

Minutes of the
SU Faculty Senate Meeting
Oct. 10, 2006
HH 119

Senators present : Curtin, DeRidder, Egan, Groth, Hammond, Hopson, Howard, Khazeh, Lawler, Morrison, Mullins, Parker, Rieck, Ritenour, Robinson, Scott, Shannon, Shipper

Senators absent: none

1. Pres. Mullins called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM. A quorum was present.
2. One correction to the Sept. 26 minutes was made. Under 5. Old Business, Faculty Welfare Committee Proposal on Annual Evaluations, the sentence: "FWC heard a number of grievances along these lines this past summer" was removed.

The minutes were approved as corrected.

3. Announcements from Pres. Mullins

- Searches for the two open administrative positions will be conducted this year. The Provost search will be a national search and although the search committee will contain members from all the university constituent groups, faculty will have the dominant voice. The search for a Director for the Center for International Education will be an internal search. Pres. Mullins will send out a request for faculty volunteers for each of these search committees; the senate officers will review the lists of volunteers and then send a shortened list to Pres. Dudley-Eshbach for final selection.
- The President will soon be forming a University Planning Council which will play a major role in developing the next strategic plan. The faculty representatives on the committee will be chosen from the members of the Long Range Academic Planning Committee.

4. New Business – Discussion of the proposal to make the SAT optional. Since the last senate meeting, the Admissions and Readmissions Committee has reviewed numerous documents (both internal and external), received and considered faculty input, and discussed this issue. Committee chair Jason McCartney summarized the committee's discussions and decision to support the proposal. (See their recommendation document for more details). The remainder of the meeting was devoted to discussion of this proposal. Some senators were concerned that the proposal did not specify any other criteria that would be used in lieu of the SAT scores. Director of Admissions, Laura Thorpe described the holistic approach currently used in the admissions process. Not only is a student's HS GPA considered, but also the specific courses s/he took

(ex. AP courses), and if they showed persistence on the part of the students (ex. – if a student took all the science courses available at his/her school or 5 years of a foreign language, etc). Admissions looks at a student's extra-curricular activities (again looking for depth as well as indications of leadership) and community service. They look for diversity, not just ethnic, but also geographic.

Other concerns expressed (and Administration responses) included: 1) Concern about awarding scholarships if SATs aren't submitted (submitting SAT is and will continue to be a requirement for applying for scholarships). 2) Concern that we don't have enough scholarships to attract high achieving students in quantity. 3) Concern that we will see a decline in the quality of our students (Admissions finds that students with higher SATs but lower HS GPAs often do less well than students with the reverse. This proposal should free Admissions from accepting those higher SAT, lower GPA students to try to keep our SAT average up. Also, students that do not submit SAT scores will need to have other distinctive accomplishments in their application package). 4) Concern that we no longer offer developmental courses. (Provost Jones said reinstating these is being discussed). Some senators quoted from published studies on the subject (some pro, some con). Some felt that an important point was that the proposal is for a 2 - 3 year pilot study and that we will examine the results (ex. freshmen retention rates with and without submitted GPAs) before deciding to make this a permanent change. One senator recommended that a detailed assessment plan be part of the pilot study. Another suggested comparing retention rates of transfer students (who do not need to submit SATs) with those of freshmen (who do).

A number of senators were concerned about the short time involved with making this decision. Provost Jones acknowledged this, but indicated that other schools have made this change, more are considering it and this is being considered as a tool for admissions to expand the applicant pool. He mentioned the need for haste is because we need BOR approval. To get that, he must bring it before the system provosts on Oct. 17, to get it to the Education Committee in time for their Nov. meeting. Also, Admissions is already recruiting students for next fall. President Dudley-Eshbach reminded the senate that this issue is the purview of our enrollment management experts and, although it is important for them to hear our concerns and get our input, it is ultimately their decision.

A motion was made and seconded to vote on the recommendation from the Admissions and Readmissions Committee. But a motion to table that motion was made, seconded and passed.

Kathleen Shannon made a motion requesting that the administration 1) hold a couple of open meetings for faculty to discuss the admissions process and 2) keep us informed of the progress of the pilot project. Seconded.

Some senators and Pres Dudley-Eshbach expressed advantages that could come from increased faculty awareness of this issue – a greater depth of understanding of various aspects of this issue and what goes into the admissions process in general, and an increased ability for faculty input in the process. Others mentioned the importance of recruitment to get the kinds of students we want.

Vote on Dr. Shannon's motion.
17 yes, motion carries.

Mike Scott made a motion that the Faculty Development Committee consider making recruitment, admissions and retention the focus of an upcoming workshop. Seconded.

17 yes, motion carries.

5. Pres. Mullins mentioned the need for an additional senate meeting this semester and requested senators send him the dates of any Tuesday afternoons that they would not be able to make a senate meeting.

Respectfully submitted by Ellen Lawler, Secretary