The Faculty Senate met Tuesday, 5 October at 5:00 PM in the Addlestone Library, following a tour of the new building. Speaker Bob Mignone called the meeting to order and invited corrections to the September minutes. Hearing none, the Senate agreed to their approval.

Speaker’s Report
Mr. Mignone thanked Susan Morrison for serving as Parliamentarian for this afternoon’s meeting, since regular Parliamentarian George Pothering was unable to be present. He began his own report by noting that the next Senate meeting was scheduled for November 2nd. Mr. Mignone told Senators that this meeting date was chosen as part of a Fall meeting schedule designed to avoid conflicts with religious holidays or College breaks. However, Mr. Mignone said, this date happens to be Election Day. Mr. Mignone alerted Senators that he was considering whether it would be possible to postpone this November 2nd meeting, in order to ensure that all Senators had ample opportunity to vote that afternoon. “We’ll keep the deadline for the agenda” for this meeting, Mr. Mignone said, but will make the decision about postponing the actual meeting after all agenda items have been received. He told Senators that they would be informed of any changes.

He next gave the Senate some information about the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education, for which an election would be held at today’s meeting. He detailed for the Senate the information the Provost had given to the Committee on Nominations and Elections regarding the composition of this new committee and its charge. The charge is in three parts, he said. The Committee will first determine the learning goals of the College’s general education curriculum, then seek out and identify 6-8 innovative and effective programs at other institutions that fulfill these goals. Third, the Committee will develop a general education program for the College of Charleston, and this proposal should include an assessment of its costs. The first two parts should be completed by May 2005, and the last part by May 2006, Mr. Mignone said. As to the composition of the committee, the Provost has specified the following: 5 faculty elected by the Senate, 2 other faculty appointed by the Provost, 2 department chairs, one dean, one other faculty member, and one or two students. In addition, the Provost will be on this committee, and the Speaker will serve “as an observer,” he said. Committee members will total 13-15 members.

Mr. Mignone next informed Senators that an Associate Vice President for the Academic Experience is expected to be hired shortly. Two candidates were on campus recently for interviews, an appointment should be announced “in the next couple of weeks.” On the state legislative, there is little to report, the Speaker noted. The Council of Chairs sent in its recommendations (on how to replace Performance Funding with a different formula) in June, but no action has been taken yet.

Glen Lesses ( Philosophy and Religious Studies) noted that he found the new Gen Ed committee’s charge “slightly worrisome.” Although the Provost has said she believes that curriculum should originate with faculty, her charge seems to presume that we need to
replace our current program. “Maybe we do,” said Mr. Lesses, but it seems premature to
conclude this. Mr. Mignone said that the charge was to develop a proposal for faculty to
vote on. “I expect a full discussion, first of the learning objectives and then of the
proposal itself.” Tom Kunkle (Mathematics) asked how the actual proposal would be
voted on. Would anything more that a simple majority be required, he wondered. Mr.
Mignone said that we would follow our own bylaws on this matter. Program changes do
not require a super-majority. “So we could have a situation where it’s 51-49 again,” Mr.
Kunkle said (referring to the Gen Ed proposal of 1999 which ultimately failed by 4
votes). Mr. Mignone noted that this close vote occurred when the proposal was brought
before the full faculty after it had been approved by the Senate. Bylaws allow the faculty
as a whole to petition for such a vote in response to any vote the Senate takes.

New Business
Committee on Nominations and Elections

Rick Heldrich, Chair, and other members of the Committee passed out printed ballots for
the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education. The following faculty were elected:

Deborah Boyle; Philosophy & Religious Studies; School of Humanities and Social
Sciences
Julia Eichelberger; English; School of Humanities and Social Sciences
Alex Kasman; Mathematics; School of Sciences and Mathematics
Susan Kattwinkel; Theater; School of the Arts
Allan Strand; Biology; School of Sciences and Mathematics

Curriculum Committee

Deborah Boyle, Chair, presented several proposals for new or changed courses. The
following were approved immediately.
F04-01 BIOL 339 Dinosaur Biology – New Course Proposal
F04-06 EDFS 460 Student Teaching in the Content Area – Proposal to Change a Course
F04-07 EDFS 440 Student Teaching in Special Education – Proposal to Change a Course
F04-08 EDFS 330 Classroom Management – Proposal to Change a Course

Next, Ms. Boyle offered a proposal for a new major, a Bachelor of Science in Discovery
Informatics, along with a minor in the same area.– New Minor Proposal. She noted that
this is an interdisciplinary program designed to teach students “to use advanced statistical
methods to mine data sets.” In the major, students also choose “a cognate area,” a specific
discipline to which they apply their skill, but the minor does not require a cognate area,
she said.

Mr. Mignone invited discussion of this proposal, starting with the major, and a very long
exchange ensued. Sam Hines (Dean, School of Humanities and Social Sciences) spoke
against the proposal. While he appreciated the hard work the committee had done to put
this proposal together, he said, he was still concerned about the number of hours the
major required: 67-72 hours, depending on the cognate discipline selected. “My objection
is not to the concept of the informatics program,” Mr. Hines said, but to “a continuing
withering away of the fundamental concept of the liberal arts and sciences.” The major
“is but a part” of this education, and the general education requirements and the elective
components are extremely important. Mr. Hines suggested that the graduate-level
expertise being required by this proposal was what concerned him. The College “needs to
focus its attention on whether or not we really want to be a traditional liberal arts and
sciences” institution, he said. Norine Noonan (Dean, School of Science and
Mathematics) said that this proposal “was viewed as a way to broaden and not narrow
students’ education.” The need for numerical and computational expertise is increasing,
she said, “and without it our students will be at an increasing disadvantage.” She spoke of
the variety of cognate disciplines that a student could choose, including Sociology,
PEHD, and Business. “We didn’t ask for any waivers,” she said, “so all students will be
able to take the general education requirements.” Even now, Biochemistry requires 76
hours, Computer Science requires 71, Geology 66, she noted.

Susan Farrell (English) noted that this major proposal includes 7 new courses, some with
titles very similar to existing courses. “I have a hard time voting on this without seeing
what these courses contain,” she said, especially if this is the first undergraduate major in
the country in this subject area. Hugh Wilder (Philosophy and Religious Studies) said that
the College has “long had an understanding about the maximum number of hours for a
major.” Exceptions had been made if the major also satisfied accreditation requirements,
or if students had the option to take a comparable major with fewer hours. He said he was
not sure that this program conformed to any of these guidelines. Ms. Noonan responded
that students did still have options and that many existing majors had “hidden
prerequisites.” Claire Curtis (Political Science) asked why the major and the minor were
being proposed simultaneously, since other new majors often began by proving
themselves as minors. Chris Starr (Computer Science) said that the task force “never
considered a minor until later on in our discussion,” when they decided that the minor
“would be something that could help other majors. We think it is a reasonable package
because we have to create so few new courses,” he said.

Reid Wiseman (Biology) asked how the major’s name was chosen. Jim Young
(Mathematics) explained that “Informatics” in some countries means computer science;
elsewhere it means library cataloguing, so they needed to make sure their term meant
something different. As to the new course proposals, “we apologize for not having them
today,” he said. The new courses have very little overlap with existing courses, he said.
“For example, there is no exposure to Bayesian statistics in our existing courses.”

Joe Kelly (English) asked if this course was really similar to existing majors in the hours
required. “When I look at the catalog, Computer Science is 40 hours. Where are you
getting 70 hours?” he asked. Mr. Starr replied that students in computer science also had
to take math courses, so those courses were part of the total. Julia Eichelberger (English)
asked whether the new proposal had other hidden prerequisites, since its first math
requirement was Math 220. Mr. Starr said that for this major, “we’ll be recruiting
students who already are ready to take Math 220” because of taking calculus in high
school.
Glen Lesses asked what students would be taking this major and why they would not be interested in any of the other majors now at the College. “Our evidence is indirect,” Mr. Starr replied. “We see a trend in students who want to engage in a major that not only is challenging but will provide them with concepts and skills for future employment. We already have hundreds of jobs ready for students with these skill sets. Monster.com has many jobs listed for students with these skill sets,” he noted. Deanna Caveny (Mathematics) addressed the issue of hidden prerequisites. She noted that the committee checked this carefully, and that there were no other hidden prerequisites besides Math 220. In response to Mr. Lesses, she noted that her own department did not believe it was appropriate to offer a statistics major at the undergraduate level, but that there were many students with an interest in this. Her department believes that this new major “is most appropriate for the undergraduate with an interest in statistics.”

Many other faculty asked questions and made comments. Lisa Thomson Ross (Psychology) asked if there was to be a new line for a program director of this proposed major; she was told that there was a one-course reduction in this proposal for a program director. Jim Young spoke about the appropriateness of an undergraduate major in the field. He said that when Dean Noonan approached him about proposing this major, they discovered there were none in the country on the undergraduate level, so he consulted with Carnegie Mellon, which offers a graduate program in this field. The director there “said he didn’t know why they didn’t have an undergrad program” in this area yet. “Maybe they will do it,” he added, since people with this training can get jobs so easily. Terry Bowers (English) noted that when a major requires as many hours as this one does, its students have “very little opportunity to pursue different interests and encounter different bodies of knowledge, which is a crucial component of the liberal education.” Alex Kasman (Mathematics) said that this new major “allows a very wide range of choices in its cognates” and is “very interdisciplinary. It would be very difficult to make it smaller. If you did, it would end up being in computer science. This is more interdisciplinary.” Deanna Caveny added, “Liberal arts is not about student choice, it’s about them bringing together lots of different disciplines.” Since no one is forcing students to take this major, they have choice, she suggested.

At this point, Susan Kattwinkel (Theater) asked that the Senate table the proposal pending further information. The motion to table failed by a show of hands.

More faculty voiced other opinions on the proposed major. Joe Kelly said he was not opposed to the major as an area of study, but said he was concerned about this proposal’s impact on the general education reform that would soon be presented. In the College’s last attempt at gen ed reform, he said, there was a split between the humanities and the sciences, with many science faculty objecting to the proposed gen ed curriculum because it was more complex and would make it more difficult for students to fulfill those requirements while completing their major. If we add this major, Mr. Kelly said, “then we have one more group of people who will be invested in defeating any changes to our Gen Ed curriculum.” Chris Starr asserted, “Just because the courses are predetermined, that doesn’t mean we are limiting their choices. This is allowing professionals to guide
the choices” that students make, he argued. “The way the courses are put together is at
the heart of the liberal arts education.” Todd Grantham (Philosophy and Religious
Studies) said, “My objection is that this does not fit with the mission of the college. It’s
very specialized.” After looking up other places that offer this program of study, he has
found that they all “are large research institutions. I think that’s where this program fits,
not here at the College of Charleston.” Charles Kaiser (Psychology) asked why cognitive
psychology was not included as a cognate discipline. Chris Starr said that over the past
year and a half, he had invited departments to propose cognates and had not yet received
a proposal to this effect, “but this program could evolve into your disciplines as you see
datasets being accumulated.” Erin Beutel (Geology) spoke in favor of the proposal,
saying, “I love the liberal arts, but we live in a changing world. This [Discovery
Informatics] is a tool that is to be spread throughout the disciplines. It’s not enough to
read and write” anymore; people need to be able “to use datasets.” Claire Curtis asked
why, if this discipline were so important, it couldn’t be available to all students, not just
the mathematically inclined who have studied calculus in high school. Glen Lesses asked
if the program could be configured with fewer courses. Chris Starr said that the minor
allowed students to do this.

A vote on the major was taken by a show of hands, and the major was passed by a vote of
33 to 23. The minor was then approved unanimously.

Resolution For a Labor Day Holiday

George Hopkins (History) proposed the following resolution to the Senate.

Resolution on Labor Day

It is hereby resolved that the Faculty Senate strongly recommend to President Higdon
that the College of Charleston observe Labor Day as an official holiday for College
students, staff, and faculty.

Rationale: Labor Day is a national holiday to honor the contributions of working
women and men to this country. To be required to work on Labor Day contradicts the intent of this holiday. In addition, working on Labor Day causes major problems for many students, staff, and faculty because K-12 schools are closed and child care/supervision must be arranged and often paid for. Observing Labor Day as an official holiday at the College would send a strong message to staff and faculty that their work is valued. It would also send an important message to students about the value of work and the dignity of labor.

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Mr. Hopkins used the projector to display a list of many institutions that observe Labor
Day, including most public colleges in South Carolina, as well as some of our peer
institutions such as UNC-Asheville. He noted that he recognized that there were a limited
number of holidays the college could observe, but that he believed the calendar could be
adjusted without damage to the lab schedule. If the Senate endorsed the proposal, they would be “recommending that the holiday be observed” and asking the President to make the appropriate adjustments. Norris Preyer (Physics) said that his department was “strongly against” the proposal, which would “play havoc with the lab schedule” because it would eliminate a Monday class; Monday labs would lose a week. Mr. Hopkins noted that the College had been able to make such an adjustment to the Spring calendar in order to observe the MLK holiday, which is always on a Monday. Norine Noonan said that her staff did not want to have Labor Day as one of their holidays, and that the holiday would be bad for labs. Mr. Hopkins said, “The point is, do we want to observe Labor Day?” If we do, he stated, a plan could be worked out. Paul Marino (Biology) said, “If we were able to start on a Monday it would be fine.” Jason Overby (Chemistry) agreed that the semester would need to start on a Monday. Maureen Hays (Sociology) said that the faculty does not put the calendar together. “This motion is to honor the spirit of Labor Day,” she said, then ask the administration to make a calendar that does this.

Glen Lesses said, “I would prefer that we first find out what the options are. The Speaker should go to the administration and find out exactly what our options are.” He moved to table the proposal; this motion was defeated. At long last the proposal itself came to a vote, and it was approved.

With no Constituents’ Concerns offered, the meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Eichelberger
Faculty Secretary

Fall 2004 Meeting Schedule

Senate Meetings (Tuesdays at 5 PM)

November 2; agenda deadline October 21, 4 PM
November 30; agenda deadline November 18, 4 PM