

Board of Advisors Online Meeting

Monday, October 16, 2023

Minutes

Present: Dr. Kinshuk, Edward Melton (Chair), Melissa Rethlefsen, Ramiro Salazar, Lynne Simpson, James Spence, Bridget Barry-Thias, Jennifer Bekker, Diane Bruxvoort, LaMoya Burks, Diane Connery, Morgan Davis-Gieringer, Mark Hopkins, Clarice Weeks, Jiangping Chen, Tae Hee Lee, Jennifer Moore, Gahangir Hossain, Tozammel Hossain, Barbara Schultz-Jones, Daniella Smith, Stephen Wheeler, Ana Cleveland, Lawrence Enoch, Penny Light

Welcoming Remarks

Dr. Kinshuk, Dean, College of Information
BOA Chair, Edward Melton, Library Director, Harris County
Public Library

Introduction of Board Members

State of the Department by Dr. Jiangping Chen, Department Chair

Q&A of the Presentation

Problems:

1. Too many courses/sections are taught by TFs and Adjuncts. Finding quality instructors is very challenging. Our TFs are wonderful, but they have their own research and study happening while they are teaching.
2. Same course will be taught by different instructors with different teaching styles. We will enforce that instructors use the same textbooks and course materials. But they may have different assignments.
3. Imbalanced student enrollment – We would like to have more domestic students in data science programs and other programs.
4. End of program Eportfolio may change to a different approach.

2023 -2024 Goals

1. Hire new outstanding faculty members.
2. Excel at research
3. Sustain teaching excellency

Break

Faculty and Staff Introductions

Group Discussion on Important Topics:

- One of the things that is challenging, is that the students don't have a strong business acumen. They don't know how to do the soft skills for the work that needs to be done. I'm curious about that approach. Do you do that for the data science group? That really benefits my hiring. What is the exposure to real world?
- As an adjunct, I know we do teach some of that. We do struggle with Health Informatics getting internships and mentorships. I have worked hard to get interns at MD Anderson, but the information is sensitive. We need more partnerships in the healthcare arena.

- Dr. Chen – Our programs don't really have a course focusing on soft skills. We need to add it to one or more of our courses.
- A few open-source work that generates synthetic patients with some health problems and do some data science modeling would be great.
- Chronic diseases are often reported and that data can be used to help those studies. Student projects need to include the soft skills. Work with patients/office work, real world projects that have students guided to work. Does your industry have an opportunity to help? We can create a forum.
- I will share forms that can help with the goal. I need a timeframe of when it needs to be done. Some courses are not appropriate. By use of the capstone and final practicum they can work on real world problems

Challenge #2: Some sessions taught by faculty, adjuncts and teaching fellows have the same textbook, but should they use the same type of assignments? One course has six quizzes while another has four and a project. Should we have the freedom per the instructor or should assignments be the same across sections?

- Allowing people to teach their own material is universal. There should be freedom to teach differing materials. Maybe a unified project across the groups. The quality control is challenging. I hope they would have some same goals with each of the teachers in a team approach.
- I struggle with this. I teach in Health Informatics. Cost is one of the reasons we don't use a textbook. We have phased the textbook out due to cost. It's prohibitive for Undergrads. It is a challenge to coordinate classes. The adjuncts that bring real world scenarios put the need for freedom in the course. I think Dr. Cleveland leads us well in doing that with meetings to coordinate the courses.

Challenge #3: What are our strengths? What can we do to make it better?

- The onboarding is a strength in training. You need to have internships and mentors. What you do well is your offerings. You have a lot of offerings and depth in those offers. You need to motivate students to get familiar with the work area.
- Your strengths are your faculty, especially Dr. Cleveland.
- We recently collaborated with Visual Arts and Design and with the museum. Our collaborations are our strengths.

Group Report/Summary of the Discussion

Group One Reporting

- We discussed Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and the rule changes. Recruiting and connecting with the community. Who will do the recruiting? IMLS- public libraries and museum collaborations are all needed.
- Graduate skills-need soft skills. How to tell a story, how to explain to people about the significance of the work. Students need to practice on the soft skills.

Group Two Reporting

- Librarians talked about needing the soft skills. How to talk to people who might influence our funding. Talking to medical doctors or how to tell a story. Many of us are introverts and don't have the skill to speak in front of people. How to draft MOUs or RFPs. How to be familiar with those kinds of things. Review contracts and what that looks like.
- Have a workshop on AI and how to use it in our work. We should use AI better, but not let it do the work for us and watch for misinformation. Need to look at our curriculum.
- Rural environments and how they are the go-to-space for all people. How to work with a funding program and work with municipalities. More challenging to manage a rural library.
- What role do libraries play in emergency response, disaster response and climate change?

Board of Advisors Business Meeting/Elections

The following items were discussed and voted on:

1. Should we have two meetings one virtual and one in person?

There is value in getting together in person.

Motion to have two meetings made by Jennifer Bekker and seconded by Mark Hopkins all in favor vote aye, any oppose.

We will have two meetings one in fall and one in spring/one in person and one virtual.

Motion Passes

LaMoya Burks to be chair for next year

Motion for LaMoya Burks as Chair made by Edward Melton and Mark Hopkins seconded.

Motion Passes

Board of Advisors nominations can be made at any time. If YOU, the board, have someone you would like to recommend, that person can be discussed and added.

If you would, please, review the bylaws on our website.

Closing Remarks and adjourn