Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting, 4 December 2007

The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday, 4 December 2007, at 5:00 p.m. in Wachovia Auditorium. Speaker Joe Kelly called the meeting to order.

Reports

The Provost

Provost Elise Jorgens reported that the College is part of Institutional Missions and Academic Programs and Planning Advisory Group (which is part of the Higher Education Study Committee), and that she is representing the College in meetings of this group, whose members include South Carolina’s comprehensive institutions of higher education (Clemson, Converse, Lander, Midlands Tech, USC). The purpose of the group is to determine where the state’s comprehensive institutions of higher education rank with respect to innovation, workforce development, and educational services. The Group will put together a report on these issues and develop a strategic plan for higher education in South Carolina. The Provost said that she had some concerns about the Group’s plan and purpose, but thought that it was nonetheless important that the College be represented in it.

The Speaker

Speaker Kelly reported that he followed up on an issue that arose in last meeting’s discussion of the C of C’s Vendor Code of Conduct, concerning the lack of an official anti-discrimination statement with regard to sexual orientation. He said that he met with the Provost about the issue and that she will bring it to the attention of the President. The Speaker said that he would also get more information about spousal benefits.

Susan Kattwinkel, Director of the First-Year Experience

Ms. Kattwinkel first provided a brief history of recent events regarding the First-Year Experience (FYE). She said that the Senate approved the FYE on March 27, 2007, that a director (herself) had been hired in July 2007, and that a First-Year Experience ad hoc committee had been formed in Fall 2007. Its members are

Susan Kattwinkel (FYE Director and Dept. of Theatre)
Kay Smith (Assoc.VP Acad. Exp. and Dept. of English)
Mindy Miley (Asst.VP New Student Programs)
Julie Davis (Dept. of Communication)
Marie Fitzwilliam (Dept. of English)
Hollis France (Dept. of Political Science)
Isaac Green (Dept. of Computer Science)
Jack Parson (Dept. of Political Science)
John Peters (Dept. of Biology)
Howard Rudd (Dept. of Management and Entrepreneurship).
Ms. Kattwinkel mentioned that key staff members are Kay Smith (Assoc. VP for the Academic Experience), Mindy Miley (Asst. VP for New Student Programs), and Page Keller (Director of Student Support Services).

Ms. Kattwinkel reported that this semester (fall) there were ten Learning Communities (each of which consists of two or more courses linked around a common interdisciplinary theme or issue). These ten Learning Communities have involved 230 students and thirteen peer facilitators. The FYE Office has also supported this year a dozen out-of-class activities. For next year, fourteen learning communities have been approved and nineteen First-Year Seminars (FYSM), involving 49 faculty and some 700 students. First-Year Seminars will begin for the first time next year. The long-term goal is that FYSMs will serve one-half of freshmen with the other half being served by Learning Communities. Ms. Kattwinkel announced that training for new faculty participating in the FYE is scheduled for May 2008, and that faculty will receive stipends for attending the training sessions. She added that feedback on previous training sessions has been positive.

Addressing a different topic, Ms. Kattwinkel said that a way needs to be found to link FYSMs to departments in our computer systems, in particular so as not to undermine a student in progressing efficiently toward meeting the Gen-Ed requirements. (For example, if a student takes a Philosophy FYSM, and later takes two more Philosophy courses to satisfy the humanities Gen-Ed requirement, only two of those three courses would count toward that requirement.) A way of tagging courses by department thus needs to be found. She said that currently the computer system can’t tag individual FYSM sections to indicate which Gen-Ed requirements they meet. A patch is therefore needed to mend the problem, and to allow one to track Gen-Ed credits and to credit faculty for teaching FYSM. The patch she has been developing consists of a series of FYSM numbers that will be linked to departments. Each department will be given two numbers in the event that they offer sections of the FYSM that count toward different Gen-Ed requirements: one number will be used by the department to indicate that certain sections count for one Gen-Ed requirement, the other number will be used to indicate that other sections count for a different Gen-Ed requirement.

Mr. Phillips (at-large) said that a patch is not an elegant long-term solution. Last year he proposed that department acronyms be used rather than the FYSM acronym, and that there be a designated number that would indicate which courses offered by departments are FYSM. Let the number be the designator for FYSM, not for the department, he urged. This way students will link the FYSM to the department.

Ms. Kattwinkel responded that this solution would not work because there is no 100-level number that has not already been used for something by some department. Using numbers below 100 or above 199 opens up other problems: 099, for example, won’t work because it is seen as a remedial course. Also, Ms. Kattwinkel thought that it was important that students see the FYSM as its own independent entity, rather than as something that belonged to a department.

Bill Manaris (guest) said that you could use the FYSM acronym to designate the course, assign a course number to indicate which department is offering a particular
section of the First Year Seminar, and then use the section number to designate which Gen-Ed requirement a particular section meets.

Brian McGee, chair of Committee on By-Laws and Fac./Admin. Manual

Mr. McGee reported that his committee received no comments on the proposal to remove sections V and VII from the FAM, which, he reminded the Senate, are in the administratively controlled portions of the document. He also reminded the Senate that those sections are either out of date or better suited for publication in other documents or institutional Websites, and that his committee recommends that those sections be removed from the FAM.

Next, Mr. McGee reported that the By-Laws required his committee to further study the recommendation the committee made at the last Senate meeting regarding an amendment to the Faculty By-Laws concerning the name and description of the Honors Program Committee. His committee, he said, has nothing to add to the recommendation, which proposes the following changes to Art. V., Sect. 3.B.13.

13. Honors Program College Committee

a. Composition: Five faculty members, three of whom shall be teaching in the Honors College and a student representative and alternate both elected by the Honors Student Association (or any successor student organization recognized by the Honors College). The Honors Program Director Dean of the Honors College (or the Dean’s designee) is an ex-officio, non-voting member of this committee.

b. Duties:

(1) To review student applications and select students for admission into the Honors College.

(2) To review faculty course proposals and select Honors Program courses.

(3) To receive and act upon written requests from students, faculty, schools or departments for exceptions from Honors Program regulations and requirements, changes in the curriculum, and changes in Honors Program regulations and policies.

(4) To review and make policy decisions concerning the Honors Program curriculum, admission and
retention standards, course selection procedures, and faculty stipends.

(5) To review information from the **Director Dean of the Honors College concerning Honors Program College admissions, retention, curriculum, etc.**

Mr. McGee, on behalf of the By-Laws and Fac./Admin. Manual, moved that the above changes to FAM be made. The Senate voted and approved the motion.

**Unfinished Business**

Discussion resumed of the motion made by Calvin Blackwell (Economics and Finance) at the previous Senate meeting that a two-thirds majority of the Faculty Senate be required for any changes to the Gen-Ed requirements. Here is exact wording of the motion: “I move we adopt the following Special Rule of Order for the Faculty Senate of the College of Charleston: All changes to the Liberal Arts and Sciences General Education Requirements of College of Charleston shall require a two-thirds vote of the Faculty Senate.”

George Pothering (guest) spoke against the motion both from his perspective as chair of the *ad hoc* Gen-Ed Committee and from the perspective of a parliamentarian. As chair of the *ad hoc* Gen-Ed Committee, he said that under the current motion any course that crossed a disciplinary boundary would require a two-third majority. New programs would also require a two-thirds majority because they will affect Gen Ed. He thought that the motion, if it passed, would create a number of problems, and saw nothing wrong with a simple majority as a proper threshold for changes to Gen Ed. He noted that to go to war—a serious matter, if ever there was one—required a simple majority in Congress. As a Parliamentarian, he noted that Robert’s Rules of Order discourages the sort of maneuver proposed by Mr. Blackwell. Two-thirds majorities are used for changes in by-laws, not for ordinary business.

Pete Calcagno (Economics and Finance) spoke in favor of the amendment, noting that since the approval of the Standing Committee on Gen Ed requires a two-thirds majority, problems would result if the Gen-Ed Proposal passed by a simple majority, but approval of the Gen-Ed Standing Committee failed. If the Standing Committee requires a two-thirds majority, then so too should the Gen-Ed Proposal, which is of so much greater consequence. He agreed with the view that it was not good that a small majority could bring about such a huge change.

Larry Krasnoff (Philosophy) spoke against the motion and observed that there are generally two reasons for why a deliberative body would require a two-thirds majority: (1) to slow people down and to make them think; and (2) to freeze the status quo, when the status quo is generally perceived as needed and desirable (some Southern states, he said, have a two-thirds majority requirement for raising taxes). The second reason doesn’t apply to the Gen-Ed situation, he said, because our current Gen-Ed system does not enjoy great support and is not widely perceived as particularly good. The first reason also does not apply because we have gone slowly. In fact, some people might be frustrated because they think the process has
moved too slowly. Many people, he noted, have worked hard on and thought a great deal about the state of Gen Ed at the College.

Nadia Avendano (Hispanic Studies), speaking in support of the amendment, remarked that Alexis de Tocqueville, who wrote about the tyranny of the majority, said that super-majorities protect minorities. The Gen-Ed proposal, if implemented, will affect many programs in ways that are not clear. If 52% of the Senate voted in favor of the Proposal, would such a slim majority really be adequate. If we can’t reach a 60% threshold, then we aren’t doing well.

George Hopkins (History) said that a simple majority is enough to change a new course, create a new program, and so on. It is adequate. He added that change is not always easy, and that a two-thirds majority requirement would put up a roadblock preventing any change. He said, too, that the two-thirds requirement was not democratic.

Mr. Blackwell, in response to Mr. Krasnoff’s earlier comment, said that he accepted a job at the College in part because he liked the curriculum; therefore, he suggested that there was at least some agreement about the value of the current Gen-Ed system. He also thought that 67% was a good level of consensus that should be required for any changes of the kind that the Senate is considering with Gen-Ed. We need more than the minimum majority of 50% plus one. He thought that 67% was a fair compromise between 75% and 50% plus one.

In response to Mr. Hopkins, Mr. Calcagno said that there was a big difference in scale between a course proposal and the Gen-Ed Proposal. He also said that there is a difference in process: course proposals start from the department level and go up, whereas the Gen-Ed Proposal has been a top-down process. Mr. Calcagno also urged that the Senate go slowly in making changes.

Reid Wiseman (guest) asked if he faculty as a whole was going to vote on the Gen-Ed Proposal. Parliamentarian Brian McGee said that a petition from the faculty would have to be generated in order for the whole faculty to vote on the Proposal.

Mr. Pothering, referring back to Mr. Blackwell’s motion, observed that the wording of the motion refers to “All changes to the Liberal Arts and Sciences General Education Requirements.” If the motion passes, he said, then in the future much time will be spent arguing about specific courses because they might appear to change Gen Ed.

Richard Nunan (at-large), speaking against the motion, said that there are entrenched interests in keeping the status quo, and that the last attempt to reform Gen Ed, which failed, showed this. He noted that the tone of that discussion was on how the reform would affect certain interests. There will always be a group that will vote for the status quo for parochial, narrow-minded reasons; therefore, a simple majority, he thought, would indicate a significant level of consensus for change.

Rohn England (Mathematics) said he was not sure that Mr. Nunan’s characterization of the last Gen-Ed reform was accurate. He added that if the Senate votes for the reform and is
wrong, then the bad effects of the changes will be visited upon many. He therefore thought that a super-majority would more likely prevent such large-scale mistakes.

Paul Young (Mathematics) said that the motion exposes an illusion about democracy, showing that a majority can be attained by a single extra vote (beyond 50%), which in the case of the Gen-Ed Proposal will affect many people beyond the Senate for years. However, he also said that the motion, if passed, would make it harder for this and future Senates to fix things or make any changes. He thus thought that the Senate shouldn’t try to change the process and should vote against the motion.

Mr. Krasnoff agreed with the claim that the Gen-Ed Proposal, if approved, would amount to a big change, but it’s in line with what we have been doing all along. It’s not just one big change; it’s a series of smaller detailed changes that have been discussed. Some of the changes will later need to be changed again, and to make that possible, the Senate, he urged, needs to stick with its current procedures.

Jerry Boetje (Computer Science) said that Gen Ed is important, but not that important. It does not involve a structural change like joining two schools. It’s like a kitchen remodel, he said, and not like adding a second story. The two-thirds majority should be used for something structural, not for Gen-Ed reform.

The Senate voted on Mr. Blackwell’s motion that a two-thirds majority of the Faculty Senate be required for any changes to the Gen-Ed requirements, and the motion failed.

New Business

Curriculum Committee

The following proposals from the Curriculum Committee passed without discussion:

**English**

Proposal to change a Course – ENGL 201 Major British Writers I
  Change the Title to “British Literature to 1800”

Proposal to change a Course – ENGL 202 Major British Writers II
  Change the Title to “British Literature since 1800”

**Computer Science**

New Course Proposal – CSCI 180 Computers, Music and Art

New Course Proposal – CSCI 210 Game Programming

**Classics**

New Course Proposals
The following group of proposals, all involving courses in the Classics Department, were next submitted for approval:

**Classics**

**Proposals to Change a Course**

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Proposal Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLAS 254</td>
<td>Change course title</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLAS 255</td>
<td>Change course title</td>
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<tr>
<td>GREK 101</td>
<td>Change catalog description and course title</td>
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<tr>
<td>GREK 102</td>
<td>Change catalog description and course title</td>
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<td>GREK 201</td>
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<td>LATN 202</td>
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Todd McNerney (at-large) remarked that the word “Classical” was being removed from CLAS 254 and CLAS 255 (in 254 the title would change from “Classical Drama: Tragedy” to “Tragedy”; and in 255 the title would change from “Classical Drama: Comedy” to “Comedy”). He said that he would like to keep the term “Classical” in the titles. Darryl Phillips (at-large Senator and chair of the Classics Dept.) said that the issue raised by Mr. McNerney was discussed in his department: his colleagues thought that the titles of these courses should be consistent with the titles of other courses in the department. It was a matter of internal consistency.

The Senate voted on the above curriculum proposals, and they were approved.

The following proposals from the Curriculum Committee passed without discussion:
Classics

Proposals to Delete a Course
GREK 204: Delete course “New Testament Greek”
GREK 205: Delete course “Homeric Greek”

Proposals to Change a Course
LATN 305: Remove course as prerequisite for other 300-level LATN courses

Proposal to Change Degree Requirements for a Minor (Classics)
Add new courses CLAS 221 and CLAS 222 as “Approved Classics Courses”

(Note: a proposal to change the degree requirements for a major in Classics was withdrawn from the agenda prior to the meeting.)

With its scheduled business complete, the Senate adjourned at around 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terence Bowers
Faculty Secretary