## APRCA Committee Report to Faculty Senate – March 2022

## **Committee charge and Membership**

Please see the APRCA committee's Faculty Senate website for the committee charge and membership.

## **Committee report**

At the February 14<sup>th</sup> Faculty Senate Steering meeting, the Faculty Senate APRCA representative received several questions for consideration:

- 1. What is the APRCA role moving forward?
- 2. How can we shape the review/reduction discussion to be future-oriented and involve the whole campus in a collaborative, participatory process?
- 3. What can APRCA/ Senate do to make sure that discussions about curricular changes take place in our arena and are framed within faculty priorities and objectives?

This report will strive to answer these questions while also bringing Senate up to date on our activities for the month.

- 1. What is the APRCA role moving forward?
  - a. The APRCA committee will continue to work with OAA to consult regarding the Provost's <u>Program Review/Reduction Process</u> (PRRP).
    - i. During <a href="Phase I">Phase I</a> of this process, the Provost's Program Reduction Working Group created "driver" and "value" metrics used to identify 18 units for further scrutiny. APRCA created <a href="Guiding Principles and Priorities">Guiding Principles and Priorities</a> to guide the program reduction process.
    - ii. During <a href="Phase II">Phase II</a> of the PRRP process, the Provost asked the 18 units identified as falling below the median on driver metrics to write narratives. These narratives are meant to address why the unit falls below the median. The narratives provide an opportunity for qualitative discussion of research, community outreach, curricular specialties, and to capture information that is not available in university databases.
      - 1. OAA organized a meeting on Feb 11 for chairs from 18 units to meet with representatives from APRCA, Budget Committee, and OAA.
        - a. Morale: Talented, hard-working, dedicated faculty feeling frustrated, anxious, demoralized, and fearful. They expressed uncertainty about who the audience was for the narrative (Provost? Dean?). They expressed worries that decisions about cuts had already been made and that nothing they wrote would make a difference. 18 of 50 departments on campus are now vibrating with stress.
        - b. Marginalization: Chairs and faculty expressed their feeling that the PRRP process has stigmatized and siloed them.
        - c. Metrics: Chairs and faculty raised questions about the driver and value

## metrics.

- i. Working with medians, half of the departments and units will always be below a median. If we have a 'super' college consisting of 'star' departments with international reputation, do we still need to 'fail' 50% of them? Are there specific goals to meet (rather than just being better than half of the rest)? Would it be possible to identify several aspirational institutions and each department can be compared with their counterparts in these institutions?
- Small departments seem disadvantaged by the metrics; they have also been disproportionately affected by not rehiring empty lines.
- iii. How and by whom were the value metrics "applied" to the list of units identified by the driver metrics?
- d. At the request of a number of department chairs, the Provost extended the narrative deadline to March 18<sup>th</sup>.
- iii. During Phase III of the PRRP process, which will take place during spring term, the Provost will use metrics and narratives to make reductions and incorporate them into School and College budgets moving forward.
- Budgeting is also moving forward simultaneously through the yearly Integrated Planning for Enrollment and Budget (IPEB) process. Deans in the various Schools and Colleges have been given budget scenarios specific to their units and need to make adjustments (mostly reductions).
  - The Faculty Senate Budget Committee invited APRCA members to attend the meetings that Budget Committee members hold yearly in February with the Deans of all of the Schools and Colleges.
  - ii. APRCA committee members remain uncertain about whether PRRP affects IPEB (and, if so, how).
  - iii. APRCA committee members note that transformative initiatives in the Schools and Colleges are vulnerable as cuts get made. Capricious resources make it difficult to plan, let alone invest. Many units feel that they have no fat to cut, no reserves to draw on, and no "bench" to turn to in times of crisis or shortage.
- 2. How can we shape the review/reduction discussion to be future-oriented and involve the whole campus in a collaborative, participatory process?
  - a. The original hope when imagining a reduction process was that we could work strategically together as a university. "Futures" conversations should come before strategic planning, and they take time and investment. The APRCA committee calls for a deeper engagement of the entire campus in such planning; ideally the planning would take place before any decisions get made about reductions at the unit levels, though the Phase III timeline and the siloed nature of the discussions about drivers and narratives does not seem to allow room for such university-wide conversations. We aspired not merely to trim around the edges but to engage in a planning process that will position the entire university to move forward confidently into the future.
    - i. At Phase II of the process, we have seemingly arrived at a moment when 18

- departments/ units feel siloed, stigmatized, marginalized, and endangered, with the rest of the university's faculty seemingly distanced and "safe" from the process.
- b. APRCA committee members hope that we can engage the Reimagine Fellows with the faculty, with the Faculty Senate Committees, and with the whole campus (not just the 18 scrutinized units). Perhaps the Futures Collaboratory could facilitate such a conversation.
- 3. What can APRCA/ Senate do to make sure that discussions about curricular changes take place in our arena and are framed within faculty priorities and objectives?
  - a. The hope is that, through shared governance, the faculty can work with the Deans and the Provost to build a better future. The faculty can frame the question in an arena over which we have control: The curriculum. Simultaneously, we can create a space for participation, innovation, and excitement.
  - b. One possible university-wide project is to fulfill the faculty yearning toward a more interdisciplinary curriculum (often stymied by SCH problems) in a way that might help meet the HECC goal for graduating more students (and thus improve PSU's budget allocation from the State). We may be able to address PRRP challenges, budget issues, and goals in Interdisciplinary Teaching and Research (ITR) by creating an easier pathway for students toward interdisciplinary majors.
  - c. Such an initiative would be forward-thinking, aimed at student success, and collaborative. It would not stigmatize or silo programs, departments, or units, but would instead break down barriers between disciplines.