

# **Faculty Assembly**

May 1, 2012

Library Conference Room

Ralph Olliges, Faculty Senate President, called the meeting to order.

## **Announcements**

Ralph reminded everyone of the last Faculty Social of the year this Friday, May 4th.

Ralph announced that Karen Burch is working on a video tribute to give to Neil George as a retirement gift and has asked for individuals to videotape any comments on May 2nd or May 3rd.

The completed committee election list has been sent out and the deadline for self-nomination for appointed committees is Monday, May 7th.

Barrett Baebler announced that for the undergraduate Curriculum Committee, the deadline for catalog submission has been moved to the middle of October.

## **Proposed University Handbook Language for Academic Administrators**

Faculty were asked to hold their questions until the presentation was complete. Presentation included information on Proposed University Handbook Language for Academic Administrators, to replace current language on "Administrative Faculty" under Part II of the University Handbook, Proposed University Handbook Language for Department Name Changes and Similar Modifications, and Proposed amendment to the section on Schools and Colleges section of the University Handbook.

The presentation began with a historical context of the Faculty Assembly. Several decades ago, the Faculty Assembly was called Faculty Constituent Assembly and administrators did not attend or vote as it was for full-time faculty members only. The deans had full-time faculty status and voting rights. Dottie Englis proposed to make President Meyers an ex-officio non-voting member and the faculty agreed. Not long after, she brought the same proposal forward for Neil George, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the faculty agreed. Many of the first administrators came from full-time faculty and when they went back to full-time faculty, they retained their voting rights. Those hired from outside Webster were not given status or voting rights. When they were hired from outside, they went through the procedure of applying for status through CRF.

When President Stroble was hired, the Senate was approached and CRF approved her for faculty status and voting rights. There was not a procedure in place for doing this, but CRF approved it. More faculty have complained about this and CRF has had trouble with it as well, as there are no procedures in place. The Senate studied the language in our University Handbook as well as those of other institutions in crafting this proposal.

The proposed University Handbook Language regarding Academic Administrators was discussed. Similar proposed language was drafted and taken to the Provost for feedback. His primary concern was that people would not have voting rights within departments. The Senate felt that it could be a conflict of interest if Academic Administrators had voting rights within departments. The Senate discussed this proposal over three different meetings and considered all angles. It was decided that the Senate needed to hear from the Faculty Assembly on this issue. If this resolution is passed, it will not immediately become University Handbook Language and will have to be approved by the Administrative Council.

A motion was made and seconded to replace the current University Handbook Language on Academic Administrators with the proposed University Handbook Language on Academic Administrators presented at today's meeting.

The question was asked how many people would lose voting rights with the proposed language. Approximately five people would lose voting rights (directors at other campuses).

The statement was made that when searching for a candidate, it should be decided in advance whether or not that individual would have faculty status. President Stroble was given faculty status and she told us that she would offer the Provost faculty status as well.

We could make changes in the University Handbook and unless some sort of consensus is reached, then there really is no point. In the past, it has not been an issue when administration has voted in the Faculty Assembly so why not limit the percentage of administrators that can vote? Why can't we work with the administration to find a happy medium?

With regard to the University Handbook, it has had a continuous existence for 40 years with various modifications. The administration has accepted most modifications and, in various legal cases, the administration has assumed that the University Handbook is the governing document.

Regarding negotiation with the administration, in the early 80s when the University Handbook Language on status was redone, it bounced back and forth from the Faculty Assembly to the administration for a couple of years on an issue that was more important.

There is concern about hiring associate deans from within the faculty where they have that role for 3 or more years and then return to the department that they came out of. The feeling is that those individuals should retain voting rights on issues that will affect their long-term employment situation.

Question called and seconded to stop the discussion on proposed University Handbook Language on Academic Administrators and move ahead with a vote on the proposal. All were in favor.

A vote was taken by secret ballot with the following outcome: 45 yes, 22 no, 4 abstentions, 4 blank; Motion carried.

### **Proposed University Handbook Language for Department Name Changes and Similar Modifications and Proposed amendment to the section on Schools and Colleges section of the University Handbook**

This has been discussed by the Senate for at least two years. The issue that came to the Senate over a department's name and whether or not it could be changed. This could also involve relocation of academic programs (i.e., Civil Rights). There is currently no Handbook Language to deal with this issue.

A statement was made that it could be seen as cost-effective to combine departments. Even the name is significant because you could start selling naming rights. It is your professional identity especially since Mercer is tied to your profession.

The question was asked that if this proposed language were to go into the University Handbook, what is to prevent the administration from changing department names? The administration has asked for a response from faculty on various things and it is extremely important that the faculty talk through the issues and reach a consensus.

A vote was taken on whether to implement the suggested amendments to the language; motion failed.

A vote was taken on keeping the original language in the proposed document; motion carried.

### **Additional Announcements**

Ralph announced that Parental Leave was put into the University Handbook and the link will be added to the Human Resources website. Even though the University Handbook is not accessible off campus, the Human Resources website is.

Assuming that it is approved by the administration, appointments are needed for the Gender Equity Task Force.

With no further business, the assembly adjourned at 4:32 p.m.