Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting, 22 January 2008

The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday, 22 January 2008, at 5:00 p.m. in Wachovia Auditorium. After Speaker Joe Kelly called the meeting to order, the minutes from the Senate meeting of 23 October 2007 were approved.

Reports

The Speaker

Speaker Kelly announced that Bertie Mack, long-time faculty secretariat, had retired. He thanked her for her 29 years of service, and said that a search to find her replacement would begin soon.

The Speaker recalled that at the previous meeting, which was devoted exclusively to Gen Ed, Rohn England (Mathematics) had requested that the Gen-Ed Proposal be formatted as it might appear in the C of C catalog. The Speaker announced that he was ruling against this request and said that the Senate will vote on the Gen-Ed Proposals as they appear in their current format. He pointed out that it is the standard and traditional practice at the College for the Senate to vote on curricular issues and for others to “translate” it into catalog form. It was not appropriate, he said, for the Senate to define the catalog form.

Mr. England remarked that one of his main concerns was that bullet points might replace words in the catalog form or that some changes might occur resulting in a “mistranslation.” Cathy Boyd (Registrar and guest) said that if the Senate wished, it could review catalog pages before they went into print. Calvin Blackwell (Economics and Finance) took issue with the Speaker’s ruling, saying that the Senate does say “exactly” what goes into the catalog, and that its language should not be translated.

The Speaker replied that the specifics of any Gen-Ed changes will be accurate when they go into the catalog. He pointed out, too, that the Senate votes on curricular issues, not on specific pages of the catalog. He assured the Senate that it could rely on procedures that have been in place and generally worked well.

Ms. Boyd added that the Office of the Registrar typically takes language verbatim from documents approved by the Senate, and department chairs and faculty review catalog pages before they are printed. She said that her office can’t put language into the faculty catalog that has not been approved by the Senate, and that she has sent memoranda to her colleagues reminding them of this policy. When asked by the Speaker who actually writes the catalog, Ms. Boyd said that typically an editor is hired to do the job.

Speaker Kelly remarked that sometimes the catalog has contained language on curricular issues not approved by the Senate, but that we are now making efforts to avoid this and eliminate such occurrences. He said that if the Senate desired, a process could be set up in which the Senate could review catalog pages.
The Provost

As Provost Jorgens was out of town, Associate Provost Bev Diamond took her place. Since the Faculty Compensation Committee was reporting today, she decided to update the Senate on other efforts related to the faculty compensation issue and wished to highlight points in a memorandum that the Provost’s Office circulated regarding merit increases.

She reported that many meetings have taken place, and that the Provost gave the deans instructions to work with department chairs to develop a merit instrument for salary increases. The Academic Forum has been working on different approaches, she said, and some uniform criteria have emerged. All merit raises will be a mix of merit and market factors. Faculty will have to meet a minimum merit threshold for a raise. This year will be a transition year, in which each school will develop its own plan. Most schools, she said, will be asking faculty to provide a one- or two-page narrative of activities and accomplishments and a c.v. that covers three or four years. All chairs have been asked to do evaluations for untenured faculty; for other faculty some flexibility is allowed. Ms. Diamond also said that the Faculty Compensation Committee will perform a new study to obtain more data on market factors with regard to salaries.

At this point, Ms. Diamond asked if Senators had any questions. Mary Beth Heston (Art History) asked what the funding source was for salary increases. The Associate Provost responded that money would come from whatever the state grants for salary increases and from whatever the Board of Trustees allows for tuition increases. Decisions on tuition increases are generally made by the Board in June, she added, and the President submits his budget request in April.

Hugh Wilder, Chair of the Faculty Compensation Committee

Mr. Wilder commented on various points of the report entitled “Recommendations on Merit/Market Salary Increase Process,” which had been circulated to Senators and the general faculty prior to tonight’s meeting. He emphasized that the recommendations focus on criteria and procedures, and said that Deans and the Provost have in principle endorsed the Committee’s recommendations. What follows is a summary of his comments on various recommendations contained in the report.

--Annual Evaluation: Mr. Wilder said that annual evaluation of all regular faculty is important, if the President is going to make an argument to the Board that faculty deserve raises.

--Merit Threshold: There have been a lot of meetings about this, Mr. Wilder reported, and he thanked Bev Diamond for her help and input on this issue. To be eligible to receive a raise, faculty must demonstrate professional competence in three key areas—teaching, professional development, and service—according to criteria established by individual schools and departments.

--Annual Evaluation Criteria and Standards: Deans and chairs have so far had more input here than faculty, Mr. Wilder reported. Faculty must participate in the development of
evaluation standards and criteria, and once they are developed, they must be published and made available to all faculty.

--Annual Evaluation Process: This will vary by rank, school, and department, but there will be some uniform standards that apply to all faculty. He said that it was likely that more documentation would be required for annual evaluations of untenured faculty and for tenured faculty seeking promotion in the year prior to the tenure/promotion year.

--Salary Increases: The President’s plan is that salary increases will be based on faculty meeting the merit threshold. Annual evaluations will be used to help determine salary increases.

--Market Factors: collecting data on faculty salaries in other institutions and doing comparative studies of those data will determine these.

--Major Evaluations: No change is anticipated in the procedures for conducting the major evaluations of faculty (third-year review, tenure, promotion, post-tenure review, and renewal as Sr. Instructor).

--Annual Evaluation for Those Undergoing Major Evaluations: With regard to those going up for tenure, promotion, and other major evaluations, in addition to undergoing the major review, they will also go through the annual evaluation process for the purpose of determining possible salary raises.

--Tenure and Promotion Awards: The Committee recommends that these continue as well as the salary increases that go with them. Those increases should be added to the faculty member’s new base salary after whatever merit increase has been added.

--Post-Tenure Review: This will probably be reviewed and changed, Mr. Wilder reported. Thought will have to be given to see how the annual review process can streamline the post-tenure review process. He said, too, that since annual evaluations of all faculty will now be required, rollovers of annual evaluations from one year to the next will likely end.

--Faculty-Administration Manual (FAM): Given the new process of determining salary increases, the FAM will need to be revised.

Richard Nunan (at-large) raised an issue from his perspective as a member of the Tenure, Promotion, and Third-Year-Review Committee (T & P Committee). He noted that the T& P Committee has traditionally relied heavily on annual evaluations, which were fairly uniform from school to school. But now that the annual evaluations are going to be more “laissez-faire”—that is, now that they are going to vary from school to school and be based on different criteria—he was worried about the effect on the T & P process and the ability of the T & P Committee to do its job properly. He said that he was specifically concerned that there will be an inclination to move to minimum types of evaluations, especially given the added number of evaluations that are being heaped upon faculty, and that this will not be good for untenured faculty, who need to go through thorough evaluations.

Ms. Diamond replied that each school’s plan will be sent to the T & P Committee for comment and input. She assured Mr. Nunan that the T & P Committee will have a say. She added that the deans have said that they want an evaluation process for all ranks; the T & P Committee will have an opportunity to provide the deans with feedback.
Mr. Wilder said that Pam Riggs-Gelasco, chair of this year’s T & P Committee, has been invited to meetings on the issue, and that the Committee has been kept in the loop. He added that the former Provost, Andy Abrams, started a pilot program in which schools adopted their own annual evaluations. So the existence of different evaluation systems in some sense already exists. He urged the Senate to trust deans and chairs to work out appropriate evaluations plans for each school.

Doryjane Birrer (English) asked if the market part of the new salary plan would address the issue of salary compression. Mr. Wilder replied that it would and pointed to item #9 of his report, where the issue is brought up. Dennis Keyes (at-large) said that his department is looking at situations where assistant professors make more than associate professors, and he wondered if the salary plan would address that problem. Mr. Wilder said that it would as long as the associate professors meet the merit threshold.

Darryl Phillips (at-large) remarked that in point #5 of the Compensation Report (“Annual Evaluation Process”), the rationale was unconvincing for why those going up for promotion should provide more documentation the year before. Why provide extra documentation the year before and the year of the promotion process? Why go through that process twice? Mr. Wilder replied that Mr. Phillips may be right on that issue. If it is the wisdom of your school, he said, that big evaluation packets the year before are not needed, then such packets probably won’t be required. Mr. Nunan pointed out that the reason for extra documentation and a thorough evaluation the year prior to promotion was to provide a “heads-up” to the chair so that he or she could discuss potential problems with the faculty member. He added that with regard to this issue, he was less concerned about tenured faculty going up for promotion than he was about untenured faculty going up for tenure.

Speaking to a different issue, Ms. Diamond commented on the language used to define levels of merit. “Professional competence” is the phrase used for the minimum threshold. “High professional competence” defines the next level of merit. She added that this phrase is already in the Faculty/Administration Manual (FAM), and that a stronger performance in one of three areas (teaching, professional development, service) can compensate for a weaker performance in another. The third level is “exceptional professional performance.”

Thomas Ross (Psychology) brought up an issue related to item #10 of the Compensation Report (“Distribution to Schools”), which mentions how funds for salary increases will be distributed to various schools of the College. He wondered whether determining the funding will be data driven or whether other factors will be taken into consideration, such as cost of living and inequities in salaries that currently exist among different schools. Ms. Diamond responded that cost of living factors were not being addressed in the salary plan. As for the distribution of funds, she said that a mechanism will be used that the Faculty Compensation Committee developed a few years ago. The President will look at the distribution of funds once he sees how much money he has and what the evaluations are that come from deans and chairs. Mr. Wilder added that one extreme solution has been ruled out, namely the distribution of funds based on current salary pools. That formula, he noted, would simply make the rich richer and the poor poorer.
Gary Harrison (Mathematics) said that in his department salary increases were linked to how specific areas of the annual evaluation (teaching, research, service) were weighted. He wondered if that method of determining salary raises can still be used. Ms. Diamond said that departments can still use it, but for salary increases faculty will still have to meet the necessary threshold in all areas.

Jeffery Diamond (History) asked if there would be pressure on chairs to ensure that not all faculty meet the merit threshold. Ms. Diamond responded that there will not be a quota system, but that chairs will have to prove that their faculty are meeting the standard. She also pointed out that deans will scrutinize chairs’ decisions. Following up, Mr. Diamond asked if chairs and deans will have to agree, and Ms. Diamond said that there will be oversight at all stages. Again following up, Mr. Diamond asked if faculty will be able to view the oversight process. Probably not, Ms. Diamond answered. But faculty will be informed about judgments made, though the specifics of certain conversations between chairs and deans can’t be divulged. She added that all the details of the procedures for oversight have not been worked out.

Jack Parson (Political Science) asked what would happen if certain schools found that all their faculty were reaching a high standard, while other schools had different results. How will we know that standards are uniform across schools? Ms. Diamond responded that such scenarios have been discussed. She assured the Senate that there is a desire to have some uniform standards across schools. Mr. Parson then asked if they will be published, and Ms. Diamond said that they would be.

New Business

Election of members of the ad hoc Committee on Faculty Governance

Michael Phillips, chair of the Committee on Nominations and Elections, conducted the election of members of the ad hoc Committee on Faculty Governance. Mr. Phillips presented the following slate of nominated candidates.

Alison Smith: LCWA/Instructor
Linda Fitzharris: ED
Bill Barfield: ED
James Williams: LIBR
Todd McNerney: ARTS
Laura Turner: ARTS
Bob Mignone: SSM
Wendy Cory: SSM
Merissa Ferrara: HSS
Larry Krasnoff: HSS
Kelly Shaver: BUS

Mr. Phillips asked Senators if they wished to make additional nominations. None was made. The Senate voted and approved the entire slate.
Recommendation to Establish a Classroom Emergency Notification System

Mark Hurd, chair of Faculty Educational Technology Committee, presented his committee’s recommendation for the establishment of a classroom emergency notification system. He explained that a sub-committee was formed (consisting of himself and Vince Benigni of Communication Dept.) to address the issue because some members of the committee did not feel that they had expertise to deal with it. What follows is the text of the sub-committee’s recommendation:

*It is recommended that the Senate support the use of cell phones within the classroom for notification of campus emergencies.*

*We recommend that if faculty members require that all students have their cell phones powered off or in silent mode while in the classroom, that they consider the following options:*

1. *The instructor should have access to a cell phone (registered in CougarTrail) that can receive emergency notifications.*

2. *The instructor should designate one student to have their cell phone on for the duration of the class. Again, this cell phone must be registered in CougarTrail to receive emergency notifications.*

*Alternatively we recommend that faculty consider asking students set their cell phones on vibrate mode for emergency notification within the classroom.*

Mr. Hurd added that the proposed system was tested and that it worked.

At this point, Speaker Kelly explained that the recommendation was not officially coming from the Faculty Educational Technology Committee. For the Senate to vote on the recommendation, a Senator would have to make motion to endorse it and the motion would require a second. He added that he asked Mr. Hurd to deal with the emergency-notification issue and to offer a recommendation. He thanked Mr. Hurd for his efforts.

A Senator moved to endorse the recommendation and the motion received a second. Discussion on the motion ensued.

Darryl Phillips (at-large) asked why there couldn’t be an alarm sounded in buildings that would alert people to an emergency. Doing so would remove the problem of students checking their cell phones. Mr. Hurd replied that that suggestion was brought up, but the problem is that it is more expensive to implement than the cell-phone solution and would take more time. His sub-committee’s proposal can be implemented now. He added, however, that this solution need not be permanent and can be altered.

Mr. Diamond noted that there is already a problem with cell phones in classrooms and pointed out that a person designated to receive emergency notifications might receive ten or fifteen other messages during a class. Given the annoyance created by increased cell phone usage in
the classroom, and given the slim chance of a major emergency happening, he wondered if the proposed plan was the best solution.

Mr. England, contesting the claim that an alarm system would be expensive, said that his parents were poor farmers in the Midwest, but they had Klaxons in place to warn about tornadoes. Such a system, he insisted, was not expensive. Mr. Hurd replied that he was told that an alarm system would be expensive.

Susan Morrison (Associate Provost and guest) pointed out that alarm systems are somewhat ambiguous. If an alarm sounds, does it mean evacuate, check your cell phone, or something else? While she also has some concerns about the using cell phones for classroom emergency notification, she found that messages can be sent to designated students unobtrusively.

Seaton Brown (SGA President and guest) supported the proposed emergency notification system and said that he thought an alarm system would be expensive and unnecessary. He added that he checks text messages sent to him during class, though he usually doesn’t respond to them. Most students, he thought, have their cell phones on in class, whether they are asked to have them turned off or not.

Sorinel Oprisan (Physics and Astronomy) said that in some classrooms in the science building, he receives no cell-phone signal.

Mr. England insisted that an alarm system would work well and be cheap and clear. If a message is so important that it needs to be sent to classrooms during class time, then it’s important enough to make a noise. Installing Klaxons would not be expensive or difficult.

James Williams (Library) said that we should think of the emergency notification system as not just consisting of one element, but as layered system.

Larry Krasnoff (Philosophy) added that the motion to endorse the proposed emergency notification mechanism was not an either/or issue. We can have this mechanism for now and something else later. He said, however, that he was uncomfortable with voting for the proposal without any time limit placed upon it, or without some assurance that something better will be implemented later.

David Kowal (Art History) asked what the alert would say. He said the proposed method of emergency notification might also be a blunt instrument. Ms. Morrison said that it would instruct folks to consult email and voice mail messages. Mr. Williams asked for unanimous consent that the motion indicate that three students be designated in each class to receive emergency notification messages, but unanimous consent was not granted.

Mr. Parson noted that the Klaxon idea would do pretty much the same thing as what the emergency notification proposal would do. If an alarm sounds, people will check their cell phones. He added that he was worried about things outside the classroom eating into the classroom space. Already cell phones intrude upon the classroom, and the proposed emergency notification system would only add to the intrusiveness. He questioned, too, how
needed the proposed system was. How many times in the past have we needed such a system?

Mr. Nunan proposed that the Senate endorse the proposed recommendation with the condition that it be valid only through 2008. He thus moved to amend the motion by adding at the end of the proposed recommendation the following statement: “This is approved by the Senate through the summer of 2008.”

George Hopkins (History) said that he was in favor of the amendment, but suggested that additional language be added to clarify that the emergency notification proposal was an interim measure designed to take care of perceived need now until a better system was found.

The Senate voted on Mr. Nunan’s motion, which passed.

Picking up on Mr. Hopkins’ idea Meg Cormack (at-large) moved that the Senate add the following sentence: “The Senate urges the administration to purchase and install three Klaxons before the end of Summer 2008.” After the motion received a second, Mr. Wilder asked if the sub-committee would continue to meet to work on the problem. Ms. Morrison said that her office could ask its members to continue working on the issue. Mr. Wilder then stated that he felt Ms. Cormack’s motion was too specific and that the Senate could offer a more productive form of guidance. Mr. Overby wondered what the city would say about installing Klaxons. Mr. Krasnoff then asked for unanimous consent to change the last part of Ms. Cormack motion to read “alarms and/or Klaxons,” but unanimous consent was not granted.

Jerry Boetje (Computer Science) remarked that it was not the Senate’s job to tell the administration exactly how to deal with the emergency notification issue. Let’s throw it back to them,” he suggested, “to devise a better plan. We can’t solve this problem tonight.” Mr. England agreed, and said that the word “Klaxon” is archaic and that some kind of alarm system is needed. Mr. Diamond then suggested that the motion be reworded to read, “The Senate urges the administration to find an alternative alarm system before August 15.” He asked for unanimous consent that the change be accepted, and unanimous consent was granted.

The Senate then voted on Ms. Cormack’s revised motion, and it passed.

Debate returned to the original motion to endorse the emergency notification proposal. Mr. Overby called the question, and his motion passed.

The Senate voted on FEC motion to endorse the emergency notification proposal, which passed.

Curriculum Committee

The following proposal from the Curriculum Committee passed without discussion:
Women’s and Gender Studies

New Course Proposal – WGST 350 Gender and Violence

The following proposals were next submitted for approval:

Sociology and Anthropology

New Course Proposal – CRLS 200 Crime, Law and Society Field Experience
New Course Proposal – CRLS 401 Crime, Law and Society Advanced Field Experience

Mr. Nunan asked what the substantive difference was between the two courses. Maureen Hays (Sociology and Anthropology) replied that each course embodies different levels of expectation and are paired with different courses at different levels (the CRLS 401 course can be paired with 200- and 300-level courses, CRLS 200 can be paired with 100-level courses).

The Senate approve the two curriculum proposals.

The following proposals were next submitted for approval:

Economics and Finance

New Course Proposal – ECON 444 Economics Internship
New Course Proposal – FINC 444 Finance Internship
Proposal to change a Course – FINC 382 International Financial Markets (Change in Prerequisites to, “Junior Standing, ECON 201, ECON 202, and FINC 303”)

Classics

Proposal to Change Degree Requirements for a Major (A.B. Degree and B.A. Degree in Classics). Add new courses CLAS 221 and CLAS 222 as “Approved Classics Courses”

Mr. Nunan asked what the difference was between ECON 444 and FINC 444. A member of the School Business responded that in FINC 444 students are involved in portfolio analysis, whereas in ECON 444 students will deal with other economic issues and may also do some work for the city.

The Senate approve the above curriculum proposals.

Committee on Graduate Education, Continuing Education and Special Programs

(A) Proposals from the Committee
Environmental Studies Program

New Course Proposal -- EVSS 630 Natural Resources Law and Policy (with permission to cross-list with PUBA 630 Natural Resources Law and Policy)

The Senate approved the proposal.

(B) Report

A representative of the Graduate Committee reported to the Senate three changes that the Committee had made to the Policies and Procedures for Graduate Certificate Programs.

--First, in the title of the document, the “University of Charleston” is now referred to as the “Graduate School of the College of Charleston.”

--Second, section c.4 formerly stated that the credit requirements for graduate certificate programs could “range from 9 to 15 graduate credit hours.” Now it states that the “number of graduate credits may not be less than 12 and no more than 18 credits.”

--Third, section d.5 has been changed. Formerly, it stated that a “maximum of 40% of the credit hours towards any certificate program may be accepted as transfer credit.” Now it states that a “maximum of 6 credit hours towards any certificate program may be accepted as transfer credit.”

Constituents’ Concerns

Mr. Parson remarked that recently a policy had been promulgated about political activity on campus. He said that his department, Political Science, had a strong reaction to this policy. His colleagues were surprised that such an important policy could be implemented in such a manner and that it comes from the marketing division of the college administration. He would like the person who wrote the policy to come before the Senate and explain it.

Speaker Kelly said that he would take the blame for this situation, and that he should have consulted others before the announcement of the policy. He said that he was sure that the administration would be happy to solicit feedback from the Senate, and that he would make an effort to ensure that the policy safeguards free speech rights.

With its scheduled business complete, the Senate adjourned at around 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terence Bowers
Faculty Secretary