

MEMORANDUM

To Rojann Alpers, President, University Senate
From Gregory Castle, Chair, Curriculum and Academic
Programs Committee (CAPC)
Date April 28, 2010
Subject Year-End Report

In the AY 2009-2010, CAPC entered its second year as a single committee representing all four campuses of ASU. Some crucial changes occurred, 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. Our new executive assistant, Renée Cesaro, appears to be settling in quite well. 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). Her commitment to CAPC makes possible the timely passage of a great many new programs and courses. Indeed, the number of items reviewed by CAPC in this past year might have overwhelmed someone with less experience and commitment.

We had an inordinately busy year. We reviewed a total of 275 new courses (a small number reviewed twice if tabled for serious revisions) and 80 curricular proposals. Included in the curricular proposals was a bundle of disestablishments that came from the Provost's office as a fifth reorganization. Unlike previous reorganizations, this one came through CAPC, a move which both guaranteed greater faculty input and helped to clarify the issues behind the reorganization (Provost Capaldi spoke on the issue in her first visit to CAPC). The conditions of recent reorganizations have resulted in a shift in our priorities and in our perspective. Most important, 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.

Another important issue is the status of the syllabus included in course proposals. Reviewing such a large number of syllabi from vastly different schools, colleges and units, alerted us to the pressing need for a policy that would guide faculty in the preparation of syllabi that includes the information necessary to make reasoned and consistent assessments. Last year, I drafted a Syllabus of Record, which was called for in the Senate Curriculum Task Force report passed on April 6, 2009. This year, I continued

to work on this project, with the generous assistance of Vice President Glenn Irvin and Vice Provost John Hepburn. The Syllabus of Record will become part of a revised ACRES form and will make possible a permanent record of all new courses and provide much-needed information for a wide variety of purposes (including outcomes and assessment). CAPC members have discussed this document at several meetings, and will be presented, in the final meeting in May, with a model of the revised ACRES form. This innovation will not only streamline 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; we cannot allow complacency to undermine our efforts to avoid curricular redundancies and disciplinary conflict. 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 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 a trying year , these members and faculty visitors deserve our recognition and gratitude. Without them, I could not have achieved so much this year and certainly could not have done so in an atmosphere of collegiality and respect.