Academic Priorities Council  
Minutes of December 7, 2010

Attendees: John Kingston, Eliot Moss, Jim Rinderle, Jean DeMartinis, Jerri Willett, Monroe Rabin, Susan Sturgeon, Margaret Allard, Ernie May, and Kathy Debevec (Chair)

1. The Minutes of the Nov. 23, 2010 APC meeting were approved.

2. The Council reviewed the revisions of proposed dual degree programs for Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA)/Master of Architecture (MArch) and Master of Regional Planning (MRP)/Master of Architecture (MArch) and voted to approve the two proposals. The programs in the dual degrees are complementary to one another and allow students with a previous degree or preparatory work in one of the disciplines to master the core knowledge and skills in both areas in three years or less instead of the four years that would be necessary otherwise. The programs both provide students with a technical foundation and skills training in the disciplines and require a combined thesis which integrates the areas. There appears to be demand and both pedagogical and professional support for both programs.

3. The Council reviewed the revision of the combined graduate degrees of Juris Doctor and Master of Science in Labor Studies Program with Western New England School of Law. It was noted that greater clarity is needed throughout the proposal so that students will understand the courses required of them if they pursue the program. Council members had difficulty discerning the number of credits required, given inconsistencies in the proposal. Students need to be given specific information on courses and their respective credits as well. Issues that should be addressed in the proposal include:
   a. Course numbers and credits need to be displayed consistently throughout the proposal. The law school courses are listed by name only in the program and these listings need to include course numbers and credits.
   b. The number of credits needed to complete the program needs to be clarified. On p. 4, the first paragraph (last sentence) implies that students will take 130 credits. On p. 6, it looks like 106 credits are needed and on p. 9, it appears that 109 credits are needed. The sample course at the end appears to require 109 credits.
   c. The proposal needs to be clear and transparent to Faculty Senate Councils that need to review it and to students (since this is a contract with them). It is recommended that a curricular table be added that shows the courses and credits required for the individual degrees and the required courses and credits required for the “joint” degree.
d. It should be clear that Labor Studies will be guaranteeing that the required courses will be taught every year.

e. Clarification should be provided on the University policy under which the program would be approved. This is actually a Dual Master’s Degree, not a “joint” degree or a “combined” degree, terms used in the proposal.

f. The advising process for students seeking to understand the course of study should be described.

Upon receiving a revision of the proposal, Council members can consider it for approval.