Minutes of the Special Faculty Senate Meeting, 18 Feb 2014

The Faculty Senate met for a special meeting Tuesday 18 February 2014 in Wells Fargo Auditorium (Beatty Center 115).

Agenda

1. Call to Order at 5:03 PM
2. New Business
   A. Resolution Regarding House Bill 4632, The “Charleston University” Bill

Speaker Lynn Cherry introduced guests at the meeting: Dr. Tom Smith, President of the Faculty Senate, Medical University of South Carolina, and a local television news channel.

The Speaker explained that a suggestion emerging from an open forum meeting on Monday, February 10 was that the Faculty Senate call a special meeting in order to address the pending legislation to merge the College and MUSC. The next regularly scheduled Senate meeting is not until March 11, and time was of the essence.

The resolution, the Speaker noted, is focused specifically on the legislation in the South Carolina State House of Representatives (House Bill 4632). She also pointed out that very similar legislation had just been introduced in the SC State Senate (Senate Bill 102).

The Speaker explained that the meeting is an open one, and all faculty and guests have speaking privileges, but that only Senators can vote, and she further stipulated, according to by-laws, that proxy voting is not allowed. Additionally, those who speak from the floor are limited to two minutes for comments or questions that add something to the discussion or offer additional arguments or counterarguments. Finally she stipulated that, in line with the by-laws, Senators and guests may speak on one issue two times at the most.

Resolution Regarding House Bill 4632, The “Charleston University” Bill

WHEREAS, the drafting of the “Charleston University” bill (H.4632) for the merger of College of Charleston and the Medical University of South Carolina appears not to have carefully considered and involved study of the following critical issues:

- the type of university being proposed, its mission, and its structure;
- the cost to expand existing programs and create new research capacities and administrative structures, and the source of funds;
- impacts of the change in mission and identity on student recruitment, alumni engagement, and faculty retention;
- impacts of the change in mission on student learning and educational opportunities;

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impacts on resource reallocation and student enrollment for existing research universities in the state;

○ impacts on funding and productivity from losing designation as a PUI (primarily undergraduate institution) among granting sources;

○ constraints on space for further expansion on the Charleston peninsula;

○ implications of an altered mission for faculty whose training and expertise are in undergraduate and targeted graduate instruction; and

WHEREAS, the filing has disrupted the College of Charleston’s Presidential search process and its critically important capital campaign, and its sponsors have disregarded the recommendations (White Paper) of the Institutional Organizational Review Committee convened by faculty and administrators from both institutions;

THEREFORE, be it

RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate of the College of Charleston opposes the Charleston University Bill.

Resolution Introduction – Irina Gigova, Senator - HSS

Gigova noted that the resolution represents a week or so of work and the contributions people from four different schools. Nine people actively worked on it, and 18 people altogether reviewed and commented on it. The group opted for a longer resolution than MUSC’s recent resolution, which allows for some specificity in the reasons for objecting to House Bill 4632 and reinforces that, while the faculty oppose the bill, we do not necessarily oppose the expansion of the College. Finally, she asked that the Senate in the case of this resolution act as a “political, not an academic body,” focusing on the statement, rather than precision of language.

Discussion/Questions

Margaret Cormack, Senator – Religious Studies, thanked the people who worked on the resolution and encouraged the Senate to vote for it. We cannot, she asserted, resolve the future of the College in this meeting, and we should stay focused on the resolution.

Jim Carew, Senator – Geology, called the question. It was seconded, and passed on a voice vote.

Decision

The Senate approved the resolution by unanimous voice vote.

B. Resolution Concerning Collaboration with the Medical University of South Carolina and other Area Colleges

Phil Jos, Senator – HSS, introduced the following resolution from the floor. Jos noted that introducing a resolution from the floor requires a suspension of the rules of the Senate, and so it is up to the Senate to decide whether or not it would like to consider the resolution at the present meeting or at the next meeting.
Scott Peeples, Senator – HSS, made a motion to suspend the rules in order to consider the resolution. The motion was seconded, and passed on a 2/3 majority voice vote.

**Resolution Concerning Collaboration with the Medical University of South Carolina and other Area Colleges**

WHEREAS collaborations with the Medical University of South Carolina and other area institutions might be an important part of serving the changing needs of the Lowcountry and securing the College’s future in an increasingly competitive educational marketplace,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate of the College of Charleston:

- asks that the Provost reconvene the Institutional Organizational Review Committee to address concerns about H. 4632 (the “Charleston University Bill”) and examine alternative forms of collaboration.
- asks that the College administration continue a dialogue with other institutions, the business community, faculty, and area legislators regarding ways to enhance the College’s service to the region while ensuring that such initiatives do not compromise the educational quality of our current undergraduate and graduate programs.
- asks that the College administration solicit faculty perspectives on any new more detailed proposals under discussion.

**Introduction of the Resolution**

Jos read the resolution, which was on projected on the screens as well. The rationale, he explained, is that, whatever happens with the current House bill, legislators, Board of Trustee members, and leaders will continue to move on these matters, and the main purpose of the resolution is to very strongly indicate that we want to be a part of those discussions and that, furthermore, we expect to be a part of them. The resolution is presented toward the goal of having the locus of discussion shift to the schools, where we have some expertise. The second rationale is that, while there is consensus to reject House Bill 4632, we should signal our willingness to think about other kinds of collaborations and to not simply be seen as an obstacle to these discussions. Jos further asserted that that levels of funding for our current mission are insufficient and that this is not likely to change. But if there are opportunities that might secure our financial future and that allow us to continue our focus on an undergraduate mission, we want to signal our willingness to continue collaboration discussions. The resolution also captures the more nuanced views that faculty have on potential collaborations between CofC and MUSC.

The resolution was seconded.

**Discussion/Questions**
Kelly Shaver, Senator – Management and Entrepreneurship, asked about the Institutional Organizational Review Committee referred to in the first bullet point of the resolution. What is the relative size of faculty on the committee? Is it six from each institution?

The Speaker replied in the affirmative, but noted that the committee included administrators as well.

The Provost added that there are two Board of Trustees members from each institution on the committee. But, he asserted that this committee might not be the right venue to pursue, given the intent of the resolution. There might be another structure that would work better for the purposes of the resolution, or perhaps a new structure might be formed. He added that his conversations with the Provost of MUSC would seem to indicate that he would also welcome the kind of dialogue asked for in the resolution.

David Moscowitz, Senator – HSS, asked about the intended meaning of “alternative” in first bullet point. Does it mean options other than merger? Does it semantically rule out a merger?

Jos said that “merger” itself has become rather ambiguous. In the legislation, the merger would seem to be produce a primarily science research institution and not one focusing on the other aspects of the College. The intent of “alternative” was to signal “all available” options.

Larry Krasnoff, Department of Philosophy, replied to Provost Hynd’s point about the possible inappropriateness of the Institutional Organizational Review Committee to the goals of the resolution, pointing out that the resolution asks to reconvene the committee, but it doesn’t foreclose on working with other existing committees or forming new structures. Therefore, the language as is should be fine.

Darryl Phillips, Senator – Classics, asked the Senate to keep in mind Gigova’s suggestion for the first resolution: that we think of this resolution, too, as a political statement. Jos’s resolution says that we are in the conversation. We have discovered in recent months, he asserted, that the legislature suddenly has a new-found interest in higher education in South Carolina, and we might consider this, perhaps, as a good thing. The resolution signals our interest and, so, he said, he supports it as written, since the faculty are the people with the expertise to be leading the discussion.

**Decision**

The resolution was approved by unanimous voice vote.

3. **Constituent Concerns**

Jim Deavor, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, asked that the minutes reflect that votes on both resolutions were unanimous.

Gigova asked if the resolutions would be forwarded to the President, the Board of Trustees, and the legislature.
The Speaker said that the resolutions will be sent to the Board of Trustees, and other offices, and that she will look into how we can forward them to the legislature.

4. Adjournment: 5:27PM