Infrastructure Council
Minutes
September 17, 2010
8:30-10:30 PM
CHE 231

Members present:
Tom Caswell
Betsy Creveling
Elias Eldayrie
Gail Hansen de Chapman
Shannon Holliday
Saeed Khan
Andy McCullough
Mark Orazem
Mark Tillman

The September 17, 2010 meeting of the University of Florida Infrastructure Council was called to order by Chair Mark Orazem at 8:30. Agendas were passed out and introductions were made. Mark stated that his goal for the Council this year was to do things to make things better on campus.

The Council agreed that a statement of appreciation for all the work done in the past by Council Chair Jane Brockman was in order. Everyone agreed she was an excellent leader of the group and put a lot in to her position. Her contributions to the University and the Council are greatly appreciated.

Mark then commented on the list of charges for the Infrastructure Council from the President of the Faculty Senate. On-line training, the challenges of Tuesday/Thursday classes, and the concern for faculty time being valued were mentioned.

Andy McCullough was then asked to make a presentation to the Council about the status of distance learning on campus and the University's search for a vendor to provide a way to "get the content to the market." Andy stated that the University is currently in negotiations with a vendor that would become the "preferred vendor", though some distance learning could continue to be delivered as it is currently being marketed. Andy said that the evaluation committee for the vendor had eleven widely diverse people well representing the University. He also stated that there would be an "opt out" clause if needed.

The Council expressed concerns about the integrity of distance learning and the need to insure the quality of degrees from The University of Florida. Andy said that the majority of the degrees being considered are at the graduate level. "We have an enormous body of expertise……we know content but not marketing," he added. We all agreed that "quality control" is a concern with distance learning and several checks will be in place to insure the integrity of the course work. There is an increasing demand for knowledge, and studies show that content acquisition is unaffected by delivery……….'face to face' or 'on-line' seem to provide the same results in most fields. Andy also commented on the increase in 2 plus 2 degrees. Members of the committee commented that 2 plus 2 degrees were at the undergraduate level, an example of distance learning not focusing on graduate degrees only. The Council appreciated Andy's remarks, but still has some concerns about the new focus on distance learning compared to a more traditional education.

Committee Chairs reported next. Tom Caswell, Chair of Preservation of Historic Buildings and Sites, reported that more buildings are becoming eligible for review by his committee. They measure the cost and significance before deciding what to do with buildings. Gail Hansen de Chapman, Lakes, Vegetation and Landscaping Chair reported that there was great interest on campus in establishing a Memorial Garden for UF employees who pass away while still employed by the University.

Mark then asked the Council to make suggestions concerning issues we felt should be addressed. Saeed Khan brought up the issue of parking on campus and commented on the different colors, decals and lots that make up our campus parking. Security issues were also mentioned, especially in consideration of recent events involving UPD and international students. The last issue brought up was the concern that many Council members had about their time, and that of all faculty, not being respected. There was a general consensus that the value of faculty time is not adequately taken into account when introducing new expectations such as required on-line training.

Elias Eldayrie, Vice President and Chief Information Officer, then spoke to the group. He introduced himself and said he was looking forward to working with us and hoped to be proactive in finding out issues. He said he was here to serve both faculty and students. He will speak to the group at an upcoming meeting about IT. Mark then adjourned the meeting. Our next meeting will be on October 22, 2010 at 8:30 in 231 CHE.