



## FACULTY SENATE

### Minutes

Thursday, October 4, 2007

Taylor 306

**Called to order at 3:33PM:** (In attendance: Andre, Borg, Castle, Cobb, Cockburn, Cote, DePaolis, Fiegener, Frederick, Garren, Gilje, Greene, Hall, Harris, Henriksen, Hobson, Hoeltzel, Hughes, Jerome, Kastendiek, Macgillivray, Maiewski, Minor, O'Neill, Parsons, Riordan, Rudmin, Scherpereel, Shelton, Slade, Spear, Szmagaj, Wingfield, Wood [for Mitri], Wright. Guests: Gonzalez and Wheeler)

**Approval of the Minutes:** approved unanimously

#### **Provost's Report:**

- \*A new suite of offices for the Faculty Senate is forthcoming in a location that should improve senate visibility. The space will also include a storage area and a conference room.
- \*The provost and the provost's office support recruitment for the ombudsman position.
- \*The provost stresses that Departments ought to have clear merit pay standards and an equitable and transparent process, based on faculty activity plans. He gets concerns each year and does want to hear about that.
- \*The state financial situation appears a bit better – now a lower, 6% reduction is required.
- \*The Board of Visitors discussed budget and tuition, and there is commitment on the part of the Board to counterbalance cuts with tuition revenue if necessary, Dr. Rose again reiterated at the Board meeting that we will not grow without funds to do so.
- \*Despite cuts, we will still be seeing capital projects over the next few years that have already been “in the pipeline.”
- \*Recruitment and retention of faculty will be an increasingly thorny issue as demand grows and people retire and supply does not meet demand. The provosts suggest that the university may need to think about other ways to address shortage (bringing back retirees, using more MA s as support, etc.)

#### **Old Business:**

Steve Garren (Mathematics and Statistics) asks that senators read the proposals and arguments posted on his website (<http://www.math.jmu.edu/~garrenst/senate482.dir/>) and talk to their colleagues. There will be formal motions at the next meeting. Arch Harris (Computer Science) suggested that an alternative for colleagues to consider with respect to the WP/WF proposals is to have consistent standards on the WP/WF administered from “one spot” (as when the old “W” was administered after the withdrawal date by the Registrar’s Office) rather than having faculty retain the options.

#### **New Business:**

None

**Speaker's Report:**

\*From the BOV meeting – The Board received a report on the Learning Resources Center's growth; and the main issue of the meeting was the budget, which was covered already by the provost's budget discussion.

\*From the Faculty Senate of VA meeting – This meeting was held at VA Tech, and a resolution and plaque were given from the Senate to VA Tech offering support and respect. There is another VA law on textbooks as of last year requiring faculty members to affirmatively acknowledge their bookstore's quoted price on the books ordered, and the Senate feels that adhering to this policy may help prevent additional textbook laws that negatively impact our pedagogy. (At this point, Susan Wheeler also noted that it may be helpful to know that late orders and modifications can change textbook pricing.) The update on the lobbyist proposal is that the Senate cannot hire one as the Faculty Senate of VA, but there is instead a move to establish the VA Higher Education Association, a separate entity which would serve as the legislative arm of Faculty Senate of VA but which would play other roles as well, allowing membership other than faculty members. Arch Harris asked about the connection between the role of this new organization and the AAUP. Joan said the Faculty Senate of VA is distancing itself somewhat from AAUP because AAUP backed out of its support of a recent bill supported by the Senate. John Scherpereel asked what was moving the lobbyist idea away from just being for the Faculty Senate of VA (Joan said apparently it's a legal constraint and she'll try to get more details.) There was also a follow up question about whether the need for a lobbyist exists because the JMU administration cannot do some things. Doug Brown responded, noting that some issues are not about a single university and that different institutions might even be in conflict. Joan added that faculty have some things in common statewide. Finally, the issue of counting faculty summer salaries as part of retirement calculations is not supported by VA faculty Senate because some institutions/individuals do not want attention drawn to this money.

\*Ombudsman position update – We have information from the ombudsman at UVA, and we have permission to use his wording as we describe our position and job announcement.

**Treasurer's Report:**

\*Flower fund is now at \$5887, after \$335 in dues was collected and \$ 300 in expenditures.

\*There are new forms – use the Request Form on the Faculty Senate website for flower fund requests. (Some senators preferred that all requests come from senators to aid in keeping records, but others preferred it to be less centralized.)

**Report of the Faculty Concerns Committee:**

\*Information on dining services – faculty get a 5% discount when they use flex in dining services.

\* The committee offered a motion to resolve that departments should be in compliance with the faculty handbook guidelines for annual evaluations and merit pay distribution guidelines. A question then arose about whether departments can put some additional constraints in place beyond those in individual activity plans. Susan Wheeler felt that departments could add some guidelines, and that negotiation would then occur within the parameters of those rules. As for extreme cases (e.g., requirements that some area must be X%), she said a Department Head would want to follow guidelines but should also be able to make special arrangements in special circumstances. Arch Harris added was on the handbook committee when the guidelines were formed, and he felt that exact guidelines would be in conflict with the intentions of the committee; Doug Brown agreed that the idea was that there would have to be

flexibility for the negotiation. Susan Wheeler also recalled that there was a thought that a department might have “defaults” but still allow these to be negotiable. The whole idea of predicting numbers then came under discussion and the ability to re-negotiate became the important factor in resolving this, although limitations of rigid standards and rules was also raised as a concern. Next, the deadlines in the motion and the need for the Senate to have all this information required in the motion were both questioned. Someone asked why this is not the Deans' concern rather than that of the faculty Senate. The committee noted that the issue was brought to them as a faculty concern and that it is in the interests of a good working environment and faculty retention. There was then a move to move the deadline for changes to mid/end April. Doug Brown added that has already alerted the deans that he expects the departments to have guidelines, and he would be willing to request the existing ones immediately. One senator was concerned about how one knows what a department's pool of money is. There was also a question of procedure -- couldn't “machinery cause salary levels to get out of touch with reality?” In other words, young faculty getting higher salaries and the best evaluations and highest raises could then increase problems with retention. It was pointed out that this question didn't speak to the motion on the floor. The amendment to change the January deadline to mid April was moved and passed unanimously. The amendment to get the current information from the provost by Dec. 1 was also moved and passed. The motion itself is to be voted on in November, the provost's office plans to begin gathering information immediately.

**Report of the Student Relations Committee:**

No report, pending new SGA president.

**Report of the Academic Policies Committee:**

\*On a motion of support for a proposed Honor Code XF that could appear on students' transcripts. Information related to this proposal is at Steve Garren's website (see above), and Chris Campbell from the Honors Council was also present at the meeting to give details. There would be a note on transcripts explaining the XF grade, and XF would only be an option in formal cases. Its use would be determined by the hearing panel, and students could appeal, though it would be automatically added to cases coupled with suspension or expulsion. XF would stay on the transcript until one year past graduation or withdrawal, at which point a student might request its removal. There was some discussion of the one year policy, leading to a proposed amendment that the petition to remove the XF after a year require a justification and/or supporting evidence. The Senate will be voting on the motion of support next month; get feedback from colleagues.

\*The committee is also continuing working on an excused absence policy. Claudia O'Neill is re-drafting an earlier policy draft to include additional and more clearly defined limitations.

**Report of the Budget Committee:**

Most issues were covered in other reports. The budget this year is not bad. Next year could possibly be worse. The committee recommends starting a dialogue about faculty budget priorities.

**Report of the Faculty Appeals Committee:**

Nothing to report

**Meeting adjourned at 5:38pm.**