Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting, 9 December 2008

The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday, 9 December 2008, at 5:00 p.m. in Wachovia Auditorium. After Speaker Joe Kelly called the meeting to order, the minutes of the 11 November 2008 Faculty Senate meeting were approved.

Reports

The Provost

Provost Elise Jorgens announced that there would likely be future budget cuts. This year already state funds have been cut some $5,000,000, and this month another 2% will in all likelihood be cut and another 2% in January. She reported that the General Assembly has asked the college to plan for an additional 15% cut next year (2009-10).

How do we deal this, the Provost asked? One possibility is personnel reductions. She said that faculty positions would be protected as much as possible, and that she has worked with deans to prioritize which faculty searches would continue. Some open faculty positions, however, will not be filled this year. So far thirteen faculty searches have been cancelled. Among staff, she reported that no one has thus far been laid off, but ten open staff positions either won’t be fill or have been eliminated, such as the following:

--the office manager in financial aid will not be filled;
--the position of assessment officer in the office of Accountability, Accreditation, Planning, and Assessment has been filled by someone from the advising office, whose position in advising has been eliminated;
--and academic support position in the office of the First Year Experience has been eliminated;
--a recently vacated position in IT won’t be filled
--the Diversity Office has given up a vacancy.

Provost Jorgens added that while the budget cuts have spurred the College to be more creative in utilizing the talents of its personnel, they have created some pain, which the administration has tried to spread out. For example, no department has been asked to eliminate more than one faculty position. A “cushion plan” is also being formulated to deal with the next round of cuts. One coping strategy, she suggested, is to fill vacant faculty positions with visiting professors.

While the budget problem has created some hardship, the Provost said that things could be worse. In one institution, she said, the faculty senate has asked professors to take a pay cut to avoid layoffs. Harvard University has frozen salaries and stopped searches (it has lost 30% of its endowment). Other South Carolina state schools have experienced complete hiring freezes. Coastal Carolina University has asked every faculty member to take on a 4/4 teaching load. Other institutions have increased class sizes.

The Provost concluded her prepared report by pointing out that in the long run the College will have to be very creative to find new ways of supporting itself financially.

The Provost then said that she would be happy to answer questions. Jerry Boetje (Computer Science) asked about possible tuition increases. Provost Jorgens answered that the President has been talking to the Board of Trustees about adjusting the ratio between in-state students and out-of-state students as a means of bringing in additional revenue. Projections have also been done with regard to tuition increases: to recover the funds cut by the state since August,
tuition would have to be increased by 8%. The President, she said, will raise this possibility with the Board. Mr. Boetje replied that students have been telling him that they can’t financially deal with another tuition increase and would probably have to drop out, if it were to happen. Provost Jorgens said that another idea it to impose an $80 fee to help deal with the budget shortfall. Also, the College is about seventh in the state in terms of the price of tuition. Other state schools charge more, so there is some room for a possible increase.

Phil Dustan (Biology) asked about the TERI program and whether it has come into discussions with respect to the budget crisis. The Provost said that it hadn’t, but that it is costing the state a lot money. The Speaker concluded by thanking the Senators for their help.

The Speaker

Speaker Joe Kelly reported a request from the Registrar regarding proposals for new programs with a starting date in 2010, spring semester: the Registrar requests that such programs not start at that time in order to avoid possible complications that might happen during the switch over to the new computer system, which is scheduled to occur at the same time. The Speaker thought that this request was reasonable, especially given the fact that not many new programs start during the spring semester. He said, too, that he and Bob Perkins, chair of the Faculty Curriculum Committee, informed the Academic Council about this request, and that the Council sees no problem with it.

Deanna Caveny, chair of the Committee on By-Laws and Fac/Admin. Manual

Ms. Caveny reported that her committee has been making progress on all the items mentioned in her last report at the previous Senate meeting, and that later in the meeting she would comment on the motion concerning the policy on departmental tenure and promotion panels.

Annual and Merit Evaluations: Report from the Advisory Committee on Tenure, Promotion, and Third-Year Review

Before Richard Nunan, chair of the Advisory Committee on Tenure, Promotion, and Third-Year Review (T & P Committee), made his report, Laura Penny, chair of the Faculty Welfare Committee, reported that her committee has begun to review the proposed procedures and standards regarding annual and merit evaluations, and would make a formal report to the Senate next semester. Mr. Nunan then delivered the following prepared report, which he asked to be included in the minutes.

At the invitation of the Speaker of the Faculty, the President’s Advisory Committee on Tenure, Promotion, and Third-Year Review has reviewed the Office of Academic Affairs’ draft language for the proposed new Section VI.E, to be inserted in the Faculty Administration Manual under the subsection title, “Procedures for Annual and Merit Evaluation of Regular Instructional and Library Faculty.” This subsection would fall under the main section governing “Evaluation of Faculty,” following a series of four sections laying out the standards and procedures governing the major evaluations of tenurable faculty, instructors, and library faculty for tenure, promotion, retention, and third-year review.

The T&P Committee has three pieces of advice to offer concerning the draft language with respect to annual and merit evaluations of faculty.

First, some concern has been expressed, both on the Committee and among the faculty at large, about potential negative consequences which the decentralization of authority concerning the development of “specific policies, criteria and standards for annual
evaluation and the assignment of merit categories,” which would, under the draft policy, devolve to the level of departments and schools. The chief concern thus far has focused on the future status of teaching at the College of Charleston, as the primary mission of the faculty and the institution as a whole. Does the new policy mean that individual departments will soon be free to choose just where to place primary emphasis, with respect to raises and the quality of annual evaluations, so that the traditional ranking of teaching, research, and service might be reordered? Would departments, for example, or even entire schools, be free to make a decision under this policy to privilege research over teaching?

It’s difficult to assess the answer to this question. In favor of the view that departments could act unilaterally in this manner, there is the elimination of the past practice of weighting teaching as counting for at least 50% of the annual evaluation. Some of the comments emerging from the Office of Academic Affairs at some public faculty forums, about the virtues of such decentralization, may also have contributed to this reading.

Against this analysis, the decentralization policy itself is qualified by language in the draft proposal immediately following the expression of the decentralization policy: “Schools and departments will develop specific policies, criteria and standards for annual evaluation and the assignment of merit categories in their units. Criteria should be clearly stated and available to all members of the department. They may vary in detail but they must be consistent with general College policies. (See Faculty/Administration Manual, Sections A, B and C.)” [N.B.: A Roman numeral ‘VI’ should be inserted here before ‘A, B, and C’].

Presumably, one of the College policies at issue here would be the remark, expressed twice at the outset of Subsection VI.A (on p. 94, in the preamble of Subsection A, and again at the beginning of the subordinate section on teaching effectiveness), that “Teaching is the primary responsibility of faculty at the College of Charleston.” In other words, the elimination of the weighting policy in annual evaluation practices may be irrelevant, because the issue is addressed elsewhere.

In the view of the Advisory Committee on Tenure & Promotion, it would be prudent to repeat this language expressly in Subsection VI.E, in the paragraph quoted. One possibility would be to append the following sentence to the end of the above paragraph: “In particular, departments and schools need to be sensitive to the fact that teaching is the primary responsibility of faculty at the College of Charleston.”

**Second**, the T&P Committee is concerned about its own role in a mandate set forth in the paragraph immediately following the one just quoted: “The Faculty Welfare Committee and the Advisory Committee on Tenure, Promotion and Third-Year Review will provide comments on departmental and school evaluation instruments upon their initial development. Approval of these plans by the appropriate Academic Dean and by the Provost is required before implementation. After initial adoption, any significant changes must be sent to the Faculty Welfare Committee for review/recommendations and to the Provost for approval before implementation.”

On the one hand, the Advisory Committee on Tenure & Promotion does believe that members of this committee have an important, and perhaps unique perspective to bring to bear on the various individual annual and merit evaluation policies which might be crafted by the various departments and schools in response to the decentralization plan. On the other hand, the Committee also suffers already under a very heavy workload, and does not need yet another major responsibility on its plate, as this review process would surely be,
if it is to be done properly. Given the rhythms of faculty governance policy development, it is not implausible to think that the Committee would be asked to conduct many of those evaluations during a couple of spring semesters, when the Committee is either overwhelmingly busy (in January and February) or exhausted (March and April).

The Committee does not think this is a reasonable demand for the Office of Academic Affairs or the Senate to impose on the Committee itself. Consequently, the Committee suggests that the important role of T&P Committee review of these developing departmental and school evaluation policies be assigned instead to an ad hoc committee consisting entirely of former members of the President’s Advisory Committee on Tenure & Promotion. This strategy would leave the current membership of the T&P Committee free to conduct its normal business, but still preserve input from the T&P Committee perspective in the important oversight provisions governing the new evaluation policies to be developed at the local level.

Third, it has come to the T&P Committee’s attention that some faculty have been asking why we should not have one-year windows for both types of evaluation, instead of the separate three-year window of data now in use for merit evaluation. The existing policy was developed by last year’s Compensation Committee, and it seems a good one from our perspective on the T&P Committee. A three-year window on merit reflects the recognition that faculty performance patterns cannot easily be confined to a single year’s duration, especially when evaluating faculty along three distinct dimensions. We would therefore urge the retention of the three-year window for merit evaluation.

Unfinished Business

Motion concerning the policy on departmental Tenure and Promotion Panels

This motion, which had been made by the T & P Committee in the November Faculty Senate meeting, was sent to the Committee on By-Laws and the Faculty/Administration Manual (By-Laws Committee) for review, as required by the by-laws. Ms. Caveny, chair of the By-laws Committee, said that her committee supported of the motion, but wished to make some minor changes mainly for the purposes of streamlining the language that would be inserted into the FAM and enhancing its clarity.

Original Motion

FAM VI.D.4, ¶ 3. When the department consists of five or more tenured faculty members, one tenured faculty member from outside the department shall be added to the panel. If a department is reviewing more than one candidate for tenure, promotion, or third year evaluation, the same individual from outside the department sits with departmental panel members for all cases, unless the department has six or more candidates due for panel evaluation. In such cases, a single extra-departmental panel member is still preferred, but at the discretion of the panel chair and panel, the department may appoint no more than two extra-departmental panel members to sit with the panel in different cases, with the cases divided in such a way so that a single extra-departmental panel member must serve in all cases under review for the same rank.

Revised Motion

FAM VI.D.4, ¶ 3. When the department consists of five or more tenured faculty members, one tenured faculty member from outside the department shall be added to the panel. If a department is reviewing more than one candidate for tenure, promotion,
or third-year evaluation, the same individual from outside the department sits with departmental panel members for all cases, unless the department has six or more candidates due for panel evaluation. In such cases, departmental members of the panel may appoint no more than two extra-departmental panel members to sit with the panel in different cases, with the cases divided such that a single extra-departmental panel member shall serve in all cases under review for the same rank.

Ms. Caveny explained that the revised language removed the preference clause (“a single extra-departmental panel member is still preferred . . .”) to avoid creating any possible ambiguity or confusion for departments wishing to be guided by the FAM on adding more than one extra-departmental member to its review panel. The revised language also makes explicit who selects the additional extra-departmental panel member (it is departmental panel members, not all panel members, one of whom may include an extra-departmental panel member). Mr. Nunan said that the T & P Committee has approved the revisions suggested by the By-Laws Committee.

The Senate voted on the By-Laws Committee’s amendment to the motion made by the T & P Committee, which passed.

The Senate then voted the entire T & P motion, which passed.

Faculty Curriculum Committee

Prior to the meeting all proposals dealing with the proposed International Studies major were withdrawn. All of the other curricular proposals on the agenda were approved without discussion and include the following:

Latin American and Caribbean Studies
Change of Minor--Latin and Caribbean Studies

Geology
New Course--GEOL 235 Geology and Civilization

Hospitality and Tourism Management
Change Course--HTMT 488 Strategic Hospitality and Tourism Management
Change major

Mathematics
Change Major--Actuarial studies track

School of Languages, Cultures and World Affairs
Change Minor--Archeology Minor
Change minor--Asian Studies

Historic Preservation and Community Planning
New Course--HCPC 375 Landscape Preservation and Community Planning
New Course--HCPC 298 AutoCAD and PhotoShop for Preservationists
Psychology

Change major   BS Psychology
New Course--PSYC 460 Advanced Conditioning and Learning with Lab
New Course--PSYC 462 Advanced Social Psychology with Lab
New Course--PSYC 464 Advanced Physiological Psychology with Lab
New Course--PSYC 466 Advanced Sensation and Perception with Lab
New Course--PSYC 468 Advanced Cognitive Psychology with Lab

Discovery Informatics

New cognate--Accounting
New cognate--Finance

Religious Studies

New Course--RELS 285 Religion and Feminism
Change Course--RELS 265 Women and Religion

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

The following curricular proposals were approved without discussion:

Proposal for a New Graduate Course:

Program -- Joint MAT in Middle Grades with The Citadel: EDMG 657 Teaching Writing in the Middle Grades

Proposal to Change a Graduate Program:

MAT in Special Education – Requirement Change

Proposal for a New Certificate Program:

Certificate in Special Education

Proposal to Change a Graduate Course:

ENGL 702 Internship – Change in hours of work

Constituents’ Concerns

Lynn Cherry (guest) reminded the Senate of the December commencement ceremony in the new sports arena. She said that the ceremony is very important to students and their parents and friends, and she urged faculty to attend.

With its business concluded, the Senate adjourned at around 5:40 P. M.

Respectfully submitted,

Terence Bowers
Faculty Secretary