

Senate Meeting 11/25/08

Senators attending: Curtin, Clarke, Welsh, Khazeh, Robeck, Gilkey, Weaver, Walton, Shannon, Ludwick, DeWitt, Street

Senators absent: Wood, McDermott, Rieck, Zaprowski, O'Loughlin, Scott

- I. Vice President Craig gavels the meeting open at 3.34 without a quorum present.
Two Announcements: 1. The Provost search committee has been set.
2. The announcement of the financial affairs committee set for the 9th. Please attend.

II. Tom Jones Speaks

The budget continues to be the major question. With regard to searches, yesterday afternoon, Provost and deans met & discussed the budget situation and the timing questions. The news is not good out of Annapolis. Revenue projections are falling short, but we won't know definitively until mid-December, when we will know more. Refers to additional budget shortfalls noted by the governor. Given the current news, it is important to harden the freeze through the rest of the searches - the last 9 searches will be frozen, but the 2 already involved with on-campus interviews will continue to interview, but no position will be offered until we know more. We want to avoid layoffs. Our searches are being damaged, but many institutions are facing the same situation. We'll keep you up to date.

President Dudley-Eshbach adds that she came from meeting of state colleges and universities - and states that most states are facing issues as bad if not worse than we are here. She is confident we will get through without taking measures of other schools such as elimination of programs, and other problems. We hope to avoid. Enrollment demand is stronger than ever, we are putting breaks on growth as we can't fill faculty positions, but we'll work with the fiscal advisory committee to explore our options. Do we need to look at institutional memberships? Look at cost-benefit analysis for groups that we belong to that have high dues - what are the benefits of those. Question on sabbaticals - if we get behind, then it takes a long time to catch up. We may have to curtail travel. We don't know the magnitude of the event so far.

Jones says we will be looking at all of the options - but we can't make any definite cuts until we have a clearer picture. There is a difference between a one time cut and a permanent reduction to the base budget. Great uncertainty.

Dudley-Eshbach says 5-10% cut is pretty likely - if it is 10%, we are going to be facing severe difficulties as we are a lean institution. Even if we get a permanent reduction to base, we could off-set that if the governor will allow a bit of flexibility on tuition. Many hard decisions.

Jones says - sabbatical process is a timing issue. We are continuing the review process of sabbaticals, but the president decides on 1 January. We will have to wait to see. Dudley-

Eshbach says we are firmly and deeply committed to sabbaticals and we will make every effort to protect them. But if we have to deal with layoffs it will be difficult to justify sabbaticals.

Travel is being frozen on many campuses. Does that apply to all money, asks Sen. Shannon? Some exceptions will have to be made.

Also the reality we are looking at is class sizes at the institution will have to change. Generally there has been antagonism to this. Student-faculty ratio in '07 was 16-1 - the lowest in 2 decades. Previously was 17-1. We may see some increase in class size. Robeck wonders how that will help? Question over how this will affect the curriculum reform - they note that this will effect the quality of the education granted to the students.

III. Motion to Approve the Minutes from 11 November.

Motion approved, seconded.

No comments or corrections.

Approved.

IV. Committee Reports.

1. Elizabeth Curtin and financial committee

Eliz Curtin discusses the committee meeting and that it will bring back a list of priorities on 9 December, but are currently waiting on Alan Seltzer.

Open discussion and questions arise, including concerning the possibility of furlough days and whether if those who make higher salaries would have to take more furlough days would result in a question of age discrimination.

Dudley-Eshbach says that the Chancellor is meeting with the Governor today & arguing that the schools should be able to have autonomy as to how they spend the money. There will probably be no money for raises or cola, the state may determine how furloughs would work. It may be easier for furlough policy to be determined by the state - but on the other hand, it is not good for state to make decision. Hard for the committee to discuss this, as we may not have much influence at all as to what our options are. Dudley-Eshbach thinks it may be early for the committee to be discussing it, but as long as they understand that their ideas may not be taken

2. Faculty Development Committee and Cathy Beise

Beise updates the Senate on the current discussions of the Faculty Development Committee concerning how to spend money allocated for faculty development days. Says committee is considering smaller development lunches for each school at the university.

Discussion and questions ensue, particularly concerning the idea that when the move came to cancel January Faculty Development Day, the money was to go into faculty travel, not lunches per se.

Beise responds that she didn't know we'd dropped January meeting this year, but this money is small and separate from travel.

Other ideas discussed concerning lunches as well as the idea of the financial climate – and that there may be better ways to spend this money in the current economic situation than to buy lunches for people.

3. Ed Robeck and the Strategic Planning Committee

Says the committee has discussed need for a process to approve hybrid and distance learning courses. Also discussed the doctoral programs, of which the committee was supportive of moving forward if budget allows.

More discussion on wording within the strategic plan – particularly with regard to academic & professional programs and regarding merit based scholarships, etc. Says committee was generally complementary of the work done on the strategic plan & the committee will send details onto the strategic planners..

V. New Business: None

VI. Old Business: The Strategic Plan

1. Questions regarding on-campus daycare and its omission from the plan,
2. Living and Learning environments,
3. Various questions of word smithing & grammar: In particular for some curricular initiatives which have not been formally endorsed by the faculty (eg freshmen seminars) the document should indicate further study rather than definite plans to implement.
4. How to address the changing demographics, including the return of GIs.

VI. Other

Dudley-Eshbach is grateful people engaged in this process & appreciates those who read the document carefully from beginning to end. When she shares the document with regents and others, she is even more appreciative of the close reading of many.

Also wishes everyone a Happy Thanksgiving,

VII. Clarke gavels the meeting adjourned.