Faculty Meeting: May 9, 2017

President Ainlay: There will be four agenda items: 1) a brief update on the Excelsior scholarship policy in NY state and changes to Taft aid and the impact of current federal government discussions on international student enrollments; 2) a discussion of the proposed Physician Assistant (PA) joint program with Albany Medical school; 3) and 4) two updates on FRB discussions from Kara Doyle, chair of FRB.

Item 1. At the moment, current US government discussions have not had an impact on international student applications to Union but could do so in future years. The Excelsior Scholarship program providing aid to attend CUNY and SUNY schools for New Yorkers with a family income of less than $125,000 has passed the NY state legislature. The legislature has also increased Taft aid to students from low income families who want to attend private schools in NY. Both programs, however, require students to stay in NY state after they graduate for the number of years for which they received aid. Schools are required to monitor and enforce this and lack the capacity to do so. To receive enhanced Taft aid, private schools also have to match the amount of the Taft award and freeze tuition for those students receiving Taft. This would also be difficult. So far neither the Excelsior nor the enhanced Taft policy have had much impact on Union.

VP Admissions Malatesta: Union has met its target of 575 students for next year and will admit 20 more from the waitlist to maintain numbers after summer melt of admitted students. Government discussions did not affect international student applications. Nor did the new state policies appear to have any impact on our incoming class.

President Ainlay: Addresses a faculty question received via email about whether Union can do additional marketing to attract students in light of the NY state policies; President Ainlay says that families realize the value of private colleges, which have very high completion rates.

Item 2) DADP Wendy Sternberg and Joanne Fitzgerald (Director LIM and Combined Health programs) introduce the proposal for a Physician Assistant (PA) program offered jointly with Albany Medical College Center. The proposal came to Academic Affairs from Admissions originally and is part of an effort to attract more, high quality, students to increase total enrollments without compromising student quality. This proposal is proceeding quickly to fit with Admission’s time frame for recruiting students.

Joanne Fitzgerald: States that she was put in charge of looking into PA programs at other schools and looking into whether such a program would be feasible at Union. There is increased demand for such programs; applications have increased by 36% nationally since 2011. The number of programs is also increasing. These programs are much in demand and have about a 34% acceptance rate. Albany Medical School was willing to partner with Union because of the existing LIM partnership. They have a 28 month program that starts in January each year and want Union students to complete their Union degree in 3 years and 1 term. Students should be able to complete Common Curriculum requirements and a major in 3 years
and 1 term if they take a few summer courses at SCCC and backcount a few courses they take at Albany Medical School. They need 1000 hours of clinical experience but they can do this working full time over 2 summers. The proposed program would be for up to 10 students /year.

**From the Floor:** Wasn’t Admissions aiming for 595 students in the incoming class.

**VP Admissions Malatesta:** Says this year’s goal was 575 incoming students; next year the goal is 595. More females apply to PA programs so this will help the gender imbalance at Union.

**Joanne Fitzgerald:** Enrollments in PA programs are 70% female.

**VP Admissions Malatesta:** 18% of students in PA programs are students of color.

**From the floor:** Speaker asks about how soon the program has to be approved.

**DADP Sternberg:** The program needs to be approved by the state, probably over the summer.

**From the floor:** The biology department first heard of this program at a Div. 3 meeting last week and is concerned that due to fast-tracking things have not been thought through properly. Union doesn’t offer anatomy and students paying Union’s tuition may not want to pay extra tuition to take some of their required courses at SCCC.

**From the floor:** Speaker asks if any of the NY6 or top 40 colleges have these kinds of programs? The chemistry department needs time to assess the impact of this program on existing courses and to see whether new courses have to be offered. This kind of pre-professional program is not central to the mission of a liberal arts college.

**From the floor:** Speaker asks if PA students will be able to take minors? The LIM program led to a decrease in Music minors.

**DADP Sternberg:** The students in the PA program will be able to take 11 electives; in addition, they would be able to count some Common curriculum courses toward minors.

**From the floor:** Will the PA students be able to take a language sequence? LIM students cannot take a language sequence.

**DADP Sternberg:** The PA program has fewer prerequisite courses than the LIM program.

**From the floor:** Would PA students be able to complete the two term social science senior thesis?
**DADP Sternberg:** The PA students could do a thesis spring of junior year and fall of senior year.

**From the floor:** This program has been introduced too quickly and there needs to be more consultation with departments, particularly those whose teaching would be impacted. No one in Div. 3 had heard about the program last week at the Division meeting.

**From the floor:** The speaker reiterates that the PA program was passed through the AAC too quickly without proper consultation with departments who might be involved. The PA students would have a very tight schedule and would have to take courses in particular terms; these courses are already ones that service pre-health students; none of the departments concerned had heard about the program until last week.

**From the floor:** The following need to be considered about the PA program: 1) As a pre-professional program does it fit the goals of the strategic plan?; 2) The degree of stress for students in the program who will have to log 1000 clinical hours in 2 years and have to go to SCCC over the summer.

**President Ainlay:** Says that there is frustration about the process through which the program was passed through the AAC. Faculty should continue to raise concerns through email and the proposal should go back to the AAC.

**Item 3) Kara Doyle, Chair of FRB:** Introduces the FRB proposal that there be a lecturer representative on the FRB. Option A is that the lecturer representative could replace one of the junior faculty representatives; Option B is that a lecturer representative could be added to the existing members of the FRB; Option C is to leave the FRB as is. The FRB was divided between A and B.

**From the floor:** How many lecturers are there in total?

**Kara Doyle:** There are 25 lecturers.

**From the floor:** How does the ratio of one lecturer representative for 25 lecturers compare to the ratio for junior and senior faculty representation?

**Kara Doyle:** The FRB will look into this.

**From the floor:** If option A was adopted would the junior faculty representative be at-large?

**From the floor:** If option A were adopted the single junior faculty representative would have to hear all the reappointment reviews.

**From the floor:** Would the lecturer representative participate in the full range of FRB decisions?
Kara Doyle: The lecturer representative would hear the same range of cases that are currently heard by the junior faculty representative.

From the floor: Are there more lecturers in sciences than in other divisions? If so, a lecturer representative would increase the representation of sciences on the FRB.

From the floor: Speaker asserts that lecturers should be represented on the FRB.

From the floor: Speaker suggests that lecturers should not evaluate scholarship in triennial merit reviews since lecturers are not required to do scholarship.

Kara Doyle: This is a good point.

From the floor: Other faculty cannot assess lecturers for merit very well since lecturers have co-curricular requirements and other faculty don’t.

Kara Doyle: Calls for a show of hands on preference for Options A, B, and C. B is the most popular option.

Item 4) Kara Doyle reports on the FRB response to the 2016 subcommittee on merit: The FRB started by trying to assess the degree of support for going back to a two tier merit system. The attendance at open meetings in the winter was small. The FRB would have to go through a complete cycle of faculty cohorts before considering a change back to two tiers. The subcommittee found that there was a lot of concern with lack of transparency in merit decisions. In response, the DADP will release a report at the end of the cohort cycle each year describing the profile of faculty who were placed in each tier. Concern was also expressed about problems with student evaluations of teaching. In response, the FRB had training sessions for chairs so that chairs could comment more effectively on TMR forms about teaching. The FRB also convened a subcommittee to look at different ways of assessing course evaluation numbers. The FRB also arranged a number of events to examine peer evaluation of teaching.