

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fort Wayne Senate

FROM: Daren Kaiser, Chair
Educational Policy Committee

DATE: October, 26 2016

SUBJECT: Review of Action Plan 41

WHEREAS, the Educational Policy Committee was charged by the Executive Committee to evaluate sections 1.4 bullet point 1, 2.5 bullet points 1-4, 3.2 bullet points 1-4, and 3.6 bullet points 1 and 2 of Action Plan 41.

WHEREAS, the following document represents our evaluation of, and opinion about, Action Plan 41.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Educational Policy Committee does not endorse any of the items of Action Plan 41 that we were charged to evaluate.

Preamble

It has become clear as the semester moves forward that the faculty response to AP 41 is irrelevant to the administration. It was fairly obvious that this was the case when the “plan” was not released until the beginning of the semester, and then the “response” from the faculty was required within a few weeks. The “plan” itself is a series of vacuous statements and action items most of which are so vague it would be impossible to respond to them. The only way one could respond to the action items was to ask the administration what they mean by these items.

Dr. Drummond was kind enough to attempt to clarify the items EPC was asked to evaluate, and, in particular, he provided an extensive plan of action to address item 2.5 bullet point 2 (restructuring of programs/elimination of degree offerings will result in optimization). Our committee reviewed his recommendations in good faith and, although we were somewhat concerned that the restructuring might affect some departments adversely, we felt, given the political and financial climate, that his plan was fair and based on solid evidence. Our only concern was to ensure that the departments most affected would be provided with ample time to voice their concerns.

Now, before any response from the faculty has occurred, Dr. Drummond’s initial plan has been abandoned and far more extensive cuts (all of which affect the college of Arts & Sciences) have been initiated for completion by January 1st. The supposed rationale for eliminating academic units is to save money. We are not convinced that these cuts will save a significant amount of money. More importantly, these cuts seem to run contrary to the mission of our University and diminish our ability to educate the citizens of northeast Indiana. The University is being forced to make these cuts without any feedback from the faculty, staff, and students. It is ludicrous to make these kinds of changes in a matter of months, just to save a couple hundred thousand dollars. It is obvious this is not about cost saving. The changes will damage IPFW and make it less than the scholarly institution it is now.

Below you will find our thoughts about the original action plan items we were charged to review. Our thoughts were predicated on what we were told by the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs. It has become clear that his understanding of Action Plan 41 is little better than that of the rest of the faculty. This committee does not wish to endorse any of these vacuous statements for fear that such an endorsement could be used later to further diminish this University. We consider this report to be feedback of very general ideas, **not** endorsement of a plan.

Our responses to our assigned action items are:

1.4 Bullet point 1: *Incorporate predictive analytics process across departments in order to inform active management decisions.* Using predictive analytics is a feasible and appropriate idea providing that “active management decisions” are made at the department level and by the department.

2.5 Bullet point 1: *Create linkage between myBlueprint demand with course offering plans.* Creating linkage between myBLUEprint and course offerings is a logical idea to increase course scheduling cost efficiency and effectiveness for students. We want to be sure that flexibility for exceptions are maintained. We also see the need for a plan to be sure students, not advisors, are knowledgeable about and responsible for updating their four-year plans.

2.5 Bullet point 2: *Restructuring of programs/elimination of degree offerings will result in optimization*
~~Discussion of Dr. Drummond’s Review and Recommendations for Academic Programs and Departments (09/19/2016). The process upon which the recommendations were made was applied fairly across all departments. The rationale for each recommendation is clear and the recommendations seem feasible.~~

~~The committee would urge Dr. Drummond to pay attention to the feedback and arguments from each department (as we are confident he will) and, in particular, to consider unintended consequences to other programs given the interconnected nature of our degree offerings. Our feedback to these recommendations is no longer relevant.~~

2.5 Bullet point 3: *Separate academic F (earned F) from F or not showing up.* Completed by EPC on September 7

2.5 Bullet point 4: *Analyze workload at individual faculty course level to manage instructional capacity.* FAC is reviewing this item

3.2 Bullet point 1: *Develop pathways major (completed)*

3.2 Bullet point 2: *Recharge the Advisory Council to be more impactful.* Recommend changes in proposed advising council reorganization: 1) Change the last sentence explaining the mission of the Executive Advising Committee in the following way “The Executive Advising Committee is to ensure information flow between and across units and facilitate changes in policy and practice originating from Advising Council”. Have seven (rather than 5) faculty advisors from at least three colleges to balance the primary role advisors. Make the SIS representative non-voting. Have six primary role advisors from at least three colleges (rather than one from each, this allows for potential restructuring of units in the future). Move the information about Executive Advising Committee to below the information about Academic Advising Council to indicate that information/policies should not originate with Executive group.

3.2 Bullet point 3: *Expand the role of primary advising in years 1 and 2.* We agree that more primary role advisors could be very useful as long as they are embedded within a department/school/college so as to be knowledgeable about limited number of major requirements.

3.2 Bullet point 4: *Regularize flow via myBlueprint from 1st year to degree.* This item is too vague for us to evaluate - what does “regularize flow” mean??

3.6 Bullet point 1: *Develop additional online/hybrid programs, flipped instruction in professional and technical programs.* Develop additional online/hybrid programs: Faculty within departments/colleges/schools should consider developing these if they are appropriate for the students and content. Academic Affairs should provide support for these efforts if faculty determine they should move forward.

Flipped instruction: We feel this impinges on academic freedom and should be the realm of individual faculty to make decisions about what pedagogical method is most appropriate for their content etc.

3.6 Bullet point 2: *Target adult learners for online/hybrid programs.* The plan currently pursued by Curt Hosier seems reasonable