Minutes of the October 10, 2006 Faculty Senate Meeting

The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday, October 10, 2006, at 5:00 p.m. in Beatty Center 115.

The minutes from the September 12, 2006 Senate meeting were approved.

Reports

Speaker

Speaker of the Faculty Bob Mignone reminded faculty members that the five candidates for College of Charleston President will be on campus the week of October 16. He encouraged as many faculty members as possible to meet with the candidates. Mr. Mignone, along with Marvin Dulaney and Deanna Caveny, the other faculty representatives on the presidential search committee, will compile faculty feedback concerning the candidates, and Mr. Mignone will present this information to the Board of Trustees on Saturday afternoon, October 21.

Mr. Mignone then announced that a draft version of a proposal from the Ad-Hoc Committee on General Education has been circulated via e-mail and is also available on the web (at http://www.cofc.edu/~oap/gened/proposal100606.pdf). He asked the committee’s chair, Julia Eichelberger, to briefly explain the timeline for discussing and voting on the proposal. Ms. Eichelberger announced that the proposal had been sent to all faculty members on Friday, October 6 and that her committee is currently accepting responses and suggestions concerning the proposal. The Ad-Hoc Committee will wait until Monday October 16, the deadline for departmental input on the proposal (that they solicited several weeks ago) before they make the next round of revisions. After this round of revisions, they will send the draft proposal to the Academic Planning Committee for review. We may begin discussing the revised proposal in the Senate while Academic Planning still has it. Ms. Eichelberger did point out, however, that her committee couldn’t predict exactly when we’ll begin Senate discussion of the proposal—it could be at the November or December Senate meeting. Ms. Eichelberger also emphasized that the proposal is still open for input. The General Education committee wants to know what departments like about the proposal as well as what they would like to see changed.

Mr. Mignone closed his report by mentioning a retreat that will be held Monday, October 16 for some faculty, staff, and alumni who will discuss President Festa’s proposal to increase underrepresented minorities on campus. The idea behind the retreat is to generate ideas, to brainstorm about ways to improve minority representation. He will report back to us about the results of this retreat at the November Senate meeting.

The Provost

The Speaker then recognized Provost Elise Jorgens, who began her report by
commending and thanking Chair of the Political Science Department Lynne Ford for her work with the recent initiative on student voter registration, which is part of an AASCU (American Association of State Colleges and Universities) project. The College of Charleston submitted 590 valid SC registration forms during this initiative—106% of our goal.

Provost Jorgens also spoke of the importance of the current presidential search, reinforcing Mr. Mignone’s plea that faculty participate in this process.

Finally, Ms. Jorgens announced that the College is beginning a budget and planning process that has not taken place for several years. This is not a strategic planning process, but a catch-up project that is an attempt to answer the following questions: Where do we stand financially? Do we have a huge backlog of financial needs that haven’t been met? Are we doing fairly well? Ms. Jorgens told faculty members that we should expect to hear more about this process from our chairs.

JoAnn Diaz—College Ombuds Officer

Next, the speaker recognized College Ombuds Officer JoAnn Diaz, who gave a report on her duties. Ms. Diaz informed faculty that her office is located in Randolph Hall and that her objective is to supply an informal resolution for complaints at the College. She does not get involved in the formal process of grievance; she cannot testify for any litigation or formal grievance hearing. But if a faculty member wishes to talk over complaints or issues or to get advice, the Ombuds Office is the place to go. The four main tenets of her position are neutrality, independence, confidentiality, and informality. She doesn’t speak with supervisors about faculty visits. She reports directly to the president, to whom she gives an overview of problems on campus without revealing specific names or issues.

The chair then recognized Mick Norton (Mathematics) who asked if Ms. Diaz could describe in a general way the types of issues that are brought to her. Ms. Diaz replied that she’d listened to problems concerning tenure and harassment as well as complaints about supervisors. Provost Jorgens then asked whether the Ombuds Office had seen a lot of traffic. Ms. Diaz responded, “absolutely.” Even without advertising, many people have utilized her services. Hugh Wilder (Philosophy) then asked whether staff and students could use Ombuds services, along with faculty. She replied that the Ombuds Office is there to help anyone at the college. Terry Bowers (English) asked if her office deals with academic issues. Ms. Diaz replied that she would discuss academic issues if they came up, determine what processes exists to resolve such issues, and try to mediate problems between specific people.

New Business

Curriculum Committee

The Speaker then introduced Gerry Gonsalves, Chair of the Curriculum Committee, who
introduced several motions. A proposal to change degree requirements for the Minor in Crime, Law and Society, and to add as electives POLS 221, POLS 352, and POLS 353 or POLS 354, passed without discussion.

The next proposal was a motion to change degree requirements for the Minors in Italian and Italian Studies. Jim Newhard (Classics) pointed out that, according to the proposals, 18 hours must be taken above ITAL 202 or 250. He suggested a friendly amendment that this be erased because of conflicts with the requirement that students must complete a course in LTIT, which has a different designation. He explained that the line he wanted to delete was simply copied erroneously from old requirements and amounted to a clerical error. Mr. Newhard himself is a representative from the department that submitted the proposal, and thus was able to accept his own friendly amendment.

The proposal passed on a voice vote.

Next up were two new course proposals, LTIT 270 and LTIT 370, as well as a proposal to delete a course—ITAL 370. Richard Nunan (Philosophy) pointed out that the explanation for deleting ITAL 370 is that the title is “Studies in Italian Film and Literature” and thus, the course replicates one of the new course proposals. Yet, the new course proposal focuses only on film. Mr. Nunan wondered if there was a separate course for studies in Italian literature that would still be on the books. Jim Newhard (Classics) replied that the last few times the course has been offered, it has focused almost entirely on cinema, so the new course more clearly reflects the actual content that is being taught. Mr. Nunan asked if there was any sense of loss in the study of literature being deleted. Mr. Newhard replied there wasn’t, since literature hadn’t customarily been included anyway. Finally, Mr. Nunan pointed out that there was a reference to a letter from John Bruns, Director of the Film Studies Minor, in the description of the two new courses, but he didn’t see the actual letter in the packet of information distributed to Senators. Other Senators confirmed that the packet did not contain the letter.

At this point, discussion ended. The two new course proposals, LTIT 270 and 370, as well as the deletion of ITAL 370 passed on a voice vote.

The next curriculum items discussed were two new course proposals in psychology, PSYC 250 and PSYC 397. Mr. Nunan, pointing out that the justification for PSYC 250 argues in favor of combining psychological statistics and research methods in a single course, asked why two current courses that separate these things out will continue to be offered. David Gentry (Psychology) explained that the new course is intended to be accelerated. Not all students are prepared to go at that pace.

Both new courses, PSYC 250 and PSYC 397, passed on a voice vote.

Committee on Graduate Education

The Speaker recognized Betsy Martin, Chair of the Committee on Graduate Education, who moved that the Senate approve a new graduate course: FREN 614. Richard Nunan
(Philosophy) opened the discussion by pointing out that the course description is illegible as it appears on the computer screen. Ms. Martin then read the course description out loud to the Senate. Mr. Nunan said that he would like to avoid the situation of the Senate being presented with an illegible course description in the future.

The new course proposal FREN 614 passed on a voice vote.

Scott Peeples—Motion to form an Ad-Hoc Committee to Draft a Vendor Code of Conduct

Mr. Mignone next recognized Scott Peeples (English) who moved the following proposal:

Motion: That the Senate appoint an ad-hoc committee to draft a vendor code of conduct in consultation with Procurement/Supply and Business/Auxiliary Services; and that at least two students be invited to serve on this committee.

Rationale: We affirmed in the resolution passed last spring that "as educators at a liberal arts and sciences institution, College of Charleston faculty are deeply committed to protecting human rights and promoting environmental responsibility," but the College lacks a vendor code of conduct to support that commitment in regard to business decisions. The resolution singled out one company on the basis of alleged human rights abuses, but as a number of faculty members and students pointed out, the case involving Coca-Cola highlights the need for a consistent, written policy that would apply to any vendor who contracts with the College. The SGA wrote a vendor code of conduct into their resolution, but the specifics of the code weren't debated. The students who sponsored the SGA resolution would like to work with the faculty and business offices to craft a code that's workable and meaningful for our campus.

Mr. Peeples pointed out that numerous colleges have vendor codes of conduct. He thought it would be a good idea to have a committee look at this issue, write a specific code, and bring it back to the Senate for action. The motion was seconded by Julia Eichelberger (At-Large, English).

Mick Norton opened the discussion by asking how such a policy would be enforced. Mr. Peeples replied that questions such as this are one reason he wants to form a committee. The committee could address such issues. Mr. Norton then expressed his concern that such a committee, working in isolation, could make a decision on the basis that it seemed fashionable to do so. Mr. Peeples replied that a couple of students who had worked on the Coca Cola campaign had met with Jan Brewton, Director of Auxiliary Services, and talked through some of these issues. It became clear during this conversation that an Ad-Hoc Committee would need to combine faculty, staff, and students.

Gerry Gonsalves (Management and Entrepreneurship) then asked how committee membership would be decided. Mr. Peeples replied that he assumed the Nominations Committee would determine this. Norris Preyer (Physics) asked how many people Mr.
Peeples expected would serve on the committee. Mr. Peeples replied that he did not have a definite number in mind, but expected there would be 3-4 faculty members, 3-4 students, and someone from Procurement, as well as from Auxiliary Services. Next followed a brief conversation in which Bob Mignone confirmed that the usual practice in such cases was for the Nominations Committee to nominate faculty members, for the Student Government Association to nominate student members, and for the specific administrative areas to nominate their representatives.

Chip Voorneveld (Foundations, Secondary, and Special Education) then asked if this issue were politically driven and how far-ranging it would be. Mr. Peeples reiterated that the issue had started with the Amnesty International students’ Coca Cola campaign. During the Senate discussion of that issue, a number of people complained that the College was unfairly singling out Coca Cola, and it was suggested that we need some kind of broad vendor corporate responsibility policy. Mr. Peeples added that he was bringing this motion on his own behalf, prompted by the constituent concern that George Hopkins (History) expressed at the last Senate meeting. In answer to how far-ranging the policy would be, Mr. Peeples pointed out that most colleges with such policies focus on merchandise with college logos. But he would like to leave the range of the policy up to the committee to decide. Personally, he would like to see the policy begin and end with companies that have violated human rights, discriminated, and tried to stop union activity.

George Hopkins spoke next, pointing out that this motion represents an effort to get a consistent policy and set of criteria against which various companies can be measured. Corporate social responsibility is a major issue in the country as well as on campuses.

Susan Kattwinkel (Theatre) then asked a two-part question. First, she wondered about the necessity of having a college attorney approve the policy. Second, she asked whether the Senate could appoint an ad-hoc committee that has staff and administrative personnel on it. Bob Mignone replied that the Senate can order a committee of faculty members and can recommend that it include members from outside the faculty.

Joe Kelly (At-Large, English) spoke next, recommending that we spell out committee membership more precisely. After some discussion with Michael Phillips, Chair of the Nominations Committee, it was determined that the committee would consist of 3 faculty members, 3 students, a representative from Procurement/Supply and a representative from Business/Auxiliary Services, for a total of 8 members. Mr. Peeples agreed to serve as one of the faculty representatives to the committee.

Richard Nunan (Philosophy) then asked, as a follow-up to part of Susan Kattwinkel’s previous question, whether CofC currently has a college attorney. Mr. Mignone replied that the College is searching for a full-time attorney, but currently has only someone consulting in that role. Provost Jorgens added that the issue of having an attorney on the committee would need to be negotiated because of fees.

Steve Litvin (Hospitality and Tourism) then asked about which members of the
committee would have a vote, arguing that if students and faculty are voting members, administrative representatives should be as well. Mr. Peeples replied that he doesn’t have an objection to administrative representatives being voting members of the committee. He didn’t hammer out these details because he wasn’t sure what the preferences of people like Jan Brewton would be, what role they would want. RoxAnn Stalvey (computer science) pointed out that administrative support would be essential to developing a policy of corporate responsibility, adding that if members of the administration are voting members of the committee, they might be more likely to support the policy. After some discussion concerning customary practices when administrative personnel serve on faculty committees, Jack Parson (Political Science) pointed out that people in administrative offices operate within a different hierarchy than faculty members. They may not be able to cast a vote without consulting a supervisor. Thus, making them voting members might slow things down and make the committee’s work more difficult. Mr. Parson advocated that administrative personnel not be voting members. Mr. Peeples replied that he would like to have directors from administrative offices on the committee so that they have authority to vote with confidence.

David Gentry (Psychology) then returned to the issue of needing a lawyer to contribute to the policy, pointing out that state law in purchasing is very rigid. Mike Skinner (Foundations, Secondary, and Special Education) argued that a lawyer needn’t be an actual member of the committee, but that a lawyer could look at the proposal the committee comes up with. It would be better to have a lawyer vet the proposal than actually serve on the committee.

At this point, discussion ended, and Mr. Peeples’ proposal passed on a voice vote.

Constituents’ Concerns

Deanna Caveny (At-Large, Mathematics) requested that, in the future, titles be added to course numbers in the brief outline of curriculum business that is distributed to Senators before meetings. Gerry Gonsalves of the Curriculum Committee agreed to do this.

With no further business, the Senate adjourned at 6:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Farrell
Faculty Secretary