

Report on AS&E Executive Committee Open Meeting

"Implementing the Strategic Plans of Arts & Sciences and the School of Engineering"

November 2, 2005 12:00-1:20 Coolidge Room (Ballou Hall)

Reports from various tables. Each table reported on two topics.

Topic #1

Ranking Priorities (research, new faculty, new physical space, technology, teaching/advising)

Projected increase in faculty size impinges severely on already inadequate space. More faculty means more space. Projected expansion of graduate programs brings need for new office space, labs, and facilities for TAs and RAs. Engineering has added faculty more aggressively in recent years than AS, which has gone up only 3% since 1980. Even with the projected Master Plan for the campus, space is still a priority. But much of the funding for such projects is still missing. The new science labs projected several years hence may prove inadequate when available. It was pointed out that many of the improvements of the physical plant have been deferred for lack of funds.

Junior faculty in particular should get start-up money. The bar has been raised in both Engg. and AS. Research has gotten higher priority, but teaching is integral with that aim. There is also a need for more graduate-student support, which the university has already begun.

Recently there has been a marked improvement of technological support. It would be helpful, however, to have a central integrative and comprehensive plan to assess needs and provide adequate support for both research and administrative tasks. Consultants should visit departments regularly to evaluate the situation, and there should be a central place to call where faculty can get technical help. Availability of hardware is a problem in many classrooms. In general technology is not always utilized effectively. There needs to be a greater investment in technology. Wireless technology would be a plus and save time.

In language teaching (particularly Asian languages) contact hours often fall below norms at other institutions.

Reducing clerical work for faculty should be a priority.

Topic #2:

Interfaces between AS and Engineering (history of the AS&E relationship; cooperative programs; synergy between strategic plans, budgets)

The Engg. strategic plan is further along, more detailed and more specific than that of AS. Its aim is to raise the research profile of the School and carve a prominent niche among peer institutions. The AS plan is more about setting goals, more generally defined. The two plans have somewhat different aims. Both plans were vetted appropriately through faculty consultation. In AS there was a task force that had open meetings and consulted with departments. It was an internal review. In Engg., faculty discussed goals in general meetings and in departments. It involved outside reviewers who recommended ways of improving quality and outreach.

The AS plan speaks of "Civic Engagement," and Engg. is working vigorously in engineering projects with the surrounding community to promote active citizenship of faculty and students. Interdisciplinary projects with AS departments have been common, but have now become a higher priority. The cross-over between AS and Engg. is extremely important and ought to be expanded.

Topic #3:

Identifying Funding Prospects and Opportunities (government, private, working with University Advancement-Development)

Advancement efforts should be targeted for individual departments, and there should be a way to involve departments in the Capital Campaign as it unfolds and needs adjustment. There ought to be a way of coordinating faculty needs and development goals. There is a sense that Development should maintain constant contact with departments, otherwise emerging priorities may get lost. There was considerable concern that lines of communication be kept open between Advancement and departments.

There is a question of how much faculty should seek out their own funding. There ought to be a more info coming from university administration about grant possibilities and a functioning infrastructure to help faculty to find resources.

Submitted by David Sloane with the kind help of Catherine Doheney, Boris Hasselblatt and Susan Ostrander

Please see

Strategic Plan for A&S

Strategic Plan for Engineering

A Brief Vision Statement, Bob Sternberg (2005)