



FACULTY SENATE

Minutes

Thursday, December 6, 2007

Taylor 306

In Attendance: Andre, Borg, Castle, Cobb, Cockburn, Cote, Fiegener, Frederick, Garren, Gilje, Greene, Hall, Harris, Hobson, Hoeltzel, Hughes, Jerome, Kastendiek, Macgillivray, Minor, Mitri, Parsons, Riordan, Sargent-Beasley, Scherpereel, Shelton, Sierra, Slade, Spear, Whittaker, Wingfield, Wright. *Guests:* Teresa Gonzalez

Called to Order 3:30pm

Approval of the Minutes: approved

Guest Speaker : Mr. Michael Walsh, Director of Admissions (with Mr. Art Dean, Office of Admissions and Dr. David Owusu-Ansah, History)

- * The discussion of admissions included information about the emphasis on diversity in admissions, geographic areas targeted (including Richmond), the Professors in Residence program, a 6% increase in applications from multi-cultural students and some increase also in acceptance numbers, the need for more financial aid for needy students, and the issue of access to computers for these HS students. Our biggest competitors for multicultural students are UVA and William and Mary. More money for transfers would help too.
- * Question from faculty senator: Can only tenured faculty participate in the Faculty in Residence program. The Admissions Office advises checking with one's department. The Foreign Language senator mentioned their department has established a "shadow day" where a HS student shadows a JMU student.
- * Information on the admissions process:
 - 97% of admissions based on curriculum, grades in core, SAT/ACT
 - marginal groups "go to committee"
 - favoritism for students competitive in science/math (4 sciences needed)
 - AP, IBs, Honors important
 - Our students have taken an above average curriculum for their school
 - The other 3% of admits are for talent (arts, sports - more arts than sports) or are "Extraordinaries." Admissions will work with departments to define "talent admits" in their area.
 - The Admissions Office believes curriculum and grades to be the best predictors of success in terms of graduation rate, high SAT/ACT is somewhat less tied to graduation rates, though the issue of the possible transfer of the strongest students is less (males with over 1300 SAT often transfer after freshman year)
- * Joan Frederick asked about the early admissions controversies. We have early *action*, non-binding (unlike early decision); we also set the early action standards higher than regular admits

Provost's Report (Dr. Douglas Brown):

- * Provided some additional VA context for diversity initiative needs
- * The Academic council passed on D- grade council
- * Discussed some issues related to new Vice Provost positions, especially to

their role in the tenure/promotion process, saying that the faculty handbook needs to be revised to reflect the fact that deans will report to a vice-provost, but that functionally, tenure/promotion and some salary issues end with the dean anyway, unless there is dissent.

- * The Governor announced the groundbreaking of SRI and spoke about economic development in the valley and its importance to the state. The Governor also said JMU has the best collaborative model for research and development (that model being to collaborate with Higher Ed, be innovative enough to spin off, and then share benefits with state and with higher education.) Doug feels this bodes well for the Governor's support for the role of higher education in the economic viability of the state. SRI operation will begin building immediate (RT 11 North). On Dec. 17th, the governor will present his budget, and we will see his plans for Higher ed at that time. Tax revenues for the state will also be calculated at that time.
- * Miller Hall opens in January, the new library will be finished in May and open for business in August, and the new faculty center open at same time on the third floor of Carrier library.
- * The list of universities with which we are in competition for students will be given to the steering committee
- * Question from faculty senator: Why didn't vice provost positions require a search? Doug responded that these are his immediate staff and just have work related to tenure, etc. as he delegates it and has always been so. Vice provosts are Doug's "key planning group," related to how he sees his vice presidents. "There are many aspects of the faculty handbook that are out of date wrt to how we actually operate"
- * Question from faculty senator: As we are increasing enrollment, doesn't seem dormitories have kept pace. Have we been considering the impacts of this? A bunch of new dorms are in line to be built at this point. Closing down the whole campus to traffic and creating high speed transportation are relevant issues; we also could create learning communities off campus to make them more part of the university. We'll be lucky to create enough dormitories to handle freshman and sophmores. Doug says he believes this campus has to be shut down to student traffic.

Old Business:

- * Discussion of the WP/WF proposal, **which will be voted on at the January meeting.** Steve Garren and Sharon Cote provided handouts describing some arguments for and against the proposed change. Steve also provided some data on faculty use of these grades and of the regular withdrawal grade: WF under 0.2% and WP 0.25% and 3% for Ws. There was some senate discussion with viewpoints ranging from a desire to move the control of this option to a central office or individual (Theresa Gonzalez noted that no office currently exists to handle this, to a discussion of departments that have standardized the use of these grades within their own programs, to expressions of concern over the possible loss of individual flexibility in using these grades. Arch Harris presented the view that individual faculty are not equipped to assess extraordinary circumstances for the use of these grades when a student doesn't need to withdraw from all courses.

New Business:

- * What are the privacy constraints on background checks on students/alumni seeking high security jobs? There was discussion and the issue was turned over to the faculty concerns committee.

Speaker's Report:

- * Senate meetings change to last Thursday of the month for spring semester
- * Ombudsman business still ongoing
- * There are speakers in the works for next meeting also
- * Joan will be attending the legislature for "advocacy day" the first Thursday of Spring session.
- * From Joe Spears as substitute at Faculty Senate of VA meeting: Expect Virginia 21 (Student lobbying group) to be checking on textbook laws implementation. We're seeing the first large pushes for assessment at college level to assess assessment, which could affect assessment issues on campus. The lobbyist issue is a legal gray area because state agencies cannot lobby. An alternative is a VA higher education association – with its own mission statement etc. It would be broad-based (could include anyone interested in higher education at any level). We could build a VA chapter off another organization would not work as well. Also, faculty members can/do go to legislature. The state faculty senate constitution was amended to allow the speaker to reimburse faculty representatives of that body for doing this.

Report of the Budget Committee:

- * The real budget story is not together yet, still just proposals, and we're still figuring out how to know what's going on. What do faculty think about the cutting of recruitment money for new faculty? Feedback on that and other budget issues welcome.

Report of the Student Relations Committee (presented by Joan Frederick):

- * The committee met with Lee Brooks on the issue of faculty advising. He suggested student advisors as a supplement to freshman advising by faculty.
- * The Senate could have a student representative (non-voting) on the Faculty Senate. Do we want this? ASK YOUR COLLEAGUES about this.

Report of the Academic Policies Committee:

- * The Thanksgiving/Fall schedule issue – possible alternatives designed by Claudia O'Neill
- * A proposal passed within the committee wrt to the Monday after Thanksgiving. (Not to prevent a full week option discussion later.) The SGA, however, opposed this idea by wide margin. Students really like having that fall break and want us to survey faculty and students before passing. ANOTHER ISSUE FOR SENATORS TO DISCUSS WITH THEIR COLLEAGUES

Report of the Faculty Concerns Committee:

- * Nothing new, but an update on the examination of current program implementations of faculty handbook requirements concerning yearly evaluations and merit pay distribution

Report of the Faculty Appeals Committee: (no report)**Treasurer's Report:**

Flower fund November deposits \$475, expenses \$150, ending balance, \$7456
Senate university accounts: personal fund at \$4441 and non-personal fund at \$2865

Meeting adjourned at 5:49pm.