

Minutes of the
SU Faculty Senate Meeting
Nov. 28, 2006
HH 119

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

Senators absent: Egan

1. Pres. Mullins called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM. A quorum was present.

2. The minutes were approved as amended.

3. Announcements from Pres. Mullins

- The senate officers recently discussed an issue regarding the meeting of sabbatical deadlines, some chairs and deans have allowed late submissions while others have not. The Provost, Deans and Chairs will soon be discussing personnel deadlines in general and so this will come up as part of that and we will probably discuss in the future.
- The Provost Search Committee has met, developed criteria. They plan to do airport interviews in Feb. and on campus interviews in March.
- Reclassification Issue – Mullins summarized a recent meeting of some the officers with Tom Jones, Donna Keener and Greig Mitchell. Some information gleaned at that meeting: 1) process involved comparing the information on the applications of AA II's to the USM job specification of the Program Manager position (not determining whether the job of the AA II's had changed), 2) the desk audits were done by external consultants with experience in academic administration, 3) Mitchell and Keener felt that the chairs had ample opportunity for input in the process, 4) individuals that were turned down for reclassification will not informed of the reason for that decision until they file an appeal, 5) chairs are only involved in the appeal process if they are called as a witness by either the union (which represents the employee) or HR (which represents SU). Mullins & Jones expressed concern that there is currently no pathway for advancement for the academic AA II's and these knowledgeable and effective individuals, especially those in large departments, have little incentive to remain in academic offices. The group discussed the possibility of creating new positions – perhaps Admin Asst 3 and 4 levels. Keener is about to go to a meeting of USM HR director's and will bring up this topic at that meeting. Senate discussion indicated that serious concerns about the process still exist.

4. A word from the Administration – Interim Provost Tom Jones

- The BOR will vote on the proposal for making the SATs optional for students with a HS GPA of 3.5 or above on Fri., Dec. 1. Results of the vote will be shared asap.
- With the increased growth, Jones is looking at re-organization particularly with regard to grad programs and on-line/distance education. Although still proportionately small, we are increasing our on-line efforts, especially with the start of programs at Shady Grove and Cecil CC this spring. We want these programs to be well done and for that need increased support services for both faculty and students involved. His goal is to institute an Office of On-line Education, bringing together services that are currently scattered throughout the University. With regard to grad programs, he thinks the first priority is a marketing plan and then, as the programs become more established, creating a position of Associate Provost or Dean of Grad Studies.

5. New Business –

a). Update on Faculty Welfare Proposal on Deadlines for Annual Evaluations – Bob Tardiff. Concerns that if the deadline was changed from Feb. 1 to Mar. 15, as proposed by FW, it would affect 1) faculty applying for promotion (Feb 15 deadline), and 2) post tenure review (Feb. 1), although requirements don't specify that the most recent chair's evaluation is necessary for post tenure review. With regard to non-renewal of first year TT faculty, the BOR requires the faculty member be informed by Mar 1; if this deadline is not met, he/she is automatically retained for one more year. If the contract is properly written this is all that is required, but if the deadline for annual evaluation is moved to Mar 15, these faculty may not receive any reason for termination in time to respond. Tardiff proposed moving the progress towards tenure portion of the chair's evaluations up at least two weeks earlier. Discussion followed including a reminder that one purpose of the FW proposal was to clearly separate the annual evaluation process from the non-renewal process. Concerns included 1) that receiving an evaluation two weeks or a month before the Mar 1 deadline is probably not enough time for a first year faculty to do enough to reverse the outcome and that 2) it could mean getting tenure committees together twice, which could be difficult. Suggestions included having a different deadline for evaluation of first year faculty and an alternative method of informing first year faculty of their performance relative to renewal (such as a meeting and letter in the middle of their first semester).

Kathleen Shannon made a motion that the senate accept the Faculty Welfare Committee's recommendation but that we send it back to them to look at the language and add a stipulation for a meeting and review by the chair of new TT faculty midway through their first and third semesters. Motion seconded.

Continued discussion and questions regarding deadlines in general. Frank Shipper made a motion that we table Shannon's motion until we have a matrix showing all relevant deadlines. Motion seconded. No discussion.

Voice vote, Shipper's motion carries.

b). Proposed Timeline for Posting of Final Grades: Motion that "that the deadline for faculty to post course grades be no earlier than 5 PM on the third business day after the last scheduled final exam."— David Rieck. Motion seconded. Concerns that faculty with 3 finals scheduled at the end of finals week, may be rushed to grade finals, calculate final grades and make critical decisions and/or redesign finals to a form that is more easily graded but not as academically valid. Response from Registrar Maisel and Asst. VP Cohea-Weible stressed that a series of sequential processes need to be done asap; these ultimately affect our retention and years to graduation rates. (These are delineated on a document circulated to Senators with agenda). Discussion included suggestions for starting the semester a week earlier or making it a week shorter, and a compromise that would allow for faculty members in this situation to submit their grades late without changing the deadline for all faculty.

Voice vote, motion carries.

6. Pres. Mullins announced the need for an additional Senate meeting this semester, tentatively scheduled for Tues., Dec. 5. Senators with a conflict should e-mail him.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Ellen Lawler, Secretary