

MEMORANDUM

To: Gary Grossman, Chair, University Academic Council

From: Gregory Castle, Chair, Curriculum and Academic Programs Committee (CAPC)

Date: May 5, 2011

Subject: Year-End Report

In the AY 2010-11, CAPC entered its third year as a single committee representing all four campuses of ASU and I am pleased to say that the committee not only works well in this capacity but has helped foster greater awareness of the university structure. Some crucial changes occurred over the last year or so, including the departure of Nancy Kiernan and Heather Hoffart from the Provost's office, and the relocation of Sergio Quiros, whose work on ACRES was invaluable; he continues to assist at CAPC meetings. Our senior Program Coordinator, Phyllis Lucie, continues to serve the committee in a vital way, not only doing her usual job of creating the agenda, insuring that proposals are complete, contacting all proposers to arrange for their presence at meetings, following up on all tabled proposals and those passed with conditions, but also taking on additional responsibilities (e.g., updating ACRES, contacting proposers if revisions are needed before proposals come before CAPC) that were handled in the past by Nancy Kiernan. It speaks volumes about her experience with university committees and her ability to coordinate multiple tasks that CAPC has become more streamlined and effective. We are able to stand by our commitment to the timely passage of a new programs and courses.

In this, my third year as chair, we had a busy year, mostly in the creation of new programs in the wake of two years of reorganization. We reviewed a total of 214 new courses (a small number reviewed twice if tabled for serious revisions) and 91 curricular proposals. The conditions of recent reorganizations have resulted in a redoubling of our efforts at oversight, particularly with respect resources and to duplicative and overlapping programs. Review of the financial implications of new programs and courses has become a vitally important element of our process; therefore, CAPC now pays close attention to program proposals that may call for new faculty or administrative personnel and to course proposals that may overwhelm the resources of existing units. This new area of diligence will help insure that ASU will function more efficiently and provide students with educational opportunities that are appropriately staffed and funded.

In a university as large and complex as ASU, there is bound to be some overlap, especially in technical and theoretical fields, and to some extent, such overlap makes inter- and transdisciplinary not only easier but inevitable. We do wish to avoid implementing programs or courses put forward by one unit that might have an adverse effect on another unit. I am happy to say that such proposals are forestalled mostly through impact statements and pre-meeting negotiation. I have taken considerable time, as has Ms. Lucie, to communicate with faculty and administrators about proposals, both while they are being prepared and, most important, after they have been either tabled or passed with minor conditions (usually clarification or addition of details). It is a testament

to the good work of people who shepherd proposals through the system, from the unit to CAPC that so few of them are tabled in any given year.

The last two years has seen the implementation and fine tuning of the new ACRES form that incorporates a Syllabus of Record, which was called for in the Senate Curriculum Task Force report passed on April 6, 2009. The Syllabus of Record makes possible a permanent record of all new courses and provides much-needed information for a wide variety of purposes (including assessment). This innovation not only streamlines the course-proposal process (by eliminating unnecessary discussions on the idiosyncrasies that inevitably crop up in syllabi used in courses) but will give allow CAPC to require certain “core” course elements, particularly student learning outcomes, which have become increasingly important in twenty-first-century higher education.

Another important development has to with impact statements, specifically how we go about determining which unit should be contacted to provide them for a given course or program proposal. The multi-campus model of ASU, together with the ongoing changes connected to reorganizations have made the pursuit of impact statements a fundamental component of the CAPC process. CAPC will continue to be a resource for information and guidance as faculty learn the new dimensions of change and the impact that change will have on their own disciplines.

During a time of unprecedented reorganization, a time when spirits might have been defeated by the rapid pace of change, the members of CAPC have performed their tasks with diligence and professionalism. We have had lively debates on a number of pertinent issues, with participation from all the campuses. These debates often included faculty invited to the meetings in order to address CAPC members’ questions and concerns about proposals. Given the workload and the pressures of another trying year , these members and faculty visitors deserve our recognition and gratitude. Without their collegiality and respect for the process, I could not have achieved so much this year.