

Minutes of the Academic Priorities Council
September 18, 2008

Present: Jim Rinderle, Margaret Allard, Ernie May, Richard Bogartz, Carolyn Cave, Dayo Gore, William Curtis Conner, Bryan Harvey, Randall Knoper, Kathy Debevec, Jean DeMartinis, H. F. Cheung; Guests: Harris Freeman, UMass Labor Center and Faculty Member WNEC School of Law, Eve Weinbaum, Labor Relations and Research Center

1. The meeting opened with nominations for Chair of the Council. Kathy Debevec was voted Chair for the 2008-2009 academic year.
2. The Council began with a discussion of the Supply and Demand document. The document summarizes discussions the Council had in 2007-2008 with Kevin Kelly, John Cunningham, Pamela Marsh-Williams, Janet Rifkin, and Karen Schoenberger relative to a) issues they have encountered due to the imbalance between student needs/preferences for courses and majors and the university's ability to satisfy those needs, b) potential solutions to some of the problems, and c) the importance of recognizing and resolving the issues as the University moves forward in its strategic planning. Ernie May proposed that the Council's findings be presented to the Rules Committee for discussion at their meeting on September 29th and to the Faculty Senate. Additional suggestions were offered for inclusion in the document (e.g. specific facts, importance of the issues to the University's reputation and competitiveness, importance of the issues for the strategic planning process, specific questions in need of resolve in the strategic planning process).
3. Richard Bogartz raised the importance of teaching students how to study for their academic success. The University ran the Power Up program for incoming freshman and about 600 students participated. It was suggested that the University needs to do even more in this regard given that so many students come to the University lacking study skills.
4. Harris Freeman, UMass Labor Center and Faculty Member WNEC School of Law and Eve Weinbaum, Labor Relations and Research Center attended the meeting to answer questions posed by the Council last spring relative to their proposal to establish a combined Juris Doctor and Master of Science in Labor Studies Program with Western New England College School of Law. The Council requested a revision of the original proposal that incorporates a needs assessment, clarification on the required courses from both institutions for labor and law, clarification on the satisfaction of UMass' residence requirements, how credits are counted, program overlap, and a reevaluation of the program after 5 years. The proposal will be revised and resubmitted to the Council for approval.