Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting, 9 September 2008

The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday, 9 September 2008, at 5:00 p.m. in Wachovia Auditorium. After Speaker Joe Kelly called the meeting to order, all the minutes of the regular Faculty Senate meetings of the spring 2008 semester (22 January, 12 February, 11 March, and 8 April) were approved. The Speaker announced that approval of minutes of all the spring 2008 special Faculty Senate meetings, which have all been posted on the Faculty Senate Web site, would be on the agenda of the next Faculty Senate meeting for approval.

Reports

The Speaker

Speaker Kelly said that his full report was in his newsletter, which he had circulated last week to the faculty by email. He did, however, wish to highlight one item, which concerned the implementation of a new Modification of Duties policy passed by the Faculty Senate in its last meeting (8 April 2008). He reported that he went to the Office of Academic Affairs and to the Faculty Welfare and Budget Committees to work out a timetable. He said that he would like to make sure that the new policy gets to the Board of Trustees in time so that it could go into effect by fall 2009.

Speaker Kelly reported that he has asked George Pothering, interim Dean of the School of Sciences and Mathematics, to serve as Parliamentarian this year, and that Mr. Pothering has agreed. The Speaker added that while it is generally not a good practice to have deans serve in the role of Parliamentarian, he thought that as Mr. Pothering had served as Faculty Senate Parliamentarian a number of times before and was a special individual, he hoped that there would be no objection to his choice (and there weren’t any). He thanked Mr. Pothering for serving.

Election of Speaker Pro Tempore

Trish Ward (at-large) nominated Scott Peeples (English) as Speaker Pro Tempore. The nomination was seconded and Mr. Peeples was elected.

Reports (Cont.)

The Provost

Provost Elise Jorgens, after welcoming everyone back, spoke about the Modification of Duties policy. She said that the administration would look at the policies of other colleges and universities and put in place a good policy for the College. She said that she will work with Tom Casey, Director of Human Resources, to make sure that no laws are being violated. She added that the current Modification of Duties policy remains in effect until a new one is developed and approved.

Addressing the topic of the merit compensation, The Provost said that her sense was that last year’s merit raise process was successful. She also thought that the President deserved credit for putting a lot of money toward raises. The deans, she reported, also view last year’s process as a success and good step forward. They got to know their faculty better, and for many faculty the results were very positive. She added that the President is committed to raising salaries, not just those of the permanent faculty, but also those of adjuncts and staff.
With regard to standardizing the merit raise process across schools, the Provost said that she, the President, and others started with the view that not everyone would fit into the same mold because of differences in each academic field. Flexibility was therefore needed. To determine what was appropriate for each field, a two-way process was set between her (along with the deans) and department chairs and their faculty. Some schools are uniform across departments, some are not. The merit raise system is still a work in progress, the Provost said, and it will continue to be reviewed and refined. She invited Senators to offer feedback on the review process and said that she has sent messages to deans, department chairs, and the Faculty Compensation Committee asking for feedback. She stressed that the College wants to reward excellence.

The Provost then brought up a key question concerning the merit review process: are we going to do the merit review as a separate process from the tenure and Promotion review? She said that we need to be mindful of having too many evaluation processes in places, and that it would not be a good use of our time to deal with multiple reviews, especially if they could be consolidated. We need to think about how the merit evaluation and the tenure and promotion evaluation can work together.

Phil Dustan (Biology) thought that the data used to adjust salaries according to market variables should be made public and that there could be more transparency in the process. Bev Diamond (guest and Associate Provost) asked what data he was referring to beyond what has already been published in the Faculty Compensation Salary studies. Mr. Dustan said that he would like to see more data about the salaries of faculty in the peer institutions, since these data are used to help determine faculty salary raises at the College. He would also like to know more about the “sliding scale” used by the administration to determine raises. Ms. Diamond said that the salary studies didn’t break down salaries by rank in each department, but did show average salaries of faculty in the schools of peer institutions. Mr. Dustan said that he would like to see more detailed data made public. Ms. Diamond replied that that was a valid request, but advised that we not go to a level of detail that ends up pitting individuals against individuals. Meg Cormack (at-large) pointed out that the salaries of all state employees making over $50,000 a year are made public and can be found on the internet.

The Provost concluded her report by announcing that she will continue to hold her informal chats with faculty called “Conversations with the Provost,” and invited faculty to attend.

Alex Modly, Student Government Association

Ms. Modly announced that the Major/Minor Fair would be held this year on Thursday, 9 October, in Physicians Promenade. She said last year’s Major/Minor Fair was a great success and encouraged Senators to participate and spread the word about it. She stressed that it was an important campus event.

Larry Krasnoff (Philosophy) pointed out that the event would take place during the Jewish holiday Yom Kippur and wondered if it would be possible to change the date of the event. Ms. Modly replied that she would try to make the change.

Deborah Jeter, co-chair of the Faculty Educational Technology Committee

Ms. Jeter wished to update the Senate on the online course-evaluation option, which the Senate approved on 8 April 2008. She said that while the option is not available for express courses this semester, it is for other courses, including study-abroad courses. She added that instructions on how to sign up for online evaluations will be sent out soon, and that the registration period will be through October 3. The whole process of online evaluations will work through Cougar Trail, which is a secure system; and as stipulated by the Faculty Senate
last spring, when it approved optional online evaluations, there will be a one-week window for students to do the evaluations. During the week of evaluation, students will be able to do the evaluations between 6 am and 11 pm each day. She also noted that most evaluations are done in the middle of the day. Students will receive instructions and reminders by email.

Ms. Jeter also said evaluation results will be made available after final grades are submitted, though percentiles will be delivered later in paper form. She concluded her report by inviting faculty to offer input to her committee, to express concerns, and to ask questions.

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

Ms. Caveny informed the Senate that this year’s committee consists of herself, Trish Ward (English), and Brian McGee (Communication), and that Associate Provost Bev Diamond and Tom Trimboli, Sr. VP of Legal Affairs, will be attending meetings.

Ms. Caveny reported that the Faculty Administration Manual (FAM) is being revised, and that the revised version will be published soon (in September). The changes do not affect content, but mainly have to do with its organization. The chief purpose of the changes is to make it easier to use, especially in the online form.

Ms. Caveny also reported that the committee is examining the language in the FAM concerning pay increases with respect to faculty evaluations.

Tom Kunkle, chair of the Committee on Nominations and Elections

Mr. Kunkle reported that some recent vacancies of faculty committee seats have occurred and that his committee is in the process of finding faculty to fill them. He said that there are some at-large Senate vacancies as well, which he hopes to have filled by next the Faculty Senate meeting. He noted, however, that his committee has had trouble finding people to serve. The committee has especially encountered difficulties in finding faculty willing to serve on the new Gen-Ed Committee, the establishment of which the Senate approved last spring (1 April 2008). He reported that he received only one response from his call for nominations for this committee.

Jason Overby (Chemistry & Biochemistry) asked if the Senate had ever fully spelled out the duties and procedures of the Gen-Ed Committee. Mr. Kunkle replied that the duties had been spelled out, but not the procedures.

Speaker Kelly encouraged Senators to get involved in the Gen-Ed Committee, but said that the committee will have a lot of work, and that some proposals are ready for submission to the committee.

Burton Callicott, chair of the Sustainability Committee

Mr. Callicott wanted a chance to speak to the Senate to say that his committee exists, has a Web site, and is working on various projects. He said that the committee is not a faculty committee, but a Presidential committee, so there are non-faculty members on it. The committee does include among its membership the Director of the Environmental Studies Program. Mr. Callicott then explained that the committee is divided into sub-committees, which each focus on a specific area: reducing waste, building and energy issues, policy issues, and education/marketing issues.

Mr. Callicott also reported that President Benson, on behalf of the College, signed a climate agreement, which commits the institution to reducing greenhouse emissions. This is a big
undertaking, Mr. Callicott said. The College will need to take an inventory of the greenhouse gases it emits and plan how to reduce them.

The Committee, Mr. Callicott continued, is working on improving our recycling system, on composting, and on solar energy possibilities. A possible long-term goal is to create a sustainability corridor, which would become a model sustainability environment, which other organizations and communities could emulate. Another goal is to incorporate sustainability concepts and issues into various courses. Mr. Callicott said that so far some of these items are just ideas, but he hopes that they will become realities, and asked for the support of all members of the College and hoped that everyone tries to do his/part to reduce waste and greenhouse emissions.

Alex Modly (guest) asked if the Committee has regular meetings. Mr. Callicott said that it meets on the first Wednesday of each month, and that the sub-committees have their own schedules.

**New Business**

**Motion to amend language on the composition of the Gen-Ed Committee**

James Williams (Library) moved to change the language outlining the composition of the General Education Committee so that representatives of the library faculty would be included. The exact details of the motion are as follows:

Composition: Seven regular faculty shall be elected to serve on the Committee. Each academic school shall be represented on the Committee. The Committee shall have one voting student member selected by the Student Government Association. Committee members shall serve a term of one year and may, if re-elected, serve as many as three consecutive terms. The Associate Vice President for the Academic Experience (or other administrator designated by the Provost) and, the Director of Assessment (or other administrator designated by the Provost), and one representative from the library faculty are ex officio, non-voting members.

After the motion received a second, Mr. Williams explained that it was important to have representatives of the library because they help construct resources that students and faculty use in their Gen-Ed courses.

Because the motion entails a change in the By-Laws, Speaker Kelly remanded it for review to the Committee on By-Laws and the Faculty/Administration Manual.

**Faculty Committee on Graduate and Continuing Education**

The following proposals were approved without discussion:

Proposal for a New Graduate Course – Master of Science in Marine Biology
BIOL 618: Marine Molecular Ecology

Proposals for a New Graduate Course – Master of Arts in Teaching Performing Arts
MUSE 601: Applied Voice
MUSE 602: Vocal Pedagogy
MUSE 703: Choral Music Literature Seminar

Proposal for a New Graduate Course – Master of Education in Languages
SPAN 655: Tyranny in Spanish American Film and Literature
Constituents’ Concerns

None was raised.

Having finished its scheduled business, the Senate adjourned at 6:50.

Respectfully submitted,

Terence Bowers
Faculty Secretary