Present: Anderson, Baker, Behrmann, Bon, DeMulder, Rodgers, Sprague, Taboada

I. Approval of December 8, 2009 Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded, following minor editorial corrections. The minutes from the December 8, 2009 meeting were approved.

II. Pros and Cons of a Departmentalized CEHD Structure

The Council members were asked about potential changes in the organization of CEHD. The discussion focused on the pros and cons associated with a departmental structure, since some discussion has been occurring about this with the transition to a new Dean. Specifically, the question was whether a departmentalized structure would help the faculty to better accomplish its work, or whether such a transition would create additional constraints, involve added work, and be too time consuming. Currently, CEHD has a non-departmentalized structure, where coordinators are appointed to represent and lead self-managed work teams. Coordinators help set the tone and agenda, and move the faculty forward. A departmental structure typically means more localized faculty evaluations, merit decisions, management of academic processes, and assurance of compliance with university policies, procedures, and deadlines.

Considerations include the observation that having departments represents a change in power. For example, salary decisions move from a review by peers to a single person, and budget decisions and issues become localized. This, then, implies that a minimum size is needed and that the number of tenure lines may be specified. A departmental structure places power with one individual for each department. This structure could also set up competition among individuals (department heads) within the college.

Council members discussed whether the current structure works for CEHD. The belief was that CEHD can do some things that other academic units cannot do because of the lack of departments. The faculty evaluations are done by a committee of elected peers. Also, faculty can move from program to program when teaching, without any budget implications. Faculty members are not limited to teaching in one program without the ability to teach in another program; this is important since CEHD has specializations that cut across programs. When recruiting new faculty, the current organizational structure – that includes being able to teach across academic units – is a selling point for the university. Council members felt that the discussion about departments would be most appropriate as part of a strategic planning process, and that, as part of this process, it would be helpful to see how long the current system has been in existence and whether CEHD is now of such a size that the current structure is no longer
appropriate. The most important question to answer is: “What structure is going to work best for CEHD, based on where we are and where we want to be in the future?”

Currently, program coordinators have a lot of responsibility and it would be helpful to find ways to ease their responsibilities. However, in the current system, limited resources are allocated to program chairs, and no localization of resource control exists. A better job could be done with informing coordinators about financial resources and their availability. Also, program coordinators have assumed many of the responsibilities that the chairs typically do. It may be helpful for programs to have some operational budgets.

Implementing a departmental structure would have significant implications for department chairs, including increased accountability (and availability), attendance at more meetings, mediating student referral issues, and reviewing specific faculty issues (e.g., conflict of interest, human subjects review, student appeals matters). Some of these require decision making, and some also require additional training or preparation. In a departmental structure, the sense of self-governance would be very different and more limited. This is not a favorable outcome.

The Council’s general feeling was that CEHD should look at ways to improve the current structure (including the provision of more budget information and limited authority for budget decisions by coordinators), as well as to review alternative ways for operation. There is a great hesitancy to move toward a departmental structure. Such a decision should be couched within a meaningful strategic planning process. Initially, it is important to look at improving the functions, rather than the structure.

III. Program Office Managers

Program office managers for academic units have been meeting more regularly over the last year. During the last two years, some of the functions done by these individuals have changed: some have fiscal responsibilities and some are advising students. The Program Office Managers have expressed concern about their title, since it appears that they are performing duties beyond “office management” (e.g., advising students, grants management). Some employees have changed their titles on their e-mail addresses to “senior program assistant,” “program manager,” “program support specialist,” or “office manager.” Program Office Managers (who are classified employees) have been offered the opportunity to update their Employee Work Profile in order to formally change their working title and more accurately account for and be evaluated on their responsibilities; no one has done this to date. The Council members felt that there was no problem with using varied working titles, provided that: (a) the EWP is updated to reflect responsibilities and the appropriate title, and the title and responsibilities are approved by the Program Coordinator and college administrator/hiring authority; (b) the activities do not include administrative or management responsibilities; and (c) the title does not conflict with titles used for faculty roles. The Council members also agreed that alternate titles on documents and e-mail accounts should not be used until formally changed via EWP review and approval.
IV. Marketing the Core Values

The CEHD Council’s advice was sought regarding ways in which the core values are communicated to students in CEHD courses. It appears that some of the college’s academic programs talk about them and other programs do not. One consideration is to have the core values cited at the bottom of the course syllabus. Another thought is to be sure that they are infused in the modification of CEHD’s mission statement.

Council members felt that it was important to infuse the core values throughout the college, including in its courses and activities. It will be important to identify some intermediate steps that could be taken to help faculty members “get the word out” about these core values. For example, one of the purposes of the Collegial Program Seminars is to help stimulate greater discussion about the core values. Another way to get the core values marketed is to have each person find a way to link to at least one of them. This could be infused into the annual evaluation (it could be done in place of or in addition to the final question about major accomplishments). It may also be helpful to link the core values to SACS or NCATE, to serve as a benchmark about what CEHD faculty and staff are doing.

V. Concern With GSE Faculty Meetings

A concern was raised that there have not been recent GSE faculty meetings: the February meeting conflicted with the CEHD Research Symposium, the March meeting was canceled, and the May meeting conflicts with AERA. Ellen reported that the March meeting was canceled because no major agenda items existed, and an increased number of routine activities were handled via e-mail. In fact, she reported that many faculty sent e-mails to her and Martin thanking them for canceling the faculty meeting and expeditiously handling matters through an alternate format. Ellen indicated that in light of the conflict for so many faculty, the May faculty meeting will likely be rescheduled.

VI. Future Agenda Items

a. Consistent and updated listing of programs of study for prospective students on the university’s website
b. Annual evaluation of Program Coordinators
c. Shared technology needs (online survey research)

Respectfully submitted by: David Anderson