SPGIA FACULTY MEETING MINUTES
Founders Hall 126
August 22, 2014

The meeting was called to order by Dean Rozell at 2:00pm. He welcomed the audience of faculty and staff, noting that the former units are blending well, and that building relationships is an important element of the merging process. The staffs are working together seamlessly, and all reports to date have been most encouraging.

Introductions of new faculty and staff followed the Dean’s opening remarks to include: Terry Clower, Kate Destler, Heba El-Shazli, Justin Gest, Sita Slavov, Jessica Terman and Keith Strigaro.

1. State of the School

Dean Rozell discussed the state of the School of Policy, Government, and International Affairs, describing the creation of the School as “a rather daring undertaking not without controversy and opposition” before moving forward to address the challenges and opportunities facing all of us. He also provided a review of the events leading up to the merging of the School of Public Policy and the Department of Public and International Affairs as well as the perspectives of central administration during this time and the commitment of President Cabrera to the success of the new School. However, “the state of the School right now is not what we had anticipated in light of the current budgetary environment and a very discouraging slide in our admissions numbers”, and therefore serious constraints may hamper forward momentum and important goals in the short term.

The first challenge is the budget. Dean Rozell presented the stark realities of the current budget at all levels of state, university and SPGIA, reporting that none are in good financial shape. Consequently, rather than providing much in the way of assistance, central administration is charging all university units to find additional means of raising revenues through executive education, grant and contracts and other activities.

A second challenge is SPGIA’s falling enrollment targets and the very real concern over this critical shortfall that will impact the important needs of the new School in hiring new faculty as well as dealing with the third challenge of salaries and salary equity. Dean Rozell is committed to eliminating the existing disparity in faculty salaries and is working on improving this situation with cautious optimism. But first and foremost, student recruitment and reversal of the admissions decline are top priority. A full admissions audit was conducted during the summer, and recommendations of the audit report are now in the process of implementation.

Another priority is the expansion of SPGIA’s entrepreneurial activities such as executive education, sponsored programs, online courses and philanthropy. Dean Rozell announced that Roger Stough will take the lead on non-degree executive education and other revenue based activities in addition to his responsibilities as Associate Dean for Research and Sponsored Programs. He encouraged all faculty to discuss proposal development with Roger in the hope of
increasing the $5 million revenue his office produced last year. Roger will also lead grant forums with faculty to further explain details of the application process.

Dean Rozell also reported that while rumors of a naming gift for the School persist, there are no immediate developments towards this end nor should a donor be viewed as solution to SPGIA’s budget concerns. He announced that future forums are planned to provide more information on the critical topics of enrollments, budget and governance. Each forum will be an opportunity to share information and seek input from faculty and staff.

Dean Rozell’s final remarks focused on the Dean Search. The Provost has indicated that he’s in no hurry to initiate a search until SPGIA proves to be in the best position possible to attract top candidates. He will be discussing the matter with the Provost in coming weeks and will advise as to the proper timing for a search to begin as well as the process. In the meantime, Dean Rozell has no plans for candidacy himself and will dedicate his efforts as Acting Dean to making SPGIA a premier unit and a School that only the best candidates will want to lead. Faculty questions and discussion regarding various aspects of the State of the School presentation concluded this portion of the meeting agenda.

2. Governance for Transition Year

Senior Associate Dean Pris Regan discussed SPGIA governance for the year ahead and said that the earlier merger proposal plan provided the blueprint for the governance structure. Faculty support, ideas and energy will be required for the governance mechanisms to work successfully. An outline of the SPGIA Divisional Transition Structure details the governance areas and has been distributed to faculty and staff. She discussed the transitional executive council, the divisions, curriculum change process, P&T and faculty committees.

3. Website Demonstration

Keith Strigaro, new Director of Communications and Marketing, provided a demonstration of the new SPGIA website scheduled for launching on September 5. He navigated through the new website to show how much more user friendly it is, how easily one link leads to another and how each one encourages interaction on the part of the viewer. A new feature permits the viewer to submit online requests for information or register for SPGIA events. In keeping with social media, there are links to Facebook, Twitter and Linked in, and more importantly, the new website is easily accessed and displayed in full on mobile devices.

There was general discussion of the new and much improved website, and Keith encouraged everyone to review the site before it goes live and let him know of any suggestions or ideas to increase the site’s effectiveness.

Senior Associate Dean David Hart concluded the meeting with announcements of upcoming events and a reminder that everyone is required to change their Mason password due to the recent cyber-attack on the university’s systems. With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00pm.