I. CALL TO ORDER

The Cameron University Long-Range Planning Committee met on Monday, March 9, 2009. Chair Mary Penick called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. in Room 104 of the Student Union.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: David Fennema, Carla Guthridge, John Hodgson, Chris Keller, Monika Linehan. Chair Mary Penick presided. Also in attendance was Vice President John McArthur.


III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Committee members reviewed the minutes of the February 16, 2009 meeting. David Fennema moved that the minutes of the February 16, 2009 meeting be approved as printed. John Hodgson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Chair Mary Penick stated the agenda for today’s meeting was to review the recommendations for long-range campus improvements discussed at the November 3, 2008 meeting and to vote on which recommendations to send forward to President Ross. The Committee reviewed the following:

- Campus improvements
- Global interaction
- Professional grant writer
- Writing/critical thinking standards and faculty development
- Teaching assistants
- Changing student population
- Revenue generation

Campus improvements. Daycare for faculty, staff, and students was an important recommendation deemed worthy of further consideration by the Committee, and it was suggested that the availability of campus daycare had the potential to increase student enrollment. A major concern, however, was how daycare would be operated and funded. The consensus was that an onsite daycare facility should be established, ensuring better overall care of children. It was suggested that the facility could be an integral part of early childhood education, operated by students with faculty oversight. Apparently, Cameron had a similar system in the past that was dropped when the manager retired. One suggestion for funding included charging faculty and staff for daycare. Chair Penick asked whether anyone was already working on developing a Cameron daycare system. Vice President McArthur suggested contacting Dean Ronna Vanderslice, who has been working with Playcare, Inc., before carrying this recommendation forward.

Global interaction. The need for greater faculty and faculty/student interaction was another important concern for the Committee as it had the potential to create a stronger learning environment by creating commonality and a greater knowledge of each other’s disciplines. Several ways to achieve this interaction had been discussed at the November 3, 2008, meeting and were revisited today. Chair Penick questioned Vice President McArthur regarding modernization of this suite of rooms and the possibility of using it as a common gathering place for faculty, such as a faculty club or lounge. Vice President McArthur stated that this suite would be modernized as part of the overall modernization of the Student Union, but it most likely would remain classroom space. It is Don Sullivan’s responsibility to assess and determine the future allocation and use of space in the Student Union. Vice President McArthur further stated that there was no faculty meeting space allotted in the new McMahon Centennial Complex. It was suggested that there could be a
reallocate space to serve more than one purpose and that this recommendation should be part of Cameron’s long-range plan.

Chair Penick addressed the recommendation for interdisciplinary lunches at Shepler every Friday to promote collegiality among faculty and students. It was agreed that such lunches would be a good opportunity for faculty and student interaction outside the classroom. However, several questions were raised. Where would the lunches be held? What is the status of the old faculty dining room and could it be used? Would the lunches be open to all disciplines or to specific disciplines on assigned dates? How would this be decided? It was also questioned whether anyone would actually show up. Due to the number of questions, Chair Penick suggested the Committee table this recommendation for now.

Professional grant writer. The Committee revisited the need for a professional grant writer and agreed that Cameron should have a more fully developed grant-writing program. Vice President McArthur stated that a position for a professional grant writer would probably not be staffed since Cameron does not write enough grants to justify a full position and that, currently, Tony Wohlers fulfilled this role in a part-time capacity. Chair Penick asked whether more grants would be available in five years. Vice President McArthur replied that it depended on the discipline, clarifying that there would be fewer in the liberal arts and sciences and more in business. He noted that in the past, payouts for grants were one in three, but now they are one in five, as funding is much harder to get. He also stated that he would like an institutional grant writing team for Title 3 funds. He went on to say that at present funding is only available through endowed lectureships. It was suggested that the difficulty in getting funding could be used as an argument for hiring a professional grant writer. Chair Penick asked the Committee to put this recommendation on hold for now.

Writing/critical thinking standards and faculty development. At the November 3, 2008 meeting, the Committee concurred that the University must have writing standards in all areas and expressed concern that programs such as WAC and critical thinking were falling by the wayside. Chair Penick readdressed the need for training in WAC and critical thinking. It was stated that Vivian Thomlinson is director of WAC and that in the past there were Wednesday afternoon training sessions and panel discussions, sponsored by the Faculty Development Committee, concerning the use of WAC throughout the curriculum. Unfortunately, turnout for these training sessions was poor. It was suggested that there be some sort of faculty incentive to encourage participation in this type of training and faculty development.

Chair Penick stated that Cameron used to have a director of Faculty Development and now that responsibility falls on Dr. Sylvia Burgess. There was agreement that faculty development was important for retention of personnel and was particularly helpful to new faculty directly out of graduate school with no teaching experience. It was suggested that a strong mentoring system would help to facilitate faculty development. It was also noted that faculty development funds are an underutilized resource.

Teaching assistants. Chair Penick reiterated that the Committee had previously suggested that funds be allotted for teaching assistants to help with such things as grading. She noted that teaching assistants would be particularly helpful in online classes with more than 40 students. However, she asked if student workers could be used in these instances rather than teaching assistants. It was also mentioned that help with grading would be useful in composition classes. David Fennema suggested that the recommendation for teaching assistants be put into the minutes of the Faculty Senate to see what discussions arise. Vice President McArthur stated that he would like to know whether faculty would want student help moved from the labs to the classroom.

Changing student population. Chair Penick asked if the Committee should invite Dr. Sylvia Burgess to address the topic of changes in student population at the next meeting. The Committee unanimously agreed to this.

Revenue generation. Vice President McArthur stated that revenue generation is definitely an issue for the future and gave the Committee a brief budget update. He noted that the budget for 2010 is down 5 percent or approximately $3 million, and the budget for 2011 is projected to be down by as much as 11 percent, which is very bad. Furthermore, while the budget is decreasing, benefit costs
are increasing. On a positive note, Cameron is in good shape financially compared to other universities. However, he emphasized that Cameron must find a way to ride out three bad years.

V. ADJOURNMENT

David Fennema moved to adjourn the meeting. John Hodgson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

VI. NEXT MEETING

The Long-Range Planning Committee will meet again on Monday, April 13, 2009 at 3:30 p.m. in Room 104 of the Student Union.

Respectfully submitted,
Monika Linehan
Secretary, Long-Range Planning Committee