Minutes of the October 14, 2019 faculty meeting

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 p.m. in Harris Hall Leopold Room 108 by Dean Adrian Randolph.

I. The minutes of the Faculty Meeting of May 29, 2019 were approved.

II. Associate Dean for Academic Initiatives Ann Bradlow delivered remarks on the status of Degree Requirement Implementation. She reminded the faculty that in the spring, a new set of degree requirements were approved at the faculty meeting. Bradlow said that since then, a series of working groups had been convened, tasked with addressing implementation, including developing learning goals where not specified previously, developing resource depositories, and writing new policies and guidelines. She stated the work completed by these groups will undergo the standard process of review through the Curricular Policy Committee and the Curricular Review Committee.

The working groups that have been convened include the College Seminar Working Group, the First-Year Writing Seminar Group, the Advanced Expression Working Group, and the Curriculum Transition Committee.

Professor Susan Manning asked about the timing of implementation. Bradlow responded that the soonest the new curricular requirements would be implemented was Fall of 2021. Professor Eric Zaslow asked if the Advanced Expression Requirement had to be completed within the major coursework. Bradlow responded that would be preferred, but not required. However, all major curricula should offer the opportunity to complete the requirement.

III. Assistant Dean for Curriculum and Assessment Laura Panko gave the second reading of the Proposal for a Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) Minor. This proposal for a six-course minor aligns with the new Weinberg learning strategies (observe, critique, reflect, and express) and incorporates the mission of the Center for Native American and Indigenous Research (CNAIR): to advance scholarship, teaching, learning, and artistic or cultural practices related to Native American and Indigenous communities, priorities, histories, and life ways.

Professor and CNAIR Director Patty Loew indicated that some of the curriculum that had been described as “emerging” in the proposal has now received registration numbers.

Dean Randolph called for a vote, which passed unanimously.

Professor Loew offered a special thank you to Associate Professor Kelly Wisecup for her work with Native American and Indigenous Studies and noted that it was Indigenous Peoples Day.

IV. Associate Dean for Undergraduate Academic Affairs and Advising Mary Finn gave a report on Undergraduate Initiatives. She began by describing the Lifecycle Project, a program initiated by the Provost’s Office, meant to study the ways Northwestern supports first generation, low-income and underrepresented minority students. This large undertaking is comprised of several committees, many with members from Weinberg College. The four main recommendations to roll out this year that were communicated by the Provost to the University community were; University-wide
coordination of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives across campus, the creation of a community scholars program, the establishment of a central space for student support, and increased support for student mentorship.

Dean Finn then described the work done within the Arch Scholars Program, a collection of programs for incoming first-year and second-year students which includes the Bridge Program, Bio&ChemEXCEL, NU Bioscientist, the Posner Program, and Organic Chemistry Preparation.

Dean Finn gave a brief update on the status of the pilot programming for the College Seminar. She noted that the members of the working group piloting the curricular change have developed a robust Canvas site with assembled resources. She also explained that the Foundational Disciplines and When Cultures Meet Overlay committees have convened.

Dean Finn concluded her report with information about the changing demographics of the Weinberg College undergraduate body. She stated that this year, there were 100 more first-year students and that last year, 151 transfer students joined the College, a large uptick over previous years. She explained that these changes create challenges and opportunities for integration of students into the College and University.

V. Dean Randolph offered some updates and remarks. He began by encouraging the faculty to attend the new faculty welcome reception at Guild Lounge directly after the meeting.

Dean Randolph gave a brief description of the 150 years of Women celebration and encouraged faculty to connect with the Dean’s Office when events or other programming might have a connection to the theme.

Dean Randolph noted that the recent budget situation at the University meant the College needed to be more restrained in its spending in certain areas but that the University was reaching a time of stability. He continued that the College was well-positioned for funding decisions for next year due to these restraint measures. Professor Susan Manning asked if there would be another year of similar merit increases as last year. The dean responded that leadership was aware that Northwestern must maintain competitive standing in the market, and he therefore anticipated a larger merit pool.

Randolph then gave a brief update on the state of leadership at the University. He noted that four executive searches are running: the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Vice President of Research, the Dean of the School of Communications, and the Dean of NU-Qatar. He also outlined the many administrative and academic initiatives that were launching this academic year, including: the Student Lifecycle Initiative, the Faculty Pathways Initiative, the Weinberg Language Resource Center, and ongoing strategic planning at the Buffett Institute.

There being no further updates, Dean Randolph thanked the faculty in attendance and the meeting was adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Francesca Petty, Chief of Staff.