

Faculty Assembly

September 11, 2012

Library Conference Room

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

Announcements

Faculty socials will be held on September 21st, October 26th, and November 16th from 3:30-5:30 p.m. in the Alumni House.

Fall Institute is October 5th and 6th at Pere Marquette. If you have not already done so, please return the reservation form.

New Faculty

Ralph asked the new faculty present to stand and introduce themselves.

Wellness Committee Update

Eric Goedereis and Troy Luh gave an update as to what the Wellness Committee has been working on. The committee is trying to create and promote a wellness culture. There is a wellness blog, email distribution list, ongoing weight loss program (48 participated last year; 91 are participating this year). The committee is subsidizing memberships with Weight Watchers and looking at subsidizing membership with fitness clubs. The Wellness Committee has been in operation for two years and is making a difference that can be seen in health care costs next year. They asked for greater faculty participation on the health survey that is sent out each year. Anyone who would like to help the committee would be welcomed.

Eric and Troy reminded everyone about the upcoming Wellness Fair to be held on September 19th from 11:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. in the University Center and Quad. Free biometric screenings will be performed by an R.N. If you would like to have a screening performed, you will need to pre-register on the website. There will also be fitness demonstrations, food samples, chair massages, and prizes awarded every half hour.

Curriculum Committee

Jeff Carter reported that the Curriculum Committee membership has been raised to fifteen (15) members with two (2) members from each school/college. He announced that all of the new curriculum forms are now available online, in PDF format, on the Curriculum Committee's website.

For any changes to make it into the 2013-2014 catalog, the deadline is Fall Break (4.5 weeks). Items will still be accepted after that date, but may not make it into the new catalog. The new forms on the website need to be submitted as the old forms will no longer be accepted. If an old form is submitted, it will be returned for completion using the new form. The new forms are really easy to use. The forms contain questions such as "does this affect anyone else?" and "have you counseled with that person?" on each page. Be thorough and ask questions in advance.

The question was asked if the language in a course description would go to the Curriculum Committee? That is a Department Chair/Academic Affairs issue.

Another question asked was if the glitch between the online and printed catalog has been fixed? The Catalog Revision Committee has been meeting for a year now and there is talk of purchasing software that would rectify that problem.

Electronic Elections

Marty Smith stated that about a year ago, the Faculty Assembly asked for electronic elections. The Senate has been working with Information Technology to implement an electronic voting system. Information Technology was not able to provide a system that was sustainable. Their system would require countless hours of their time for each election.

Alyssa Jones and Angie Ruble met with Ralph, Marty, and Cynthia this summer to demonstrate two different voting systems that closely matched our needs. One was free (BallotBin), but included ads. The other (BallotBox) is .88 cents per voter with unlimited elections for one year. There is a minimum fee of \$250.

Marty Smith and Cynthia Pirkle were given access as administrators to both voting systems and had a chance to play around with both systems. BallotBin was very cluttered and did not even look like a ballot. Also, for every election with BallotBin, each person would receive a new ID to use. It was decided that BallotBin would not meet our needs.

In BallotBox, a few sample ballots were created and an attempt was made to mimic the paper ballots that are sent out for elections. Five Senators were sent the test ballot and we received positive feedback on the ballot and interface. With our unique elections, we can set a minimum/maximum number of choices for faculty to vote on. If a person selects too many nominees, it will flag the ballot as invalid. When a user has finished voting, they will be allowed to preview their ballot and can go back and change any response before submission. Once you have cast your ballot, users receive an email that informs you that your ballot has been cast. As long as the election is still open, a user can go back and discard their ballot and receive another email with a link for a new ballot.

Voters will be notified by email anytime an election is active. We are using Webster email addresses for electronic elections. Prior to the first election, faculty have to activate their account. An email will be sent containing a link to activate the account. If you do not register and activate your account, you will not be able to vote. We will no longer be sending out paper ballots.

A question was asked that if someone does not activate their account, will they still receive an email about an upcoming election? We are waiting to hear back from BallotBox on this issue.

During an election, any administrator of BallotBox can go in and see the percentage of those that have participated. Once an election is complete, a quorum of administrators is needed to unlock the ballots. BallotBox will also allow us to export all elections digitally to save for the future.

We have always sent out a paper survey for the institute and this year we will be sending out the survey electronically to get everyone prepared for voting.

At one time, there was a question as to who is eligible to vote. Has this issue been settled and if not, why? It was reported that the University Handbook is unclear who is eligible to vote. It is not in the Handbook because it takes faculty and administrators to approve Handbook changes and that has not been done.

Are we using electronic voting to vote on procedures to replace this body in terms of the Handbook? It is assumed that if we meet as an Assembly, we vote in the Assembly unless someone makes a motion to take the vote outside of the Assembly.

Strategic Workgroups

Dr. Julian Schuster joined the Assembly via teleconference to discuss the workgroups as he is

currently in China. Dr. Schuster stated that he is delighted to speak to the Faculty Assembly regarding the workgroups. He reported that the workgroups are in place to align our goals and remain true to the mission, vision, and values of the institution.

Ninety-five (95) percent of our revenue comes from tuition and we, therefore, need to be a student centered institution. In serving students, we are offering academic quality and an opportunity to be a lifelong friend and part of our community. At convocation, President Stroble mentioned continuous challenges and part of that comes from enrollment. The focus is not solely on enrollment management or admissions, etc. but on a collaboration of the entire university. By doing that, we are going to encompass all the vital parts of the university and provide the best services to our students.

Diverse students require a diverse faculty and Webster will continue to have searches to bring new faculty and colleagues to our campus. We want to reach out to the most diverse to attract those individuals so that Webster can be true to our values.

There are a couple of other workgroups that deal with structural realignment. We need to look at how our current structure is aligned with our mission, vision, and values to best serve our current and potential students.

The workgroup dealing with shared governance needs to work together as a collective group to provide the best possible environment. With regard to the University Handbook, that document needs to be updated. In doing that, we will need to see what is working well and what is no longer working well. In order to withstand the test of time and truly operate as one University, we need to address the salient issues and work together. Some of the issues to look at are: role of staff members, how do we deal with colleagues at our international campuses, Faculty Senate, etc. This will not be done in isolation, but in an open forum with open discussion.

The timeframe for the workgroups is one academic year. We will do our best to accomplish the work by the end of this academic year. As of today, 220 people have signed up for the workgroups.

At this point in the meeting, the floor was opened up to faculty to ask Dr. Schuster questions about the workgroups:

Q: Will the groups be policy making or information gathering?

A: We are recommending complete measures to undertake salient issues as focusing around groups. Relevant data will be provided to the workgroups and the groups will then analyze that data.

Q: How and by whom will the composition of the workgroups be chosen?

A: Every attempt will be made to meet the choice of the individual volunteering for a particular group. The volunteers and groups will be entered into an Excel spreadsheet and the administration will look at the data and honor colleagues' first choice of workgroup. For those that need to be moved to another group, individuals will be engaged before those changes are made. Dr. Schuster and President Stroble will ultimately choose the groups in the spirit of working together.

Q: How many people will each workgroup contain?

A: This issue will be dealt with after the administration has a change to assess the Excel spreadsheet data.

Q: Concerning the recommendations that are the outcome of the workgroups, how will decisions be made and vetted among constituent groups? Will the recommendations go back to the various constituent groups?

A: The existing arrangement at the University will be followed. The bottom line is that we need to work together to reach an arrangement that best aligns with our mission, vision, and values. We need to find a way to bring the community together to best serve the students. No decision will be made unilaterally.

With no further business, the assembly adjourned at 4:01 p.m.