Minutes CLAS Finance Committee of Monday March 14, 2011

Members present: Monika Ardelt, Patrick De Leenheer, David Foster (Chair), Richard Hollinger, Michael Martinez, Kenneth Merz, Andrea Sterk and Caroline Wiltshire.

Members absent: Tim Johnson, Kimberly Browne (Dean's Office Liaison)

Minutes taken by Patrick De Leenheer

Meeting started at 4:05pm.
1. Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
2. Brief discussion about Associate Dean Richardson's study of NRC data, which was distributed to department chairs and presented at the CLAS assembly.
3. Discussion of Dean's report on possible transfer of the Department of Economics to CLAS from the recent Faculty Council meeting.
4. A report that Rick Yost and the Faculty Council has requested feedback from CLAS committees on the Shared Governance Report.
5. Discussion of concerns regarding the impact of the progressive increase in tuition for graduate students. With the next few years hiring post-docs will be less expensive than supporting graduate students with RA stipend and tuition. This may impact graduate student numbers in science departments with significant numbers of PhD students funded by grants, and programs where students are self-funded.
6. Discussion of draft proposal of a shared serviced model from the CFO. The committee discussed how some services including travel, P-Card, and grant entry might be more efficient in a combined setting, but how services including such things as graduate student recruitment, seminar speaker organization etc. would be less efficient. It is unclear how the estimated value of about $600K in savings is calculated. Clarity about the savings is needed to assess the benefit of the proposed transition.
   Many concerns about this proposal were raised during the discussion:
   - Why is CLAS selected as the first college to be transitioned to shared services? It might be more appropriate to implement this for a smaller, rather than the largest and most diverse college.
   - Would it not be better to test the concept for a few selected services (e.g. grant-related services) first, instead of implementing this for all services at once?
   - There is a significant diversity across departments in CLAS, each requiring more or less emphasis for specific services. Perhaps certain departments with similar needs could be grouped?
   - Unclear how and which the staff members were included in the merger in the draft document. This raises questions about the estimated savings. Are the savings based on the average salaries of staff and do they consider the larger salaries that will be required for the directors?
   - The proposal is unclear regarding the cost of services to units.
7. Report by M. Ardelt on the Governor's proposal to changes to retirement and health care benefits (In the plan employees would be required to contribute 5% of salary into retirement, leading to an effective 5% salary decrease, and health insurance costs would be increased 1k/yr per individual, 8k/yr per family. President Machen has proposed to use part of a tuition increase to offset the salary cut with a salary increase and suggested that UF could create its own HMO-style plan with Shands. President Machen is seeking faculty input on these options.

Meeting ended at 5:25pm.