Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting, 10 February 2009

The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday, 10 February 2009, at 5:00 P.M. in Wachovia Auditorium. After Speaker Joe Kelly called the meeting to order, the minutes of the 9 December 2008 Faculty Senate meeting were approved.

Reports

The Provost

Provost Elise Jorgens reported on the on-going fall-out of budget cuts. She began by saying that this academic year fifteen academic positions have been lost and that she is not happy about this, though the Office of Academic Affairs has worked hard to minimize losses, and to spread them out over the campus so that no one area is affected more than others. Also, the Office has chosen to not fill some positions, rather lay people off—though fifteen losses, she admitted, is still significant. Eleven staff positions have also been cut and efforts have been made to consolidate staff positions.

The Provost also reported that there have been cuts in the operating budget. As for future budget cuts, the Provost thought that there wouldn’t be anymore this fiscal year, but that there would likely be another in July.

On the issue of enrollment, the Provost was happy to report that applications have been up 16% from last year, which makes this year a “banner year.” Deposits received by students who have been accepted are up by 20%. The Provost said that these were very positive developments. She also urged the faculty to attend admission events and reported that fifty-seven faculty have been involved in a pilot program to call prospective students to encourage them to attend the C of C. She thanked those faculty for their participation in the program.

The Provost next reported on the findings of the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) survey, which is administered by the Higher Education Research Institute of UCLA to freshmen nationally to find out the key reasons for their choice of college or university. One key reason, the findings show, is the school’s reputation. Another centers on the social life of the campus. Cost of tuition is another. Of increasing importance to prospective students is whether the school serves as a helpful gateway to graduate school and whether it will lead to jobs. Visits to campus, the survey reveals, are also very important in influencing students’ choice of school.

At this point, the Provost opened the floor to questions. Rohn England (Mathematics) asked whether the rise in deposits by accepted students applies mainly to in-state students or out-of-state students. Provost Jorgens responded that the increase applies to both categories, but that the greatest increase is among in-state students.

The Provost then mentioned a recent article in the George Street Observer and said it was mostly accurate, but that she was misquoted in her statement regarding a search for a new coordinator of the Office of Diversity. Provost Jorgens told the Senate that due to the sudden resignation and departure of the previous coordinator, her office, along with other members of the Executive Management Team, will need time to evaluate the role of this office on campus before a replacement is hired. Student workers in the Office of Diversity will complete ongoing projects (such as the Model U.N.) but are being assigned to other offices on campus.

The Speaker
Speaker Kelly reported that the Faculty Compensation Committee is looking at the proposed language on annual and merit evaluations and would make a report on it in the future. He said that the rest of his report could be found in the most recent issue of his newsletter.

In the ensuing question-and-answer period, Bill Manaris (Computer Science) noted that the Speaker in his newsletter had made reference to a pilot program that would involve faculty in working with a new learning management system, which may replace WebCT. He asked how faculty could learn more about the program and possibly participate in it. The Speaker said that he should talk to Susan Beattie, Director of IT, for additional information.

Noelle Carmichael, chair of the First-Year-Experience Committee

Ms. Carmichael said that her committee wished to update the Senate on the First Year Experience program (FYE). She said that fifty-eight faculty are slated to participate next year. About half of these are new to the program, and half are returning. Currently the FYE is meeting the needs of 800 students; next year it will serve 1100, and the year after that 1500. The plan is to have over 2000 in the FYE by 2012, which is when the FYE will be required for incoming students in their first year.

Ms. Carmichael said that the committee and program directors are working on making it easier for faculty to find teaching partners for learning communities and are soliciting feedback from those who have participated in the program to learn how to improve it. She reported, too, that the budget for the FYE has been cut by 10%, but that they are coping successfully and that there will be no problem in keeping the program running. She announced that brochures will be distributed at the end of the month and that students will also start signing up for courses.

Darryl Phillips (at-large) asked if the FYE will continue to receive new faculty lines in light of the recent budget problems. Ms. Carmichael responded that of eight lines that had been pledged, two are going through and six are on hold.

Phil Dustan (Biology) asked what criteria were used to measure the program’s success. Ms. Carmichael replied that students are surveyed. Kay Smith (guest and Assoc. VP for the Academic Experience) said that surveys measure student satisfaction. She said, too, that part of the Quality Enhancement Plan includes an assessment schedule for the FYE. As part of the assessment, learning outcomes, which professor teaching the FYE course have chosen to emphasize, are also evaluated. With respect to the question concerning new lines, Ms. Smith informed the Senate that the two new positions slated for this year have been put on hold.

Laura Penny, Fac. Welfare Committee (report on annual & merit evaluations)

Ms. Penny presented a written report that contained the proposed language defining the annual and merit evaluations to be inserted in the Faculty/Administration Manual (FAM) along with the Welfare’s Committee’s comments on certain sections of that language. Presented below are passages from the proposed language on evaluations (in italics), the Welfare Committee’s comments (in red) on those passages, and summaries of Ms. Penny’s additional comments (in regular text) made during the meeting.
1. Introduction

Annual evaluations shall serve two functions: (1) to guide the professional
development of the faculty member, and (2) to record part of the evidence upon
which personnel decisions and salary recommendations shall be based.
Accordingly,

• each regular faculty member of the College of Charleston will be
evaluated annually on the basis of performance over the last
calendar year at the College.

In addition,

• each faculty member with at least one full calendar year of service
at the College will be assigned a merit category on the basis of
performance over the last three calendar years (or the time since
hire if this is less than three years) as one factor to be considered in
the determination of any salary increase.

Newly hired faculty members will not be assigned a merit category. Instead,
each will receive an “average” raise determined by the relevant dean and
based on the percentage of the salary pool allocated to the faculty member’s
school for raises.

The term ‘average’ is vague. Is this the actual numerical average? It is
possible that the newest faculty members of a department would be higher paid
than colleagues hired a year or two before and this would only exacerbate a
salary inversion issue.

Each annual performance evaluation should include strengths, weaknesses,
and specific recommendations for improvement.

There are certainly cases where no weaknesses exist. Is this statement
requiring a chair to manufacture a weakness for the review?

Probationary faculty should be rigorously evaluated each year in preparation
for third-year and tenure reviews. In the case of a tenured faculty member or
a Senior Instructor, the assessment may be less detailed. A faculty member,
Chair, Dean or Provost can request that a more extensive evaluation be
conducted in any given year.

This is a significant change from the past policy allowing a tenured faculty
member to forgo any evaluation for up to 2 years. Welfare is concerned about
the added workload of a more extensive evaluation at the request of the
administration. We suggest that those departments that do implement tiered
evaluations should have specific guidelines on notifying tenured faculty
members that a detailed evaluation is being sought. Also that they develop
policies on how often or for what causes these extensive evaluations of tenured members would be requested.

Ms. Penny added in the meeting that a timetable should be provided for when a detailed evaluation is required, along with notification and reasons as to why it is needed.

Annual performance and merit reviews constitute only one of many factors that are considered during the tenure and promotion decision-making process and in no way conclusively determine that outcome. Because tenure and promotion decisions often involve an assessment of career achievement and potential, as well as a demonstrated commitment to scholarship and the mission of the institution, annual performance reviews and the assignment of merit categories to a faculty member for purposes of salary administration for one or several years are insufficient, by themselves, to determine the outcome of such important decisions.

While we see the merits of the above paragraph, Welfare does feel that there should be a clear and predictable relationship between the annual & merit evaluations and progress towards tenure & promotion. Are we really saying that a probationary faculty member could receive 5 years of good annual evaluations and still not be good enough to receive tenure?

This segues to the larger topic of College wide standards for tenure & promotion. If schools and departments come up with their own policies then the T&P committee must accept those policies and criteria specified by the individual departments when evaluating faculty. Are there no specific and quantitative College wide benchmarks that all departments must require from their faculty? Are we comfortable with having no common scale for teaching, research and service?

Ms. Penny added that this paragraph of the evaluation proposal particularly bothered the Welfare Committee because it seems to say that just because one gets good evaluations, one shouldn’t expect tenure and promotion. Such an idea, she stressed, seems very problematic and leads to the issue of there being no across-the-College-standards, especially those of a quantitative nature.

From 2. Standards, Criteria and Evidence for Annual Evaluation

The Faculty Welfare Committee and an ad Hoc committee of past members of 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.

Welfare shares the concern of T&P with regard to the workload that we will receive with regard to this last paragraph. At the very least the departmental evaluation procedures should be vetted through their individual schools and presented for review by Welfare collaboratively. Or it may be best to set up an ad Hoc committee to approve the initial instruments/procedures and then any subsequent changes can be reviewed individually by Welfare.
From: 3. Annual Evaluation and Merit Review Process

Annual evaluations will normally be completed early in each calendar year. A calendar for the evaluation process will be posted on the website of the Office of Academic Affairs.

While specific policies may differ by school and department, all annual evaluations should provide sufficient information to allow for full, fair and constructive evaluation without being unnecessarily burdensome to faculty or Department Chairs. At a minimum, faculty members will provide

- a current curriculum vitae, and
- a 1-2 page personal statement presenting accomplishments in the areas of teaching, research and professional development, and service over the last calendar year.

We perceive issues in evaluating teaching with only two pages of narrative. Research and service are fairly easily quantified, but effective teaching is difficult to demonstrate without additional materials. We suggest that all faculty members be allowed to include some (limited) amount of additional evidence for review.

Ms. Penny added that the Welfare Committee thought the two-page narrative for evaluating teaching should perhaps be a required minimum length, not a maximum length.

From: 6. Dean’s Role in the Assignment of Merit Categories

The Dean plays an active role in the development of departmental and school criteria and standards for annual evaluation and the assignment of merit categories. The Dean is responsible for ensuring that these standards and criteria are applied by chairs equitably across departments in his or her school. Normally a Dean and Chair will discuss the assignment of merit categories before a faculty member is notified of such. Notification to the faculty member of the assignment of a merit category may occur separately from the annual evaluation.

Welfare has received many comments on how the merit category and subsequent raises are decided and how much of that information is shared with the faculty member. In general the faculty feel that this process should be transparent where they are notified of the specific recommendations of their chair, dean, provost, and final rating. As the administrator with the most knowledge of their faculty, if the chair’s initial recommendation is changed, support for that change should be given.

Ms. Penny added that this was the most commented on section, and stressed the need for transparency in the decision making process. If chairs’ decisions are overruled by deans, then justification must be provided, since chairs know faculty in their departments best.

Deanna Caveny, chair of the Committee on By-Laws and Fac/Admin. Manual
Ms. Caveny reported that her committee is working on several issues. One issue is to eliminate an ambiguity in the by-laws concerning the definition of “regular faculty,” a definition that has implications for determining who is eligible to serve as a Faculty Senator and how many Senate seats are allocated to academic departments. The main ambiguity centers on faculty who are also administrators. For example, some chairs may not be counted in senatorial apportionment decisions and be ineligible to serve in the Senate because they may not “teach at least six hours.” The question of who is an “administrator” is also problematic and has implications for how one defines and counts “regular faculty” in departments. Ms. Caveny said that this issue has been around for a while and is complicated, but that the committee will present a proposal to address it, probably at the next Senate meeting.

Ms. Caveny also reported that the committee is bringing to the Senate an amendment that will allow the committee to make changes to defunct or inaccurate titles. The committee is also crafting language to deal with a change to the FAM endorsed by the Senate last year. This change requires the candidates for tenure, promotion, renewal, and third-year review to sign their departmental evaluation panel’s letter and receive a copy. Finally, the committee is considering proposing changes to the FAM that would require that students be provided reasonable accommodations for religious observance. Ms. Caveny remarked that this issue was first brought to the committee’s attention by a faculty member, and that Tom Trimboli, Legal Counsel, advised that rights concerning religious freedom obligated the College to accommodate students.

New Business

Motion to Amend Article V Section 2.B.3. of the By-Laws

Ms. Caveny, on behalf of the Committee on By-Laws and Fac./Admin. Manual, introduced the following motion:

Intent: To allow Committee on the By-laws and the Faculty/Administration Manual to correct inaccurate administrative titles in the FAM without action by the Faculty Senate and the faculty.

Motion: to amend Article V Section 2.B.3. of the By-Laws

3. Committee on the By-Laws and the Faculty/Administration Manual

a. Composition: Three faculty members. *Ex officio* members are the Speaker of the Faculty, the Faculty Secretary, the Provost (or Provost’s designee), and the Vice President for Legal Affairs. (Rev. April 2007)

b. Duties:

1. To review on a continuing basis the Faculty By-Laws and the Faculty/Administration Manual;

2. To propose changes for the improvement of these documents and to forward the recommended changes to the administration and/or the Faculty Senate as appropriate;

3. To incorporate any revisions to or interpretations of either document in new editions of the documents; and
4. To make non-substantive changes to the Faculty By-Laws to correct unintended grammatical and spelling errors, and to address minor problems of stylistic consistency, and correct inaccurate administrative titles. Such a non-substantive change shall not constitute an amendment to or repeal of the Faculty By-Laws. Such changes shall be made only when unanimously approved by the Committee. Notice in writing shall be given to the Faculty Senate within 60 calendar days of such changes being approved by the Committee. Such changes shall be repealed if an appropriate motion to amend something previously adopted is approved by a simple majority of the Committee, the Faculty Senate, or the College Faculty. (Ins. April 2007)

The Speaker pointed out that, as required by the by-laws, the motion must go to (in this instance return to) the By-Laws/FAM Committee for review. At the next meeting, the By-Laws/FAM Committee will report on the motion and the Senate will vote on it.

Save-Our-Trees Resolution

Speaker Kelly next recognized Phil Dustan (Biology), who said that he wished the Senate to vote on a resolution that would encourage the College administration to put a halt to the planned removal of some trees in front of Randolph Hall until a public hearing was held and the administration provided a fuller justification for their removal.

The Speaker informed the Senate that to introduce such a resolution at this time, the Senate would have to vote to suspend the rules, and that a two-thirds majority was required. Mr. Dustan made a motion to suspend the rules, and the motion received a second. The Senate voted and the motion passed.

Mr. Dustan said that he thought many Senators had followed the discussion about the tree-removal controversy on the College listserv, but he wanted to provide some additional context. He said that this was not the first time that the administration had tried to take down trees without consulting the college community. He mentioned that the Sotille tree was almost taken down simply because some administrator thought it was ugly. It was saved because students protested. Similarly, an attempt was made to take down the bald cypresses in Cougar Mall, but that effort too was stopped after some protest. Such incidents, he continued, prompted the creation of an ad hoc Tree Committee, though that committee, which was created to deal with a specific controversy, no longer exists. The same pattern is recurring now where trees are going to be removed without consultation with the College community simply because someone in the administration does not like how they look. Though other reasons have been given for their removal, Mr. Dustan said that they were questionable, and that the resolution asks for a forum so that the reasons for their removal can be examined and discussed. He then moved that the following resolution be endorsed by the Senate:

Save our Trees
February 2009

Dear President Benson,

It is our understanding that the College of Charleston Administration is planning to remove 10 significant native trees from the area around Randolph Hall. The 4 large magnolias and 2 mature palms that grace the south side of the building are slated to go, as well as 4 American hollies (the trees with the red berries) on the north side.

We object to this because cutting these trees will significantly diminish the beauty of our campus landscape, and significantly reduce the diversity of the plantings.
around Randolph Hall. These are mature trees that add a lot of grace to the building, and a lot of color and texture as well. They are home to many birds and small mammals. The trees are far enough away from the building to allow for air circulation, and their root systems pose no obvious threat. We object to cutting the hollies particularly because of their fruit – these red berries add welcome dots of color to our campus during the winter season. They also play a large role in ameliorating the urban heat island effect and help save energy by providing shade for buildings. Trees are a very important part of our campus. They provide us with a sense of place. There is no need to take the drastic action of removal.

Therefore, the undersigned members of the College of Charleston community request that no removal action be taken until such action is satisfactorily explained and justified to the entire campus community. We urge the persons who have suggested such removal to hold a well-announced public hearing to present their rationale.

The motion received a second.

Michael Gomez (Hispanic Studies) asked if the magnolia trees were twenty years old. “Yes,” Mr. Dustan replied. They were planted as mature trees and contain a lot of bio-diversity. In response to a question about the justification given for the removal of the trees, Mr. Dustan said that the primary reason was to reduce moisture around and on Randolph Hall, and that the administration cited a guideline that no tree should be within 25 ft. of a building. Mr. Dustan thought this was a wildly unrealistic guideline because if it were followed, it would entail the removal of 80% of the trees on campus. Problems of moisture, he added, can fixed by installing drains and pruning. No one wants to damage Randolph Hall, but the building can be preserved without removing the trees, which help give us a sense of place.

Anthony Williams (Philosophy) asked if the consultants hired by the College have in mind some sort of future image-making use of Randolph Hall and wondered if that may be motive for the tree removal. Larry Krasnoff (Philosophy) then asked about the declarative statement at the end of the second paragraph of the petition: There is no need to take the drastic action of removal. He suggested that, given the spirit of the resolution and its call for open-mindedness, the language of that sentence be modified. Mr. Dustan proposed changing the word “is” in the sentence to “may.” This change was accepted without objection.

The Senate voted on Mr. Dustan’s motion to endorse the petition: the motion passed.

PASCAL Resolution

David Cohen (guest and Dean of Libraries) introduced the PASCAL resolution (below), which, he explained, comes to Senate from the Faculty Library Committee.

To the South Carolina State Legislature:
Submitted by the College of Charleston Faculty Senate
Author: Faculty Library Committee

Purpose: To advocate the restoration of full funding for PASCAL by the South Carolina General Assembly.

Whereas, PASCAL is a statewide academic library consortium, of which the College of Charleston is a member, and
Whereas, PASCAL’s funding has been supported by the member colleges and the South Carolina General Assembly, and

Whereas, PASCAL has succeeded in serving the research needs of students by expanding access to information through a rapid delivery system and through access to online databases provided at consortial pricing and

Whereas, the state funding for PASCAL was decreased by 90% in FY2008-2009, necessitating increased fees by member colleges and reduced services and

Whereas, without a reinstatement of legislative funding, PASCAL will cease to exist in FY2009-2010, and

Whereas, the online and print materials provided by PASCAL will no longer be available to the majority of the of the 230,000 students and faculty of South Carolina institutions, and

Whereas, the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education Study Committee has identified PASCAL as “the best current example for sharing inter-institutional costs for technology in South Carolina,” and

Whereas, the Commission on Higher Education has recommended funding PASCAL at a cost of $2.3 million,

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly has the authority to reinstate PASCAL’s funding and to support the inter-institutional cooperation that serves the students and faculty of South Carolina’s colleges and universities, and

Whereas, the College of Charleston is a direct beneficiary of PASCAL’s resources having received access to over ten million books, 13,000 research publications and delivery of over 3,938 books. Therefore,

Be it enacted, by the College of Charleston Faculty Senate the following:

That, the College of Charleston Faculty Senate strongly appeals to the South Carolina General Assembly to Fund PASCAL at the $2.3 million amount recommended by the Commission on Higher Education.

Mr. Cohen then explained that PASCAL is consortium of South Carolina libraries that shares books and pools resources to purchase and share databases. State funding for PASCAL, however, has been cut by 90%, which, if continued, will cause our library and other state libraries to loose databases and the software needed to make them functional within the system. Such drastic cutbacks, Mr. Cohen continued, will also hurt faculty research efforts and ultimately compromise the mission of the College. He added that Faculty Senates in other colleges have passed similar resolutions. He also encouraged faculty to call or write their legislative representatives to urge them to restore PASCAL to its previous funding levels.

Sheila Seaman (guest and Asst. Dean) added that the College contributes around $12,000 for participation in the PASCAL consortium, but gets over $100,000 in database assets, which make us comparable to the University of South Carolina in this area. PASCAL democratizes library resources and makes available to each academic library in the state the resources of all the other libraries.
The Senate voted and the PASCAL resolution passed.

**Faculty Curriculum Committee**

The following curricular proposals were approved without discussion:

- Change Minor—Women’s and Gender Studies
- Change Minor—Archeology

Next the following proposal was introduced:

- Change of Major—Latin and Caribbean Studies

Mr. Krasnoff asked whether there had been any discussion of the study abroad component in the proposal when it was reviewed by various committees. He said that he thought it was good for students to have study abroad experiences, and was glad that there was a clause in the proposal that students could opt of it. But he was worried about the financial burden such a requirement would impose on students and wondered about the wisdom of requiring educational experiences that students or the College might not be able to afford.

Sarah Owen (at-large) responded that she and her colleagues in Latin and Caribbean Studies had talked about the issue. She pointed out that there is a lot funding for study abroad and that many study abroad scholarships are available to students. So the money is there, she stressed, and students can always opt of the study abroad requirement. She also stressed that study abroad constitute wonderful and valuable learning experiences for students. Bob Perkins (chair of the Faculty Curriculum Committee) said that his committee did discuss the study abroad component of the proposal, and Norris Preyer (Physics and chair of the Budget Committee) said that his committee discussed the issue a lot and were glad to hear that many study abroad scholarships were available.

The Senate voted and the proposal to change the Major in Latin and Caribbean Studies passed.

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

The following proposal passed without discussion:

- Proposal for a New Graduate Program: MAT in Teaching in the Middle Grades

Next, Heather Tierney, chair Faculty Committee on Graduate Education, Continuing Education and Special Programs, informed the Senate of the following curricular change that her committee had passed:

- Permission to Cross-List A Graduate Course – FREN 590 with FREN 490

**Constituents’ Concerns**

James Williams (Library) asked that Senators spread the word that students should never give out their C of C account password to anyone soliciting it, especially through email.
Mr. Krasnoff asked if the Speaker could update the Senate on the Provost Search. The Speaker replied that the first meeting of the Provost Search Committee would take place on February 16.

With the Senate’s business concluded, a motion was made to adjourn. The motion received a second and passed. The Senate adjourned at around 6:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Terence Bowers
Faculty Secretary