

## **Report for the Ad-hoc Committee on Faculty Senate Reorganization**

April 6, 2010

Senators Gilkey, McDermott, Scott, Walton

### **CHARGE TO THE AD-HOC COMMITTEE:**

Sen. Khazeh brought three motions from the Perdue School to the October 13, 2009 meeting of the Faculty Senate for purposes of discussion. Since that time, there have been two discussions of the motions and related issues that included the Senate officers and representatives from the Perdue and Seidel schools, with Dr. Brian Polkinghorn as moderator.

Based on those discussions, the Senate officers would like to form an ad hoc committee consisting of representatives from the four schools to examine Sen. Khazeh's first motion. We feel that a periodic review of senate structure may well benefit the organization. The University and its faculty have changed since the inception of the Faculty Senate and it may be time to look at how well our current structure serves the needs of the faculty, and if there are specific changes that might improve our effectiveness.

Your charge will be to review the current structure of the Senate and Sen. Khazeh's motion, and to bring back to the Senate your recommendation on the best structure for the Senate by our first meeting in March, 2010.

### **COMMITTEE DELIBERATION:**

The committee took this charge seriously and contacted faculty within their schools regarding Faculty Senate effectiveness, efficiency, and representation of issues important to non-Senate faculty. Our findings identified a number of serious faculty concerns. To summarize in no particular order, opinions included:

- A lack of knowledge about both Faculty Senate initiatives under consideration within committees and the method to get involved in the formative and deliberative stages
- The perception that the Faculty Senate does not represent the opinions of their faculty constituents,

- A frustration with the treatment of Senate Committee work received by the Senate
- A perception that decisions by the Senate leadership takes place behind the scenes
- The overrepresentation of the Fulton and Henson Schools within the Senate.

Taking Senator Khazeh's original motions, solicited faculty opinions, and subsequent discussions into account, the committee focused upon three core principles to improve the operation of the Faculty Senate: representation, transparency and communication.

## **REPRESENTATION:**

1. Department Based Representation – We propose that the Faculty Senate move from School/At-Large representation to Departmental representation. Most Departments will be represented by one representative; large departments will have two and small departments will share a representative. The detail of the representative allocation plan is attached. Departments will develop their own method for choosing their representative with current Senators coordinating the process. If a secret ballot is the selected option, Membership and Elections is available to conduct the election process. The committee discussed possible transition from current structure to recommended structure and decided not to address transition at this point, in recognition that there needs to be further Senate input regarding transition options.

Rationale: The Academic Department is the fundamental unit of faculty organization at Salisbury University. Departments meet regularly, discuss all manner of issues, and search for consensus. By linking the Faculty Senate to the Academic Departments, we seek to improve both faculty representation and communication.

2. We propose that the Bylaws be modified to state definitively that the Faculty Senators should operate within a constituency model of representation. It

will be expected that each Senator should identify issues of concern and actively solicit input and reaction from department faculty members.

Rationale: Faculty involvement and discussion is critical to shared governance and faculty ownership/support of Senate.

3. We propose expanding the Faculty Senate Officers be expanded to seven persons. In addition to the President, the Secretary, and the Webmaster, each school caucus will selects a Vice-President. The department Senators for each school will select the vice-president to represent their school by consensus.

Rationale: Some important issues are discussed by Senate Officers that are never elevated to the full Senate. This assures that each school is represented by an officer and has input when issues are brought back to Senate officers for deliberation.

4. Candidates are encouraged to state a platform with issues. This should enliven this representative process and improve on the raising of issues of concern.

Rationale: This allows faculty to select candidates that represent issues of importance.

## **TRANSPARENCY/COMMUNICATION:**

1. We propose that any meeting between Faculty Senate Officers and the Provost or President include at least one Officer from each School in attendance. The substance of these meetings will be reported back to the full Senate at the next meeting or to their school caucus by the appropriate vice-president if timeliness is an issue.

Rationale: The Provost meets regularly with the Senate Officers. This has been the practice since Provost Buchanan. To remedy any issues of

transparency (real or perceived) and communication, Senators need to be aware of these meetings and what was discussed.

2. All motions requiring Faculty Senate action will need two readings prior to approval.

Rationale: This will allow for discussion and clarification of issues prior to final approval. This will also allow Senate to review committee recommendations and give feedback to the committee prior to final approval.

## **PROCESS:**

1. We propose that the Faculty Senate may enter closed session by 2/3 vote of Senators present.

Rationale: Closed session will help to insure that individuals are not embarrassed or offended by Senate deliberations.

2. We propose that anyone nominated to be the President of the Senate must have served as a VP prior to becoming President.

Rationale: This will insure that the President has a minimum level of experience as a prerequisite.

3. We propose that Senators may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. After serving two terms, a Senator will not eligible for election for three years. Temporary sabbatical replacements will not count toward term limits.

Rationale: Terms limits will encourage greater involvement of faculty.

4. We propose that a School may recall a departmental Senator upon 2/3 vote of the School's full-time faculty.

Rationale: This provides a mechanism to replace a departmental Senator.

5. We propose that Senate meetings should be video-taped and broadcast on the SU television station.

Rationale: This will increase Senate visibility while addressing transparency and communication issues.

6. We propose that all Senate committees send committee meeting agendas to all Senators at least forty-eight hours prior to the meeting.

Rationale: This will increase Senate awareness, ownership and support for committee work. It will allow for the identification and discussion of issues that are best addressed at the committee level rather than at the Senate level.