

**Northern Essex Community College  
Academic Affairs Leadership Team**

**September 12, 2013**

**Attendees:** Bill Heineman, Donna Bertolino, Pat Demers, Mary Farrell, Nancy Garcia, Nita Lamborghini, Dawna Perez, Chuck Phair, Mark Reinhold, Janice Rogers, Linda Shea, Ellen Wentland, Shar Wolff, Grace Young, Diane Zold-Gross, Judy Zubrow

**Unable to Attend:** Sharon McDermot

Minutes Submitted by Janice Rogers

### **1. Grade Appeals in the Student Grievance Procedure**

Nita described the steps in the process for a grade appeal.

- Level 1 (informal): The student discusses the grade concern with the instructor.
- Level 2 (formal), Step 1: The student discusses the concern with Nita or Dawna. They determine if the student's issue is really with the grade and if so, they refer the student to Grace (Senior Academic Officer designee). The student puts the complaint in writing, and Grace sends it to the responding party and gives the response to the student.
- Level 2 (formal), Step 2: Grace sends the materials to the instructor's supervisor who makes a determination in consultation with the senior academic officer or designee.

Grace and Nita will keep track of the appeals and grievances and their resolution and communicate the decision to the student.

Nita asked that we try to resolve more issues at the informal level by having the (assistant) dean help with communication with the faculty member involved. Chuck pointed out that if the appeal advances to Level 2, the (assistant) dean is no longer an impartial party and so there is a conflict of interest. This led to a question about the process for handling general complaints about an instructor. Bill responded that the student should see Nita, but it is preferable to resolve the complaints first, perhaps with the help of the (assistant) dean to keep it from pushing forward. Another question came up about the role of Department Chairs in the grievance process. Bill stated that although the chairs may be in the best position to diffuse the situation, we can't require them to get involved.

Bill encouraged deans not to "freelance" solutions to problems and to see him to be sure we are following statewide policy if there are any concerns with issues that may involve more than one type of complaint or office.

### **2. Update on Budget**

The budget is expected to be finalized early in the week of September 16. Additional cuts of \$50K in academic affairs operational spending have been put in place and no additional cuts are expected for now. Bill encouraged deans to spend only what is needed. Sharon will re-send the adjusted budgets. Faculty searches are on track. An increase in student health insurance costs affected the FTEs for the fall, which are down.

The Affordable Care Act impact on state colleges is being handled at the state level. They are using the DCE payroll from this fall to estimate costs. We will continue to hire DCE faculty as we have been doing until we hear differently from the state.

Bill clarified that Perkins-eligible activities support career and technical education such as Lab Science. Proposals should provide all necessary detail on the associated costs of the requests.

### **3. Update on Facilities**

420 Common Street opened with a few bumps, but they are on track to have two computer classrooms, office space for CIS and ESL faculty, and the two general classrooms equipped and ready to use in spring 2014. Salem State (Health Programs) maybe and the Assessment Center will be on the second floor, and the bookstore/café will be on the first floor.

Other projects are also on track, including the Student Center bookstore.

### **4. Other Business**

There was a question about notifying faculty of their finalized schedule and workload at the end of the add/drop period. It was agreed that the updated schedules are sent out by that date, but the workload is sent only if requested or if it has been adjusted, in accordance with the contract.