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Senate Executive Committee Request for Information

First Year Experience (FYE) Faculty Compensation and the use of Academic Advisors and Peer Mentors to teach FYE in Fall 2019

Submitted by: Wayne Johnson

11/3/2019

Question(s):

1. What compensation was offered to faculty to teach FYE in Fall 2019?
2. Were there any concerns raised about the qualifications of academic advisors and peer mentors replacing faculty in teaching sensitive and nuanced topics like “white privilege”? If so, in what venue and what was stated?
3. Will Academic Advisors and Peer Mentors be used to teach FYE in Spring 2020? If yes, will they be given additional training on how to handle sensitive and nuanced FYE course content?

Rationale:

At the October 23, 2019 Faculty Senate meeting, there was a seemingly rhetorical question raised about why faculty did not “step up” to teach FYE in Fall 2019. In prior years, faculty were offered several methods for compensation for teaching FYE. Per the Georgia Southern Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) document: “Part of the design of First Class recognizes that personnel choose to be involved. Also, the QEP team acknowledges the importance of employees’ ability to choose a compensation mechanism most appropriate for them. Hence, the team has planned three possibilities for compensating those faculty teaching the First Class one-hour seminars: • For faculty, the one-hour seminar could be included as part of their regular teaching load, counted as 1.5 credit hours. • If teaching as an overload, faculty could bank 1.5 credit hours toward future release time. • Alternatively, instructional faculty could earn a \$1500.00 payment for teaching First Class as an overload.” It would be prudent for greater transparency in acknowledging the specific reasons faculty might not have “stepped up” to teach FYE in Fall 2019.

Response:

SEC Response: Approval of RFI and forwarded to Dr. Carl Rieber, Provost, VPAA

Response by Associate Provost Christine Ludowise (11/18/2019).

A1. What compensation was offered to faculty to teach FYE in Fall 2019?

Please see the attached notes from the Academic Leadership meeting and attached emails to campus regarding compensation to faculty to teach FYE in Fall 2019. Specifically:

The stipends which previously were paid to those who taught FYE 1220 have been redirected to help fund the faculty and staff equity adjustments. Faculty and exempt staff who value teaching FYE 1220 should speak with their chairs and supervisors about how teaching the course could be considered as a meaningful component of their contributions to student success. As noted by the faculty members on the redesign team, faculty need to have a clear understanding of how teaching FYE 1220 will count in some meaningful way for them. The Provost's Office has asked the Deans to work with their Colleges, departments, and faculty to clearly articulate how teaching FYE 1220 (and CORE 2000) will count in faculty evaluations and towards their important milestones (tenure, promotion, post-tenure, merit-evaluations, etc.).

There are likely a number of ways that these courses can count in positive ways for faculty.

Possibilities include:

1. As evidence of excellence in teaching, evidenced by a focus on student success and student persistence.
- 2) As evidence of significant service, again focusing on student success and student persistence.
- 3) As evidence of mentoring students within the discipline, with a focus on providing students with guidance on their pathway through their educational journey

None of this precludes faculty members from teaching FYE 1220 or CORE 2000 in their assigned course load, if that arrangement is appropriate.

2. Were there any concerns raised about the qualifications of academic advisors and peer mentors replacing faculty in teaching sensitive and nuanced topics like "white privilege"? If so, in what venue and what was stated?

Of the 105 individuals teaching FYE in Fall 2019:

46 are Academic Advisors [44%]

25 are Faculty (6 of 25 are administrative faculty, such as Department Chairs) [24%]

26 are Staff [25%]

8 are Graduate Students [7%]

Until the FLSA rules changed in 2016-2017, academic advisors and other staff members regularly taught the FYE course on the Statesboro Campus. It is my understanding that Academic Advisors also taught the FY course on the Armstrong Campus, prior to consolidation.

Previous Years: FY Instructors

CY 2013: 133 individuals; 71 faculty [53%], 62 staff [47%]

CY 2014: 139 individuals; 79 faculty [57%], 60 staff [43%]

CY 2015: 137 individuals; 80 faculty [58%], 57 staff [42%]

CY 2016: 133 individuals; 80 faculty [60%], 53 staff [40%]

CY 2017: 119 individuals; 89 faculty [75%], 30 staff [25%]

CY 2018: 131 individuals; 106 faculty [80%], 25 staff [20%]

Peer mentors have been an integral element of FYE courses, on the Statesboro Campus, for 7-8 years, and have always worked in tandem with the instructor (not as sole instructor of the course).

Curriculum and instructor resources were built around the following six topics:

Growth Mindset

Information Literacy

Achieving Your Academic Goals

Communication in Our Communities

Diversity and Inclusion

Campus Engagement and Student Success

Of course concerns were raised. Concerns were raised primarily about academic advisors having difficult and nuanced conversations in class, rather than their primary role which generally involves one-on-one settings. Those conversations happen regularly. Professional development on teaching diversity and inclusion topics was offered, as well as training on classroom management. Academic advisors engaged in those development opportunities as part of the requirements of their position, as well as in professional development on an on-going basis.

It is important to note that prior to this year, only part-time and new limited-term instructors were asked to participate in training for FYE 1220. Full-time faculty (and staff, previously) could forego any type of training.

3. Will Academic Advisors and Peer Mentors be used to teach FYE in Spring 2020? If yes, will they be given additional training on how to handle sensitive and nuanced FYE course content?

Yes, Academic Advisors will teach FYE 1220 in Spring 2020. If they request a peer mentor, they will be paired with one. On-going training and professional development will continue to be available and recommended.

Thank you.