

Thoughts on the Reorganization of Academic Affairs

For the Faculty Senate, March 23, 2016

The Concept: Effectively use the existing school, departmental, and university committee and council structure and eliminate the “intervening layer” of the administrative structure currently filled by the Executive Dean for Academic Affairs.

Recommendations:

1. A good deal of administrative work involves layers of redundant checks, superfluous files, and unnecessary reports. Much of this could be eliminated. Some have raised the question of whether we need a Dean, a Division Head, or for that matter, any “intervening layer” of administration between faculty and the VPAA. Let’s see if we can get by without it. This would be efficient, less costly, and in line with a genuinely faculty driven university. We could be leaders in this groundbreaking approach to how our university is run.

At the same time, paperwork, record-keeping, and documentation is necessary. Let’s hire (and compensate well) an administrative assistant to the VPAA who can competently handle this paperwork.

2. The Personnel Policies Committee and the Committee on Committees have been working on reviewing and revising the university committee and council structure. We have the structure to do the work of the university. It needs to be streamlined, communication and documentation improved, and make efficient use of time (a carved out niche of time—on Wednesday afternoons from 1:00 to 5:00—would help tremendously).
3. This revised committee structure will include the Presidential Advisory Committee for Budget. With its strong contingent of faculty senators, this committee will work with Dennis Westman to provide adequate faculty participation in the budgetary processes and decisions.

I’ll not go into the criticisms and dangers of an organizational structure with Division Heads or a more expansive governing role for a group such as the Academic Council.

For your consideration.

Sincerely,

William Lloyd Fridley