

Minutes of the
SU Faculty Senate Meeting
Nov. 27, 2007
HH 119

Senators present –Clarke, Curtin, Gilkey, Hopson, Khazeh, Lawler, Ludwick, Mullins, O'Loughlin, Rieck, Ritenour, Robinson, Scott, Shannon, and Zaprowski

Senators absent – Diriker, Hammond and Shipper

1. Pres. Curtin called the meeting to order at 3:31; a quorum was present.
2. Change to the minutes from the Nov. 13 meeting, the sentence “Jack Leng, the SGA rep to the senate, will report back to them about our discussion” was added to the end of item 7, Fall Break Advisability. The minutes were accepted as amended.
3. Announcements from Pres. Curtin
 - a. There will be a special, additional meeting of the senate on Thursday, Dec 6 at 3:30 to deal with one issue – the proposal for an Academic Achievement Center. However, this is dependent on the senators receiving a copy of the proposal by early next week, so they have time to review it and are ready for a full discussion. Provost Jones expects to have the report from the committee this Friday and will send it out as soon as he’s reviewed it. Pres. Curtin apologized for having to schedule this meeting as some senators will not be able to attend. But she suggested that they make their opinions known to her or other senators before the meeting, or they can send a substitute to express their opinions at the meeting. However, the sub won’t be able to vote for them.
 - b. The University Forum will meet on Tues., Dec. 4 at 3:30. Both Pres. Dudley-Eshbach and VP Greig Mitchell will be on the agenda.
 - c. Sen. Shipper sent Curtin an article from the NY Times regarding the percentage of part-time faculty nationally and would like this to be a matter of discussion at an upcoming meeting. The article will be forwarded to senators with a future e-mail.
4. Dropping Dial-Up – Jerry Waldron

For over a year, IT has been looking at this issue – in light of the age of the equipment and the amount of utilization. There are over 1000 faculty and staff that could potentially be using this option, but over the last semester only about 50 actually are. The cost to upgrade the equipment would be \$12,000 - \$15,000 with an additional \$5,000 per year and two specialized phone lines to run. IT has spoken with the relevant senate and forum committees and the forum committee canvassed opinions from the 4 schools. They also brought it up with the VPs in the summer and a month ago. As the system could go at any time, and they didn’t want people depending on it to be caught off guard, particularly in mid-semester, it was decided to discontinue service on Jan 1. Discussion – Sen. Rieck reminded that indeed some faculty & staff do rely on this and discontinuing it is depriving them of a service. He asked whether other USM schools have this service. Waldron did not have that info with him, but said that other schools in general are

discontinuing it. A couple senators suggested specifically informing the current users of the situation and warning them that the system might go at any time, but letting service continue until the system fails – that would give them the service as long as possible and, perhaps give them more time to purchase another service. (Some can be gotten for a low as \$10 per month). This seems kinder than just cutting off. Waldron – but not just cutting off, have sent around notice to all faculty & staff and felt it better to stop service between rather than within semesters, especially didn't want to affect communication with students during a semester.

5. A few words from the Administration – Tom Jones

- a. State budget – the system came out OK in the special legislative session, but there will still be negotiations in the regular session regarding the way the increased revenue (from increased corporate and sales taxes) will be spent. The Gov. has said ½ will go to higher education and if a slots bill passes, some of that also. However, the legislature can take away (but not add to) the governor's budget during the regular session. So we won't know for sure until March or so.
- b. Growth – The legislature has cut the proposed growth for the system in half, from an increase of 3,000 to 1,500. So our growth has been reduced from an additional 300 to 150 FTEs for next year. There's always the possibility that that may change, but it probably won't increase. The only way we've increased our allocation from the state is through increased enrollments, but the question is whether the quality suffers. Sen. Shannon asked whether the 4-5 new faculty lines that were lost last year when that proposed increase was reduced will be regained. Jones said we will most likely need to hire 8-10 new faculty for the fall. (Which may be hard as Towson, with an increase of 500 FTEs for fall, will be hiring 90 new faculty).

6. Fall Break issues – this will be on the agenda of the Forum meeting on Dec. 4. The staff senate has not discussed yet and Jack Leng reported that the SGA discussed it and that 35 of 54 students present at a recent open SGA meeting were in favor of a fall break. Bob Tardiff reported from what he found out the last time this was discussed and from talking with HR. Yes, we could have classes on Labor Day and either 1) have it still officially be a holiday and pay time and a half to any staff that had to work that day or 2) could choose to celebrate the holiday on another day (as we currently do for some of the other federal holidays). Inge Frost reminded Bob that staff, who have not had a holiday since July 4th, look forward to that day off. Pres. Curtin asked whether eliminating Labor Day is the only way to have a fall break – no, we could add days on either end and also in most fall semesters, we have a couple days extra (over and above COMAR regs), but we would end up with another broken week if we keep Labor Day & also have a long weekend later. Discussion about departments with multi-section courses – especially those with labs, some may be able to adjust schedules more easily than others. Sen. Scott surveyed nearby state schools – although no USM schools have one, 90% of the others have a fall break. Most start earlier in August and have Labor Day off and then have a long (3 or 4 day) weekend in mid Oct. Most took Thurs & Fri off rather than Mon & Tues off as it was less disruptive to their labs and evening classes. He also found a number of on-line sources that considered a fall break as “academically good” and mentioned that a fair number of students get involved in service learning projects (usually local) during fall break. Sen. Shannon suggested trying it for a couple of years and if it doesn't work we

could eliminate it. Sen. Rieck indicated that another partial week would mean eliminating that week's Gen Chem labs and might affect their accreditation. Sen. Khazeh asked about the possibility of starting a full week early to have a week long fall break. Tardiff - we would need to get a waiver from USM policy which sets the start and end dates and we would need to accommodate UMES students that are taking courses from us. Other concerns included – students working in OC during the summer, education students working in the local schools and needing to coordinate with their schedules, desire to hear from students before we proceed further. Curtin – do we want to move forward with this or continue discussion in spring?

Sen. O'Loughlin made a motion to put aside the idea of substituting Labor Day for a fall break and pursue other options. Seconded.

Voice vote, motion carries.

Jones and Tardiff will investigate with the USM whether they would agree to our changing the academic calendar for fall. Tardiff said that they are often receptive, but that we will still need to accommodate UMES students in our courses, but they might not have to accommodate ours.

7. CUSF update – Pres. Curtin recently attended a meeting of the USM Faculty Senate presidents followed by a CUSF meeting. A hot topic of discussion at the presidents' session came from an article in the Baltimore Sun about an assessment program to eventually be common to all USM schools and already being used in two. The most controversial part of the Voluntary System of Assessment is that it includes a standardized test that will be administered to all students when they enter and then at different times during their matriculation. The results would be reported with other statistics from the schools. One concern is who will determine which test will be used; some of this is coming from NASH (the National Association of System Heads, of which Chancellor Kirwan is a member). The topic was just briefly mentioned by Kirwan at the end of the CUSF meeting. Provost Jones has a copy of this; NASH decided something needed to be done before the feds decided to impose some assessment system on U systems. Kirwan said the tests will show "value added"; Jones said we can tinker with the tests. Curtin said the senate presidents were concerned that this was already being done in two system schools and they did not know about it. This is why it's so important for us to always have reps at the CUSF meetings.
8. Other –
 - a. Curtin was disappointed that we have not had a special election for the two by-laws changes yet, especially as those two committees need to get working. Sen. Zaprowski said that Kelly Fiala (new committee chair) just received all the materials from him and that the by-laws election will be held in conjunction with the election for sabbatical replacements in early spring semester.
 - b. Sen. Zaprowski commented, with regard to the new mid-semester report of selected freshmen, that it does not make sense to include Orientation courses in the report and that the way it is currently done is redundant with regard to lab science courses in which information has to be entered twice – once for lecture and once for lab.

9. Adjourned at 4:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Ellen Lawler, Secretary