

**Advisory Council Minutes**  
College of Arts & Letters  
December 3, 2015

**Present:** Chris Long (Dean), Gary Hoppenstand (University Council), Ann Mongoven (RS), Justus Nieland (ENGL), Julio Cesar Peredes (Graduate Student), Michael O'Rourke (PHIL, in place of Kristie Dotson), Jon Frey (AAHD), Mutsko Endo Hudson (L&L), Madeline Shellgren (Graduate Student), Safoi Babana-Hampton (RCS), Ann Folino White (THR), Stuart Blythe, (WRAC).

### **Initial Business**

- White convened the meeting at 3:16 pm
- Nieland moved approval of the agenda. Mongoven seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.
- Hudson moved approval of the minutes for the Council meeting on November 15, 2015. Nieland seconded. Two spelling errors were changed. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Dean Long's Remarks**

- Dean Long shared copies of the Fall Planning Letter. He said the Provost doesn't want "specific asks" in the Fall Letter. Those should appear in the Spring Letter. Dean Long wants to see the Fall Letter as "a living document"—a text that we refer to frequently as the College continues its work. With the The Dean now plans to give individual feedback to each department. The Dean will then ask each department chair to craft a response to the feedback that he gives. The priorities in the Fall Planning Letter are the priorities the Dean identified at the College meeting in November. He hopes that all units "will feel some ownership" in these priorities—or the priorities that seem most appropriate to each department.
- Dean Long reiterated his support of the Citizen Scholar Program as a signature program in the arts & humanities. Ann Folino White is chairing a committee to develop this program. Dean Long has invited participation from RCAH. Dean Long feels that we need to make commitments to the arts & humanities that reach across the campus.
- Dean Long wants to increase summer support for faculty research. This would be targeted for research faculty, to get them to do research in the summer rather than teach in the summer. Would pay selected faculty members as if they were teaching the
- Enhanced support for graduate studies. One initiative is to recruit a diverse student body. The Dean says he doesn't want to lose a highly desirable graduate candidate to another graduate program because of money.
- Dean Long commented on Liberate MSU. Dean Long welcomes efforts to articulate a better future for everyone—a future achieved in part by removing obstacles caused by institutional racism. AAAS will be recruiting a larger graduate class, which means that CAL must ensure that all students are supported and able to thrive on campus.

### **Q&A with Dean Long**

- Hudson noted that "outreach" was not directly stated in the Fall Planning Letter. Dean Long replied that outreach is an important component, but that it is entailed in other terms—such as "engaged research"—that are mentioned in the Fall Letter. He emphasized that the quality of the outreach must be rooted in the quality of the research.

- Nieland asked about a possible cluster hire in the digital humanities. Dean Long said that this is an exciting opportunity. He wants to be “strategic” about deciding which departments might be given one of these positions. He wants to do so “in a way that does not pit people against each other.” He said that, along with thinking about hires and department homes for those hires, CAL should be thinking about curricular changes. When it comes to digital humanities, Dean Long said, “It’s not really about the technology, it’s about humanities questions in a digital age.” He also emphasized that he is open to advice about how to go about making a cluster hire like this.

### **Academic Specialists, Voting Rights & Committee Assignments**

White shared a table showing the types of positions represented in each CAL department. One type of position is the academic specialist. Academic specialists have one of two appointments: fixed-term or continuing. Academic specialists can have responsibilities for research, teaching, advising, outreach. Academic specialists can work at MSU indefinitely. White’s research suggests that CAL has over 50 specialists.

- Issue 1: These 50+ academic specialists have **no voting rights** currently in CAL. They are listed in CAL Bylaws as “other faculty” (section 1.1.3). The other kinds of faculty are “regular” (tenure stream; see 1.1.1) and “fixed-term” (see 1.1.2). When voting rights are established, they are granted to “regular” and “fixed-term” but not “other.”
- Issue 2: Academic specialists **cannot serve on some CAL committees**. For example, the College Advisory Council mentions “regular or fixed-term faculty,” but not “other” (see section 3.2.4.2 of the College Bylaws).

Members of the CAC agreed to propose revisions to the bylaws that extend voting rights and committee representation to academic specialists, and that that can be achieved by moving mention of “specialist” from the “other” category (1.1.3) to the “fixed-term” section (1.1.2) and that the “fixed-term” designation be renamed to “fixed-term and specialists.” Blythe offered to make the necessary changes to the CAL Bylaws, to track those changes, and to submit the revision to the Council for discussion at the January meeting. This proposal will be drafted and submitted to the College voting faculty for a vote in the spring semester.

Hoppenstand moved to adjourn. Nieland seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 5:13.

Minutes submitted by Stuart Blythe

Reviewed by Ann Folino White & Chris Long