

MINUTES/FACULTY SENATE MEETING

February 2, 2012

The Senate met on Thursday, February 2nd, 2012 at the Alumni House

Ralph Olliges, Faculty Senate President, Presiding

Members Present: Jef Awada, Glen Bauer, Maxine Bauermeister, Carla Colletti, Don Conway-Long, Susan Heady, Andrea Rothbart, J.P. Palmer-Schuyler, Stephanie Schroeder, Marty Smith, Eileen Solomon, Keith Welsh, Gwyneth Williams

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the January 19th Faculty Senate meeting minutes as amended. All were in favor; motion carried.

Communications with the Media Discussion

A student reporter from the Journal requested to attend the Faculty Senate meeting for the administration policies on communications with the media portion of the meeting. After discussion, a vote was taken to allow the student to attend the meeting for the media portion only and to allow her to record the discussion without recording names; all were in favor.

In early December, a meeting was held between the student Journal advisor and Barbara O'Malley to explain that the administration was putting into place a new policy, to include Journal access, which states that University personnel, if contacted by the media, should direct the media inquiry to Public Relations. It is felt that the policy is stifling an individual's right to speak/give an opinion. Policy allows for those that are an expert on a topic to speak, but to also let the Public Relations office know. Some felt that the policy lumps everyone together. Faculty are about the pursuit of education and this policy seems to be a contradiction of Academic Freedom. Faculty, staff, and students should not be inhibited about speaking to the media on a topic of which they may have knowledge that could be valuable to the community. There is a difference in speaking on behalf of the University versus speaking about the University. Transparency has been touted quite a bit by the administration and this policy has raised concern about Academic Freedom for faculty and students in an environment that is supposed to be conducive to free discussion.

With that in mind, the following motion was made:

The Faculty Senate is deeply distressed by the implementation of the new media policy because it is a direct contravention of Academic Freedom and violates the administration's stated goal of transparency. We, therefore, request that the policy be suspended until such time as a policy appropriate to the free exchange of ideas be developed and approved by the faculty.

All were in favor unanimously; motion carried. The media policy will be discussed at the February 14th Faculty Assembly meeting.

Spring Institute

A draft of the program for the upcoming Spring Institute was distributed and discussion followed. The theme is the past and future of Webster University as well as the celebration of the career of Neil George. Several names were suggested to be contacted for historical information on the University. More will be shared as information is gathered.

Committee Appointments

Ralph is waiting for confirmation of a replacement on the IRB Committee to replace Susan Seymour for the Spring 2012 semester as she is now the Acting Academic Director of the Thailand campus and will not be available.

Faculty Assembly Agenda

Ralph shared a draft of the agenda for the February 14th Faculty Assembly meeting for approval/suggestions. The topics for the agenda will be: 1) Electronic elections; 2) Overview of GCP courses for Fall 2012; 3) Webster website update and information; 4) Salary & Fringe Benefit update; 5) Update on new media policy.

Committee Update: What constitutes a faculty member?

The subcommittee will be meeting with Julian Schuster next week to discuss their concerns of granting faculty status to newly hired administrators and the fact that this type of appointment contravenes the current University Handbook language.

GCP Communication

In the interest of transparency, the GCP Committee reports that a waiver was approved for the School of Education in Teacher Education for the high credit major. The committee also approved a course (Philosophy 1010) that has no breadth area and is not in the middle eight courses, but is being assessed for two skills (critical thinking and written communication). One other course (Writing 1010) was approved with no breadth area and is for students to count as one skill on their transcript.

Equity Committee Discussion

As a follow up to a motion made at the November Faculty Assembly meeting, an email was sent to several people about the past history of equity panels to gather historical information and makeup of past committees. Past Equity Committee was made up of 5 faculty, 3 administrators (from finance, academic affairs, and institutional analysis), and 3 ex-officio administrators. In order to move forward, out of Faculty Senate, into a working committee the makeup should be: one faculty representative from women's studies, one faculty representative from Salary & Fringe Benefits, and 3 at large faculty representatives. It was suggested that an email be sent out asking for self-nominations and then faculty representatives would be appointed to the committee. A note should be sent to Julian Schuster, with the committee makeup, stating that this is who the Faculty Senate would like to see serve on the Equity Committee.

Bookstore

A complaint was voiced regarding the bookstore not ordering enough books for most courses every semester and leaving students without books for 2 – 3 weeks of an 8-week course; this is unacceptable as it is impeding the educational process. What can be done to ensure that an appropriate number of books are ordered and available for students to purchase? It was decided that Ralph will send an email of inquiry to Julian Schuster and Greg Gunderson regarding the complaint and stating that we are not certain where to start with this problem, but it is a serious problem and negatively affects students in an 8-week course.

The meeting adjourned at 3:17 p.m.