



FACULTY SENATE

Minutes

Thursday, March 27, 2008
Taylor 306

In attendance: Tammy Castle, Ken Wright, Joe Spear, Rustin Greene, Mike Pearsons, Cynthia Gilliatt (for Sharon Cote), Sarah Sierra, Robert Jerome, Carey Cole (for Mike Mitri), Mark Fiegenen, Val Larsen, Hugh Hobson, Diane Riordan, Annie Papero, Denise Perritt (for Ian Macgillivray), Molly Whittaker, Rory DePaolis, Jeff Andre, Arch Harris, David McGraw, Hilda Taylor, Steve Garren, Kevin Giovanetti, Susal Barber (for Janice Minor), Roger Hall. *Guests:* Doug Brown, Theresa Gonzalez, Susan Wheeler, Oris Griffin (Briefly).

Called to Order 3:30pm

Note: Speaker Pro Tempore, Ken Wright is acting speaker for Joan Frederick. Joe Spear is acting Secretary.

Brief Guest Announcement: Dr. Oris Griffin spoke on the Professor in Residence program at the meeting's beginning.

Approval of Minutes from February Meeting: Approved

Provost's Report:

- ❖ Legislative Update: A State budget has passed House of Delegates and Senate, and is now awaiting Governor Kaine's changes. This will likely result in a special session toward the end of April, and JMU budget specs remain in question until the budget is settled.
 - it is likely that we will be raising tuition to meet our needs as the state budget will provisions will not be great and may include more cuts
 - In Response to Questions:
 - Though the State may offer additional funds to schools that cap tuition increases, JMU will not likely do that since the pool of extra funds is very small.
 - We are likely approaching the upper limit on what we can charge for out-of-state tuition before we start to lose applicants.
 - Tuition and fees would not rise at the same percentage rate – most of the increases should end up in tuition, not in fees.
 - Capital appropriations are likely the most secure aspects of budget provisions, so capital projects should go on as expected. This money, however, is likely to be done via bonds at a level that would not require a general electoral vote (roughly less than \$1 billion).
 - at the moment, it looks as if raises will be 2% for the next 2 years (effective each Novemeber). Half of that is in state appropriations, the other half has to be funded by JMU.

- In response to question:
 - The Board could vote to increase raises above the 2% level, but that is unlikely
- ❖ JMU is currently working to expand its base of funds
 - Development Campaigns: the last campaign was very successful and the next one is soon to start
 - There are concerted efforts to find very large donations to JMU (measured in the millions) that could change our budget picture significantly
 - Money available from grants via the Office of Sponsored Programs has grown dramatically and should continue to do so. We may have as much as \$30million flow through Sponsored Programs this year.

Old Business:

- ❖ Continuation of the Excused Absence Policy first presented by the Academic Policies Committee and the February 2008 meeting. A revised version of the original was distributed that clearly separated the text for the Catalog from the proposed text for the Faculty handbook (available on the documents page of the faculty website)
- ❖ Discussion began with the suggested text for inclusion in the Catalog
 - An amendment to the Policy was presented by Joe Spear on behalf of the department of Sociology/Anthropology (available on the documents page of the faculty website)
 - Discussion ensued largely regarding how much the written policy should explicitly state given that the overall effect of the policy is to leave control over absence policies in the hands of faculty
 - The purpose of listing out relatively detailed aspects of typical policies was given as a means of making sure that students are clear about expectations and responsibilities.
 - This amendment was defeated by a vote of 14-8.
 - General Discussion of policy as presented by Academic Policies:
 - continued largely along the same lines as the amendment discussion in terms of the question of how much the policy should specify given that the policy also specifies that faculty ultimately set their own policies.
 - Specifying more will inform both students and faculty about procedures and expectations that are common, can provide faculty with some greater legitimacy in asking students to document absences and may help produce greater uniformity in policies thus reducing misunderstandings for faculty and students.
 - Yet, specifying may contradict faculty policies and provide students with a sense entitlement that may have a similar effect.
 - Another amendment to the policy was suggested by Arch Harris: the amendment suggested eliminating the bulleted lists of typical scheduled and unscheduled absences, while keeping most of the prior text with some more minor edits to reduce the chances of producing unrealistic student expectations.
 - This amendment was seconded and after further discussion along similar lines to the above passed by a vote of 16-5

- A further amendment was proposed to strike the opening clause of the policy which read: “While certain absences are often considered legitimate”
 - This amendment was seconded and passed by a vote of 21-0
- The amended version of the Excused Absence Policy was then passed by a vote of 21-1. The final text of this is available at the Senate website.
- ❖ Discussion of suggested text for the Faculty Handbook:
 - Amendment Proposal by Rustin Greene that the text should state that Faculty hold themselves to the same policies as their students. This received no second.
 - Amendment proposed to eliminate the text “and/or discuss” to encourage faculty to publish policies on syllabi rather than just provide them orally. This was seconded but defeated by a vote of 13-7.
 - Amendment proposed: “...how many excused absences will be allowed...” with “...their attendance policy, including...”. Amendment passed by a vote of 18-1 with one abstention.
 - A vote on the amended statement passed by a vote of 20-0. The final text is available on the website and will be considered by the next Faculty Handbook committee.
- ❖ Speaker’s Report (Ken Wright in lieu of Joan Frederick). Three Announcements:
 - 1. The date for the BOV reception for retiring faculty has been moved to April 24th, directly after the senate meeting. Please encourage retiring faculty members in your units to attend.
 - 2. Dr. Meredith Gunter, Vice Rector of the BOV, will attend the senate’s April 24th meeting. Senators should send any questions they have for Dr. Gunter to Dr. Frederick, frederjx@jmu.edu.
 - 3. The April BOV meeting has been moved to May 2nd. Faculty members up for Tenure and Promotion will receive notification of the BOV actions on the President’s recommendations after the May 2nd BOV meeting. Please inform colleagues in your units who are up for T&P of this change so that they do not worry.
- ❖ **As the hour was late and the agenda showed no further business of substance from any of the committees the meeting was adjourned at 5:18PM.**