The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday, November 1, 2005, at 5:00 p.m. in Education Center 116.

The minutes from the October 11 Senate meeting were approved.

Reports

Provost

Speaker of the Faculty Bob Mignone recognized Provost Elise Jorgens, who had requested to speak with the faculty about the new plus/minus grading policy. Provost Jorgens announced that the policy would be implemented in the fall semester of 2006. She explained that she hadn't anticipated the "level of anxiety" her request to delay implementation of this policy would cause on campus and that she did not wish to interfere with faculty governance. Provost Jorgens asked that the Academic Standards Committee continue to conduct research into the effects of the policy. The committee will also be responsible for tracking average GPA's at the college over the next four or five years. While the Provost does not expect a marked difference in average GPA's over this period, she thinks it is important we gather as much information about the effects of the new policy as possible.

The Speaker

Speaker Bob Mignone reported that the general education forums held on October 24th and 25th were very successful, with over 60 attendees each day. The Ad-hoc General Education Committee plans to distill out and synthesize the goals and objectives suggested at the forums and by departments and bring a list for Senate approval sometime next spring. Mr. Mignone also announced that the committee plans to hold forums in the spring as well, to discuss the methods we use to deliver our general education at the College.

New Business

Curriculum Committee

The following proposals put forth by the curriculum committee passed without discussion:

1. Proposal to change a course
   ECON 320: Managerial Economics. Change in prerequisite: remove ECON 317

2. Proposal to change degree requirements for a Minor/Concentration
Film Studies Minor. Change in distribution of courses as well as increase in the number of courses available to choose from.

**Committee on Graduate Education, Continuing Education, and Special Programs**

The Speaker recognized Betsy Martin, Chair of the Graduate Education Committee, who introduced two proposals:

1. New Program—Master of Arts in Communication

2. M.Ed. in Languages Proposal—Change in Program Requirement for ESOL-track students

In discussion of the first proposal, Glen Lesses (Philosophy) asked whether the new M.A. in Communication had been vetted by the Budget and Academic Planning Committees. Chris Hope, Chair of the Academic Planning Committee, reported that her committee asked many questions about the proposed M.A. Program, were satisfied with the answers they had received, and approved the proposal. Erin Beutel, Chair of the Budget Committee, then noted that the proposal had been approved by the Budget Committee as well. The proposal passed on a voice vote.

The second proposal passed without discussion.

**New Admission Policy for the School of Business and Economics**

The Speaker then recognized Lynn Cherry, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies, who introduced on behalf of the Academic Standards Committee (Chair Renee McCauley was unable to make the meeting) a new admission policy for the School of Business and Economics.

Bill Barfield (Physical Education and Health) opened discussion by asking how many students the new policy would eliminate from the School of Business and Economics. Rhonda Mack (Marketing and Supply Chain Management) replied that 81 students would be eliminated in one year. Yet, Ms. Mack pointed out, the intention of the proposal is to set up a pre-candidacy program to get students ready to enter the School. They hope not to eliminate so many students by working with students before admission.

The speaker then recognized Julia Eichelberger (At-Large, English), who asked whether a department or school could simply decide that they would have a higher GPA requirement than the rest of the college. Ms. Eichelberger wondered what the rationale for such a decision might be. Lynn Cherry responded that the School of Education has an admissions requirement above a 2.0 GPA because of accreditation issues. Ms. Eichelberger then asked whether accreditation requirements for the School of Business and Economics specifically required a 2.5 GPA. Rhonda Mack replied that accreditation did not specifically require a 2.5 GPA, but pointed out that it did require tracking and
retention of students. Ms. Mack added that the proposed admission policy is typical of business schools around the country.

Mike Skinner (Foundations, Secondary, and Special Education) then pointed out that the 2.5 GPA requirement in the School of Education is a state-mandated requirement and thus goes beyond the needs of accreditation. Deanna Caveny (At-Large, Mathematics) commented that there is a difference between entrance and exit requirements. The School of Business and Economics, she pointed out, is not requiring a 2.5 GPA to exit the program.

The Speaker next recognized Joe Kelly (At-Large, English) who argued that the issues of accreditation raised in the proposal did not seem to be addressed by the entrance requirement. He worried that the intervention required by accreditation standards might involve simply kicking students out of the School of Business and Economics. He asked where such students would go and argued that a 2.5 GPA for admission to a School should be instituted across the board or not at all. The proposal, Mr. Kelly, argued, creates a “de-facto honors college” out of a specific school.

Jack Parson (Political Science) then asked whether a student who meets the entrance requirement with a 2.5 GPA could still graduate with a 2.0 GPA. Ms. Mack replied that yes, a student could do so. The problem is with students having access to courses that fill up and close and with students getting in the necessary prerequisites. The proposal also addresses enrollment issues, Ms. Mack argued. The School of Business and Economics has the largest or second largest class sizes on campus. The School needs to curb enrollment. They’ve already had to cut service courses. The proposal the School put forth, according to Ms. Mack, asks that students come with a willingness to succeed; students in the School have the second-lowest SAT scores of any school at the College already.

The Speaker then recognized George Hopkins (History) who reminded faculty members of a situation at the University of South Carolina a few years ago in which a group of students virtually became “academic boat people” because their GPA’s, while high enough to be retained at the University, were too low to gain admission to many programs.

Hugh Wilder (At-Large, Philosophy) pointed out that the admission standard asked for in the new policy is higher than retention standards at the College. Mr. Wilder pointed out that all schools and departments couldn’t do this. Furthermore, in the School of Education, there is a clear connection between certification and accreditation and GPA requirements. Such a clear connection is missing in the policy proposed by the School of Business and Economics, he argued. Mr. Wilder wondered if the enrollment and prerequisite problems cited by Ms. Mack couldn’t be better handled by earlier advising. He concluded by arguing that this new policy would set a bad precedent at the College.

Deanna Caveny (At-Large, Mathematics) offered a perspective as a teacher of MATH 105, arguing that, in certain majors and courses which attract students, there tends to be a
large gap between what students expect and what is actually required of them. Such is the case in MATH 105 and might be in the School of Business and Economics in general, Ms. Caveny pointed out.

Claire Curtis (Political Science) argued that there is a difference between simply setting a requirement and advising students *thoroughly*. She echoed Mr. Wilder’s point that the accreditation requirements could be met by good advising. Bob Dukes (Physics and Astronomy) then offered another possible solution to solve problems pointed out by Ms. Mack, suggesting that the School might implement pre-requisites for upper-level courses that involved attaining specific grades in lower-level courses. Jose Gavidia (Management and Entrepreneurship) argued that the proposed criteria include what Mr. Dukes suggested. Mr. Gavidia pointed out, though, that the School of Business and Economics has a logistical problem in that students are being denied seats in necessary classes. He wants the School to avoid wasting seats on students who aren’t going to graduate.

Jason Overby (Chemistry and Biochemistry) argued that the new admission policy is a matter of student responsibility. He has no problem with the 2.5 GPA requirement because he believes it sends a serious message to students. Rhonda Mack added that the School has surveyed students, and that they responded favorably to the proposed admission requirements, believing these requirements would raise the value of their degrees. Ms. Mack also pointed out that intensive advising in the School is difficult because of the large number of majors.

Agnes Southgate (Biology) noted that the new policy would set a precedent many others would want to follow. She pointed out that the Biology Department is facing similar problems to those experienced by the School of Business and Economics. In response, they’ve created a new class, part of which deals with advising.

Reid Wiseman (At-Large, Biology) then asked about a hypothetical student who has taken 15 hours and has a 2.4 GPA. Could such a student continue in the School? Ms. Mack replied that such a student could take an additional 9 hours and then re-apply.

Brian McGee (Communication) asked Ms. Mack to comment on the statement in the proposal that reads, “Meeting these requirements, however, does not guarantee admission into the School.” She replied that the School can’t currently accommodate all their students. They have students right now who can’t get their senior courses. The School wants to reserve the ability to have room for their best students. Jose Gavidia added that rejecting the proposal would set a bad precedent for our ability to control enrollments. He reiterated that such admission policies are a common practice in business schools across the country and that the policy would encourage students to have higher standards.

Jack Parson then pointed out that the issue is really the 2.5 GPA requirement. He believes the School has provided a good rationale for admission requirements, but that there will be plenty of students admitted with a 2.5 GPA who graduate with a 2.0. Mr. Parson argued that requiring completion of prerequisite courses earlier in a student’s career is a better solution than the GPA requirement.
Glen Lesses spoke next, arguing that, if such a policy is instituted, it needs to be institution-wide, not just the province of a single School. Mr. Lesses argued that the Corporate Communication track would have to absorb students not admitted into the School of Business and Economics.

Deanna Caveny, responding to Mr. Parson’s point, pointed out that the Math Department has been looking at pre-requisites recently. She expects that very few students who enter the School with a 2.0 GPA would exit with a higher grade. Students, she argued, almost never do better in later courses than in the pre-requisite courses. Ms. Mack added that the School of Business and Economics has tracked students for a year and found Ms. Caveny’s point to be true.

Terry Bowers (English) argued that requiring the higher GPA might have the effect of starting a process of grade inflation. Joe Kelly then asked Ms. Mack what the School expected to happen to the students they don’t admit. Ms. Mack replied that they haven’t tracked individual students, but that she expects these are students who drop their majors in the School anyway. The problem is that they leave late.

Jason Overby asked if the University of South Carolina had similar admission requirements. Ms Mack replied “yes.” Mike Skinner asked if USC has a specific GPA requirement, and again, Ms. Mack replied “yes.” Sue Balinsky (Physical Education and Health) suggested that maybe rather than an overall GPA, the School could require a certain GPA for business courses themselves.

Susan Kattwinkel (Theatre Department) spoke next, pointing out that we are a liberal arts and sciences college. In the School of the Arts, she argued, students who aren’t going to be great performers aren’t kicked out; we are not a professional college. Ms. Mack responded that the School of Business and Economics is a professional school.

Jack Parson then suggested that perhaps the School of Business and Economics should look at predictor courses and require particular grades in those courses. Ms. Mack replied that the School has brought such proposals forward before, but has not been able to get them through the Senate. Mr. Parson asked if such proposals had been brought in the context of admissions, pointing out that they might be more “marketable” within that specific context. Ms. Mack replied that they had not.

Julia Eichelberger pointed out that any student with a 2.5 GPA would be more likely to succeed than a student with a lower GPA. She can’t ignore the fact that the proposal allows the School of Business and Economics to teach students who do better and makes it the job of other Schools to deal with poorer students. Michelle Mac Brooks (Chemistry and Biochemistry) responded that some students don’t do well in certain courses. They might not be poor students, but they may have a different calling. Scott Peeples (English) then pointed out that the new policy requires a 2.5 GPA overall, not just in business classes.
Sarah Owens (Hispanic Studies), arguing that we were beginning to repeat ourselves, then called the question. Liz Jurisich (Mathematics) seconded. The Senate voted in favor of calling the question. After a division of the house, the motion for the new admission policy failed.

**Noting Non-Credit Experiences on Academic Transcripts**

The Speaker next recognized Glen Lesses (Philosophy), who made the following motion:

“The Academic Planning Committee shall recommend to the Senate by the February 2006 meeting whether to eliminate non-credit experiences from the academic transcript.”

After Susan Kattwinkel (Theatre) seconded the motion, Mr. Lesses explained that, in December of 2003, the Senate had rejected a motion from Career Services to establish a non-credit course to record non-credit internships on the academic transcript. He considers this motion unfinished business from the earlier meeting and is worried about the integrity of the academic transcript.

George Pothering (At-Large, Computer Science) asked whether Mr. Lesses’ motion was intended to be about non-credit experiences or just internships. He pointed out that the catalog currently lists courses that have no credit attached and asked whether these courses should be reviewed as well. Mr. Lesses replied “yes,” that he thought they should be reviewed.

Liz Jurisich (Mathematics) then pointed out that internships are experiential, but that we should consider research projects differently. Mr. Lesses replied that a committee should consider those questions. Mark Lazzaro (Biology) then added that some academic experiences have the number of hours allowed to them capped. Students who go beyond the capped hours would not have these experiences represented on the transcript if non-credit experiences are eliminated. Mr. Lesses replied that just such complications should be explored by a committee.

Calvin Blackwell (Economics and Finance) pointed out that the Internship Director for the School of Business and Economics has spoken about the benefits of noting non-credit experiences on the academic transcript. Some companies, he argued, won’t credit such experiences unless they’re officially noted by the College. Mr. Blackwell asked what the costs of such notation would be to the College.

At this point, Mr. Mignone interrupted the discussion to note that it was somewhat off-topic since we were not debating the issue of eliminating non-credit experiences itself, but rather whether to send this issue to the Academic Planning Committee to explore. Nevertheless, he said he would allow further discussion.

Bob Dukes (Physics and Astronomy) then argued that it sounded to him as if Mr. Lesses had a particular outcome in mind, judging by the language of the motion. Mr. Lesses
acknowledged that the proposal *does* charge the Committee with deciding whether to eliminate such experiences from the transcript.

Claire Curtis (Political Science) argued that, in light of the Senate’s rejection of the December 2003 request from Career Services, it might be useful to have more information about the topic. The Speaker then asked if anyone present could talk about potential plans to develop a co-curricular transcript. The Provost replied that Student Affairs had been looking into the issue, but she wasn’t sure how far along the investigation is. She pointed out that many schools do indeed use co-curricular transcripts.

Joe Kelly (English) then asked whether there was a difference between the Speaker simply asking the Academic Planning Committee to look into the issue and the Senate voting on it. Mr. Mignone replied that it wasn’t in his purview to simply hand the issue to the Committee. If the Senate votes on the motion, the Committee will be given a specific charge and a response date. Frank Morris (At-Large, Classics) next asked about the particular response date and whether or not it was feasible. Mr. Lesses replied that he chose the February date because it was far enough in the future, but not too distant.

Next, Calvin Blackwell offered a friendly amendment to change the language of the motion. Instead of charging the Committee to investigate whether to eliminate non-credit experiences, Mr. Blackwell wanted the Committee to be charged with reviewing the treatment of non-credit experiences. Mr. Lesses declined to accept the amendment as a friendly one. Claire Curtis added that she would like to see a report on the issue come from the Academic Planning Committee. Joe Kelly then moved Mr. Blackwell’s amendment as a non-friendly one. After some discussion, the amendment was worded as follows:

“The Academic Planning Committee shall review the treatment of non-credit experiences on the academic transcript and report with a recommendation to the Senate by the February 2006 meeting.”

Mr. Lesses pointed out that he didn’t think his language was prejudicial since considerable objection to noting non-credit experiences on the transcript had been expressed in the Senate previously.

Andrew Smelzer, treasurer of the Student Governor Association, then asked to be recognized. He argued that all students would want non-credit experiences noted in some official manner, whether on the academic transcript or a co-curricular transcript.

Bob Dukes then returned to the question of the February date. He asked whether this deadline was realistic. Chris Hope, Chair of the Academic Planning Committee, after consulting briefly with the Provost about potential programs coming down the pipeline, agreed that the February date was realistic.
At this point, the Senate voted to amend the motion as proposed by Mr. Blackwell and Mr. Kelly. They then approved the newly amended motion.

**Constituent Concerns**

The Speaker recognized Jack Parson (Political Science), who raised questions about a change in language in the advertisement for a new Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences. The original advertisement had language which read that the College was “committed to becoming a nationally preeminent public liberal arts and sciences university. . .” The new language reads that “the College is focused on becoming a nationally preeminent public university, committed to maintaining its historic strength in the liberal arts and science tradition.”

Provost Jorgens responded by informing the faculty that she asked for the change in language. She added that, after numerous conversations with President Higdon, the deans, and other groups on campus, she has been working on a white paper suggesting a different way to think about the College. The reality of the situation, the Provost argued, is that we're not a liberal arts college; the language describing us in these terms is misleading because of our large size and the complexity of our mission. Her white paper, when finished, will suggest a new way to promote the College for what we actually are. She had hoped to hold off on the new Dean search for a year until after we’d had these conversations, but unfortunately, that didn’t happen. The Provost hopes to finish this paper in the next few months and then open a conversation with faculty about it.

The Speaker then recognized Reid Wiseman (Biology) who expressed consternation that we aspired for “pre-eminence” in the first place. What’s wrong with the word “eminent” he asked.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:25.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Farrell
Faculty Secretary