A regular meeting of the Senate Committee on Educational Policy (EPC) was called to order at 1:10pm on Monday, December 2, 2013 in room 232 English Building with Chair Gay Miller presiding.

1. Introductions
   Guests were introduced.

2. Old Business

   A. Revision to Standing Rule 13 – Formation, Termination, Separation, Transfer, Merger, Change in Status, or Renaming of Units

      i. RS.14.01 Resolution on Governance Procedures for Changes in Academic Organization

         Chair Miller invited sponsors of the recently approved RS.14.01 to discuss the resolution with the committee.

         Oberdeck began with an explanation of how the resolution was formed. Some of the ideas behind the resolution came out of the closure of School of Aviation and the votes that were taken. The situation appeared that faculty members were moved to other units and when the department was included in discussions, the decision seemed to have already been made. The School of Labor and Employee Relations (LER) has had discussions about these types of processes. In this case it seems that the decisions only came out in the public media and not in the Senate. It also seemed that LER faculty only had the choice of narrowed down options. In what way can shared governance be strengthened? Standing Rule (SR) 13 does not really involve EPC or the full Senate until late in the process. It makes sense to Oberdeck and others that the Senate/shared governance process get involved earlier and to know what is occurring. It appears that the anomalies of SR13 have already occurred to EPC. O’Brien added that constituents were concerned about changes that might be happening.

         Miller reviewed previous EPC conversations for those that were not at prior EPC meetings. Committee interest started with the Civic Leadership Program (CLP) and the enrollment dropping to zero. There was also a substantial growth in Engineering that caused some hardships in other colleges due to required courses.

         The resolution itself calls for the Seventh Senate Review Commission to review these issues. Miller added that at the last meeting, members of the Senate Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures (USSP) attended to contribute their feedback to this issue.

         Meyer recognized that legislating intent is difficult. Through attrition a program may no longer have enrollment so when the proposal is submitted to EPC there is nothing left for EPC to do but approve the proposals. Molina indicated that it may not necessarily be intent, but rather accountability. The Provost has indicated that he wants an examination
of possible mergers. There is no procedure that allows LER or GSLIS (Graduate School of Library Information Science) to come to the Senate. There does not seem to be a rationale from the Provost about why he wants a merger. The reorganization plans are not necessarily clear.

Molina noted that when she served on a committee for the Stewarding Excellence initiative that units have nowhere to get answers. The current process relies on the dean being transparent with the department faculty and the Provost being transparent with the dean. Some faculty members do not have the chance to talk to their dean. There is no place for faculty to obtain answers until decisions have been made. The initial factor for Stewarding Excellence was budget; is it financially feasible? There does not seem to be a study in universities that shows that there is a monetary savings. The goal is now intellectual capital, more innovative, more likely to have international recognition. There is no way for faculty to ask these questions. There is no mechanism for accountability at the administrative level. If a faculty is not in agreement with a dean, there is no mechanism for faculty to ask questions.

Meyer commented that the budget seems like an administration purview, but now the directive has changed to more intellectual which should be more faculty driven. International excellence also falls more under the purview of the faculty rather than administration. Vanka added that the further removed a person is from the program/unit the less likely a person would know if the program is viable. There needs to be some place in the Senate that faculty members can find answers.

Miller noted that once the committee finalizes a proposal, it would then be sent to USSP and USSP would take it to the full Senate. Oberdeck suggested that since this question seems to involve a range of potential stakeholders that it might be worthwhile to have a cross-committee to think about what a structure might look at.

Chair Miller noted that this discussion will continue and will remain on the agenda as old business. Carney and Miller will contact the Council of Undergraduate Deans to request input.

3. Approval of Minutes
   The minutes from November 4, 2013 were approved as amended.

4. Chair’s Remarks (G. Miller)
   No remarks.

5. Office of the Provost Updates (K. Kuntz)
   No updates.

6. Graduate College Updates (B. Buttlar)
   No updates.

7. New Business
   A. Revised Form for Units of Research or Public Service (Center or Institutes)
      Kuntz noted that when discussing a proposed entity, a better definition of temporary versus permanent was needed. There is a process for centers that are temporary with external funding. If the external funding expires, it becomes the responsibility of the department to seek permanency or not. An attempt has been made to narrow the campus’s inventory. Many discussions have been held with people that have seed funding to focus on research and how to define those in appropriate ways. Initiative or program might be suggested titles. External funding sometimes comes with additional requirements to fulfill in order for the campus to except those dollars.

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Kuntz indicated that renewing temporary status was acceptable, but the Stewarding Excellence initiative requests justification. Extensions are typically for one to two years and are done administratively. Extensions depend on individual situations. Initial discussions with the Senate Committee on General University Policy (GUP) concluded that extensions should not be used in normal circumstances to prolong making a decision of viability. Kuntz noted the difference between the temporary and permanent status of Centers are that temporary status is approved by a memo from the state, and permanent status approval is needed by the Board of Trustees (BOT) and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE).

Kuntz then discussed smaller centers or initiatives within a larger body and the possibility of allowing the larger body to govern over those smaller centers. This idea might be formalized through this committee. The state has agreed that if an entity lives within a larger entity, that the larger entity is allowed to make governing decisions about the entity within. Kuntz added that there is an attempt to change the focus from the name to the structure or more of a unit focus. The most used terms are center or institute, but the Coordinated Science Lab has been permanently established.

Vanka expressed concern that using the temporary/permanent terminology might cause outside agencies to interpret a temporary status as meaning the researcher is not serious. Kuntz replied that these terms temporary/permanent are used by the state, but that the committee is not required to use those terms.

Miller concluded the discussion by adding that the next meeting will have discussion about programs that live outside of a department at the college level; interdisciplinary programs.

Francis made a motion to approve the revised form for Units of Research or Public Service. The motion was seconded, and approved by voice. Kuntz will make the minor suggested changes and the form will be posted on the committee website.

B. Topics for the Seventh Senate Review Commission

Miller noted that according to the FAC website, FAC is charged with the best interest of the University, not necessarily the faculty members. Miller gave her opinion that given the charge, the FAC does not act in the capacity of an ombudsman; consideration should be made to reestablish an ombudsman or something similar. The committee agreed that the lack of an ombudsman or committee that functions similarly to an ombudsman should be a topic discussed by the Commission.

The discussions surrounding Standing Rule 13 should be transmitted to the Commission. The inclusion of a memorandum of understanding and accountability related to the processes of reorganization were suggested for inclusion in Standing Rule 13.

Michael suggested that the Senate develop more financial training. It was also suggested that the Senate Committee on Admissions be broadened to the Senate Committee on Enrollment Management.

Chair Miller will compile the list of suggestions and transmit them to Abbas Aminmansour, Chair of the Seventh Senate Review Commission.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:47pm.

Jenny Roether
Clerk of the Senate