved with minor modifications by the executive committee on Feb. 23, 2010.
- Assigned Time - how is it dispensed? Some junior faculty have asked for clarity on this from Deans.
  - Susan Opava had her staff examine the data she has about assigned and release time. From what we can tell, assigned time is mostly used for administrative activities, and rarely to support research and professional development. After Susan Opava's report, there are no immediate actions on the agenda for the committee related to assigned time..
- Review current policy regarding research and human subjects - does policy need updating?
  - The committee determined that from its perspective, the current policies and procedures are adequate.

Other Agenda Items

Review Cal Poly Strategic Plan

The committee reviewed the most recent draft (Version 7) of the Cal Poly Strategic Plan, and invited the coordinator for the Strategic Plan document, Erling Smith, to the meeting on Feb. 22. We discussed various aspects of the Strategic Plan relevant to research and professional development during that meeting. Since there were no major concerns from our side, and no new version of the plan is expected until a new president will be in place, we decided to resume the discussion of the plan at that point.

Teacher-Scholar-Model

The committee reviewed several versions of the report produced by the WASC group at Cal Poly, and made suggestions for improvement. One concern was the low profile of graduate programs in the report, which was brought to the attention of the WASC evaluators during their visit. A continuing issue is the lack of a clear definition of what "Teacher-Scholar Model" means in the context of Cal Poly. The committee will continue working on this, especially in the context of the white paper on research and professional development (see below).

Adequacy of current research grant administration efforts

The committee continued its discussion of issues with the administration of research grants through
the Cal Poly Corporation. Since there is an external evaluation in progress, and significant changes in Corporation personnel have occurred or are anticipated, the committee decided to postpone discussion of this topic.

White Paper on Research and Professional Development at Cal Poly

In preparation for changes in Cal Poly's leadership after the announcement of President Baker's retirement, the committee decided to put together a "white paper" on the status of research and professional development at Cal Poly, with the intention of making this available to candidates for leadership positions at Cal Poly. A draft version was completed during the Spring quarter. The document is based mostly on existing resources such as the AS-691-09 Resolution on Research and Professional Development at Cal Poly, which was based on a R&PD Committee Report to the provost in 2008, the Self-Study Report produced by the WASC team, the Cal Poly Strategic Plan, and similar documents by other institutions.

Role of Graduate Programs at Cal Poly

As a consequence of the current financial difficulties, there were discussions at the deans' level to eliminate or suspend graduate programs, or to transfer them to Continuing Education. In response to these efforts and other recent actions concerning suspension of programs and reorganization of academic units, the committee co-sponsored a resolution on Program Suspension with the Faculty Affairs Senate Committee.

Special Committee Procedures

As requested by the Senate's Executive Committee, we prepared a document describing the operational aspects of the committee. After minor modifications, the document was approved by the Executive Committee.

Committee Organization

The committee continues to use a Wiki as a repository for committee documents, see [http://wiki.csc.calpoly.edu/senate-research-prof-def/wiki]. Available through the Wiki are this report, as well as meeting agendas and meeting notes. The Wiki also contains more detailed information on specific issues on the agenda, but those documents are restricted to committee members only.

Franz Kurfess

Chair, Academic Senate Research and Professional Development committee

June 17, 2010