

VSU Department Heads Council Meeting
Odum Library, Rm. 1604
Minutes – May 27, 2008 - 4:00 pm

Attendees: Jim Baxter, Deb Briihl for Bob Bauer, Carl Cates, Ed Chatelain, Robert Gannon, Don Leech, Rey Martinez, A. Blake Pearce, L. Wayne Plumly, Mylan Redfern, Paul Riggs, James Shrader, Viki Soady, Mark Smith

Guests: Louis Levy, Jane Kinney, James Black

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:02 pm by Chairperson Mark Smith. The first order of business was consideration of the March 25, 2008 meeting minutes. Without addition or correction, the minutes were accepted to be filed.
2. Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Louis Levy addressed the Council. His remarks included:
 - a. Dr. Connie Richards had been selected and accepted the position of Dean of the College of Arts and Science. She will begin her post in July. Dr. Levy complimented the search procedure and expressed his appreciation to all who were involved.
 - b. The Council was invited to make suggestions to President Zaccari for comments to be included in the “transition handbook” he is developing for the new President. Dr. Levy suggested statements regarding the role and function of the Council would be appropriate.
 - c. Dr. Levy discussed the new requirement for entering freshman and transfer students, who are not exempt based on ACT or SAT scores, to register for the Regents Examinations in their first semester at VSU. He asked Council members to encourage faculty advisors to stress this new requirement during summer orientations.
 - d. Department Heads should soon be receiving grade distribution reports from the Registrar’s Office. Dr. Levy remarked that these reports should be used in the formative assessment of faculty members to help them improve.
 - e. Dr. Levy raised the challenge of how to best evaluate advising. He remarked this is a difficult task. Council members stated that a duplicate advising form is being used to document proper advising, but sometimes even after students have been advised and their flag lifted, they enroll for other courses. Dr. Levy said that “advisor error” was not a good reason for course substitutions; however documentation of proper advising is essential. All degree checklists should be reviewed to reflect the current requirements for each degree program. Dr. Baxter mentioned he regularly advises student to request their graduation check at least two semesters prior to their anticipated date of graduation. Dr. Martinez suggested that perhaps more emphasis could be placed on the evaluation of advising in the Senior Survey that all graduates are asked to complete.
 - f. Dr. Levy relayed a request from Dr. Christy Coons Yates for Department Heads to update progress on a monthly basis for all departmental initiatives, especially those that have been funded, in the strategic planning database.

- a. The directive from the Chancellor's Office is that all business transactions must be "totally transparent and totally accountable".
 - b. An email message had been sent to all Deans, Directors, Department Heads and Budget Managers with a listing of dates and times a special training class on the use of the P-Card will be held at VSU. This class is mandatory for the aforementioned administrators with budget responsibilities.
 - c. Mr. Black also referenced the new mandatory reporting procedure for any "suspected malfeasance" with regards to business transactions. Failure to comply with this directive could leave an individual liable for prosecution.
 - d. The issue of the acceptance of gratuities from vendors was also discussed. Mr. Black informed the Council that vendors are being required to complete a disclosure form in which they must report individuals who have accepted invitations to lunches, dinners, or accepted tickets to events. Public employees must not be perceived as having a conflict of interest with vendors. The bottom line is not to accept anything from anyone.
 - e. Deadlines for the return of cash advances will be strictly adhered to in the future and failure to meet the deadline must be reported.
 - f. Dr. Paul Riggs asked if greater use of "golden rod" forms might be coming given the controversies that now exist regarding the use of the P-Card for purchases. Mr. Black commented that greater use of this form may occur in the future. He commented that he is committed to helping Department Heads conduct business as easily and quickly as possible. P-Cards will remain an option; however its use must be carefully scrutinized since there is little room for error and could lead to legal action for inappropriate purchases. Mr. Black remarked that everyone needed to keep good records of all purchases.
 - g. Mr. Black ended his remarks by informing the Council that a new "ethics statement" to be signed annually by state employees will likely be disseminated this Fall.
5. Chair Mark Smith ended the meeting by announcing that Council meetings during the 2008-09 academic year will remain on the last Tuesday of the month. He asked members to send to him any remarks or commentary to be forwarded to President Zaccari for possible inclusion in his transition handbook. In closing Dr. Smith asked the Council to please submit to him ideas for Council activities for next year.
 6. The meeting was adjourned at 5:43 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Reynaldo L. Martinez Jr.
Vice Chair