

Chairs' Council Graduate School Meeting with David Butler

October 2, 2023

Miller Education Building

- I. Dr. David Butler (DB) Intro
 - a. Goal of CGS (College of Graduate Studie) is to get the university to have 20% of overall university enrollment be graduate students.
 - i. At 13% now, when DB arrived, 9% (8 years ago)
 - ii. Reasons lower enrollment
 1. Have fewer grad programs.
 - a. Most peer institutions have around 100, and we have 50-60
 - iii. We need to increase the portfolio of programs.
 - iv. How quickly we get there depends on the ability of faculty to take it on.
 - v. CGS has a contract with Hanover Consulting Group, who do research for higher education and tell us what degrees are emerging, those that are on decline, area business needs etc.
 1. They take our data and say, "Here are potential degrees you can offer," and then we decide if it "makes sense" (e.g., do we even have that major?)
 2. Then CGS takes info to each dean.
 3. Last year, CGS had a Faculty Learning Community (FLC) where 10 people came together to work through the THEC notification LON (Letter of Notification)
 - vi. At this point, CGS wants to accelerate degrees rather than waiting for them to emerge organically.
 - vii. Issues
 1. Graduate program director compensation (started last fall)
 - a. Has put a proposal in the provost's office for a coordinator to be there year-round.
 - i. Will the proposal come with a description?
 1. Yes.
 - b. Currently, no standard regarding compensation
 - i. Some get release time.
 - ii. Some get money.
 - iii. Some get nothing.
 - c. Use grad program directors to put on a career path of a chair.
- II. How do you define a program director?
 - a. Graduate program director is under a single degree, not referring to concentrations.

- III. Since we have this goal of 20% graduate enrollment, should CGS talk to the people who would implement that (i.e., chairs) and not just deans?
 - a. As chairs, we don't feel like there is an active desire to reach out to individual programs to get chairs' perspectives.
 - i. Example – workloads were changed so that graduate classes no longer count as two classes, even though they take more work to create.
 - b. CGS provides strategic level goals (e.g., 20%), but no one comes to us as chairs to say, "How can we help you reach this?"
 - c. Things we, as chairs, struggle with include getting graduate students to come and what funding is proposed (e.g., some grad students need labs, some need stipends, some need health insurance)
- IV. When you get this info from Hanover, are you considering that a lot of programs need extra faculty to even think about this?
 - a. DB's answer was vague. He referred to how medical programs are expensive, so we do not have a lot of medical graduate programs. But he did not really answer the question.
- V. Is there going to be a push/value for online education?
 - a. Yes – looking at, and at times, privilege it. But it's not the only thing we are considering.
 - b. Most adult learners in the area want online degree programs.
 - c. If CGS wants an online presence, we need help getting courses through the online proposal system.
- VI. What about the lack of websites for new programs? We cannot market programs that have no information available online. Also, no one really does marketing for the Humanities.
 - a. DB: We must be in digital marketing as a graduate university.
 - b. CGS marketing needs exceed the full demands of the marketing department.
 - i. Has hired Ramona Collins to help with this – marketing specifically for grad programs.
 - ii. Wants more narrow marketing for each individual program.
- VII. Is there a specific amount associated with developing a new program or concentration?
 - a. Built into new program proposals is a new marketing budget so that it is guaranteed.
- VIII. We seem to be taking the, "If we build it, they will come." Until then, who is going to teach these classes?
 - a. Some programs have to say they can't do it now because of this.
 - b. When the university's staff formula changes, it may prohibit growth (e.g., if we are not allowed to replace lines, we cannot teach those classes because of lack of T/TT faculty)
- IX. Stipends
 - a. DB has asked for higher stipends for 8 years, but gets very little action

- b. DB has also asked if we could swap adjuncts and GTAs, but the issue is do we have enough money to pay their tuition?
- c. Insurance – it was going to cost us a minimum of \$1.5 million/year with 8% yearly inflation. Solely a cost factor.
- X. Chairs: If our goal is to have 20%, then we must be prepared to spend the money on lines, insurance, etc. We are setting these goals, but there is no recognition that we must actually invest in faculty. Somewhere at the strategic level, your level, there is disconnect. What is it we as a university are trying to do at the graduate level?
 - a. DB: The goal we set at graduate studies is parallel to the undergraduate level.
 - b. Chairs: Our current goals exceed our capital allocation.
- XI. How is everyone else in the state affording it? Other graduate programs are paying for insurance with higher stipends. Are we really underfunded at the state level or is there something else everyone else is doing that we are not?
 - a. DB: Not every school has insurance. Every school is LOOKING at it, but they aren't guaranteed.
 - b. If you want them to help with stipends, you need to write and let them know that they lost a good graduate student due to stipends. They need a record
- XII. Do we have anything in the university to offer extra to some outstanding students?
 - a. No – we spend what we have every year.
- XIII. Hanover data – what does their raw data look like before it turns into MTSU degree programs?
 - a. They are telling us what degrees and jobs are in demand in our region. It is not them matching us.
- XIV. Are we maximizing resources for international students?
 - a. Has been a challenge since 2017 and Covid.
 - b. Sometimes interviews at a consulate can take 18 months.

RESEARCH

- I. R2 Status
 - a. To get R2 status, it means they have \$5 million or more in R&D and Science and Technology areas and have awarded 20 doctorates.
 - i. Humanities don't count in terms of the \$5 million– only STEM.
 - ii. But all degrees count towards the 20 doctorates.
 - b. ORSP
 - i. Focus is funding research and creative activities.
 - ii. Not part of P&T process
 - iii. Fund URECA
 - iv. Want to increase grants applied for by 10% every year.
 - v. Last year, ORSP started an open-access peer-review index.
 - 1. \$500, per faculty member, per year
 - vi. Grant Writing enhancement program
 - 1. Open to all faculty, students, and staff

- II. When trying to get R2 status, the message was using the sciences (i.e., STEM) to help fund the humanities. Where are we at that?
 - a. Has hired a consulting group regarding increasing FNA rate.
 - b. Once the rate increases, we can start that process.
 - c. When is money going back into the humanities for grants that aren't going to bring in more money?
 - i. The demand for current money exceeds supply, so we cannot fund it at this time.
 - d. Chairs: You are offering grant money across the university, but it is exclusionary regarding who can get that money. Humanities research is worth funding. Part of your job is ensuring everyone has an equal chance at this money. What you are saying is the only research that matters is what generates money. You are the "guru of research" at the university, so we would think that part of your charge is ensuring that all kinds of research is being funded and being completed across the university.
 - i. This especially matters if we want to keep our PhD programs.
 - e. DB: Even if we just funded the sciences, we still wouldn't have enough to fund everyone.
- III. Chairs: Seems like we are trying to operate under an old model, so why wouldn't you separate these two offices (i.e., dean of graduate studies and dean of research) to be independent?
 - a. President wasn't convinced these two offices should be separated when proposed.
 - b. Both deserve someone 50-60 hours a week.
- IV. Is anything going to change with R2 status? What's an R2 workload?
 - a. DB: I'm not part of the workload conversations. He doesn't know how that works nor is part of those conversations.
 - i. Usually – we just look at what other LGIs workloads are and see if we are on par.
- V. Why is that a standard – comparing universities?
 - a. DB: It just seems to be a very conservative way of doing business. Minimizes risk.
- VI. Chairs: We know we aren't going to get new faculty lines to support this growth, so you should be intimately involved with workload so that departments have the faculty to teach these classes.
 - a. Chairs: Workload directly impacts what you can do – if you can talk workload, you can make a good argument.
 - b. Chairs: You seem to be willfully avoiding a big piece of this pie.
 - c. Chairs need some agency to be able to move the needle on research.
 - i. Neither side communicates with the other, so how do I research when the provost office doesn't care about research and the research office doesn't care about workload.
- VII. Will more people be hired in ORSP? The people seem overworked and behind.
 - a. Probably down one person.

- b. We also need some additional training with those currently there.
- VIII. If our goal is to increase funded research, what incentive is there for the faculty member?
 - a. DB: Most faculty are motivated by P&T. Only 2 departments require those going up to submit grants before going up.
 - b. Currently working through a document that says, “if you buy out some of your time,” is there a way to get some of that buy out back to you.
- IX. What about if classes can’t be taught? Could they take extra compensation?
 - a. If you have a 3 hour release, that must be covered/reimbursed.
 - b. It seems like faculty just get more work.

Meeting Ended at 4:17 pm.