L&S Academic Planning Council, Brief Notes
Tuesday, September 20, 2016, 1:00-2:00 p.m., 101 South Hall

Chair: Karl Scholz
Members present: Heather Allen, Charles Fry, Daniel Kapust, Clark Landis, Shirin Malekpour, Louise Mares, Marisa Otegui, Laura McClure, Daniel Quint
Observers present: Cal Bergman, Kimbrin Cornelius, Greg Downey, Anne Gunther, Elaine Klein, James Montgomery, Susan Ellis Weismer, Nancy Westphal-Johnson, Devon Wilson, Eric Wilcots, Sue Zaeske

1. Announcements and Informational Items. A link to the L&S Climate Survey report was circulated to members. KS announced that an ad-hoc committee on teaching and learning excellence had been convened to forward recommendations to him on this topic.

2. Consent Agenda (a.) Approval of notes – September 6, 2016 (b.) Report of Responses Submitted to Requests for Comment on New Programs: UW System (i.) UW-River Falls, BA in Geographical Information Systems (ii.) UW-Milwaukee, BA in Urban Studies. Members approved consent agenda items.

(c.) Request for Comment, UW-Madison (i.) School of Education, BS-Education Studies (Request for Authorization to Implement). Members removed this item from consent agenda for further discussion. EMK briefly explained the process for seeking comment on new programs, and reminded members that the APC approved the “Notice of Intent” for this program last year. While members agreed they were not anxious to see a proliferation of discipline-specific policy programs, they had no objections to creation of this program. Members unanimously approved the Request for Authorization to Implement.

3. Action Items. (a.) Request to Discontinue Academic Program: Artist Certificate in Music (CRT 105). Members approved the request to discontinue the academic program Artist Certificate in Music (CRT 105). (b.) Request to Suspend Admission to Capstone Certificate in French Studies at the Graduate Level (CRT 452), Members approved the request to suspend admission to the Capstone Certificate in French Studies at the Graduate Level (CRT 452)

4. Academic Program Review. (a.) Astronomy, including: BA/BS Astronomy-Physics, MS-Astronomy, and Ph.D. in Astronomy. EW led discussion, indicating he is a member of the Astronomy Department but was speaking from his role as Associate Dean. He reviewed major points from both the self-study and the review committee, including: the department has an undergraduate major that requires relatively few Astronomy courses; they have excellent research opportunities for undergraduates; the climate in the program is open and welcoming, the graduate program is excellent. He shared the department’s identified opportunities to improve, including: reviewing additional opportunities for offering lower-level coursework, reviewing undergraduate major requirements, creating a student grievance process, and creating a graduate student handbook.

There was extensive member conversation about the undergraduate major including: pathways into the programs, whether the major is substantially differentiated from Physics, whether the department offers enough courses to support a major, the importance of having learning goals firmly embedded in
the program, and the importance of having an established assessment protocol that will give the department feedback on how well students are meeting those goals. Members noted the lack of information about assessment of student learning, and that such information is an essential part of program review; a review ought not be considered complete without it, particularly since that information should provide evidence to inform planning and guide decisions about program changes. Members also spent some time discussing the self-study focus on potential undergraduate major changes, including discussion of a change in the program name. Since proposals to change programs frequently seek to help students better meet learning goals, that absence of information about student learning made it difficult to weigh the merits of the changes discussed.

**Members did not approve the review as complete.** Members directed the dean to ask the department to address more directly assessment of student learning in the undergraduate and graduate programs. At a minimum, the work must include the current learning goals and the department’s future plans to assess how students are learning those goals (an assessment plan). If Astronomy has not been intentional about assessing learning goals in the past, members advised looking for qualitative or quantitative information that already exists that might indirectly measure learning outcomes. Members also wished to have greater clarity about where undergraduate program changes are headed, and how changes will align with learning goals, and whether those learning goals will be changing. Finally, members advised L&S not to consider a name change for the undergraduate program until the program review is complete and the undergraduate major changes have been proposed.

5. **Discussion and Consultations of the Dean.** KS announced the first October meeting will be cancelled.

**Meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.**