

Faculty Assembly Meeting
October 28, 2008
Adopted November 19, 2008

Present: Bruce Campbell, Mike DiPaola, Alan Fuchs, Carl Hershner, Katherine Kulick, Lisa Landino, John Lee, Rip McAdams, Alan Meese, Leisa Meyer, Todd Mooradian, Adam Potkay, Marc Sher, Carol Sheriff, Barbette Spaeth, Gene Tracy, Tom White, Laurie Wolf.
Absent: Larry Evans, Steve Kuhl, Kate Slevin, and Greg Smith
Others in Attendance: Provost Feiss, George Greenia, and Dean Strikwerda

Tom White called the meeting to order at 15:32

1. Motion – to approve the minutes of the meeting of September 23 passed unanimously.
2. Provost reported that further news on the budget would probably be forthcoming in December when the governor releases the figures for next year. He reported that decisions on position freezes and other matters related to this year's reductions would be made as soon as possible.
3. President White reported that the FUPC issued a report on October 15 that was sent to the president and provost. The report communicated the budget priorities of the committee. A question was raised about the definition of "furlough" in the report. The intent of the term was to suggest that pay increases promised should be made, but then employees furloughed for the number of days required to reduce the payroll to the current expenditure levels.
4. A discussion on a sample faculty survey that resulted from the work of committees of the Assembly as well as committees of other constituent groups. The College's Steering Committee plans to convene four public hearings to gather additional faculty input. The faculty task force of the Steering Committee will convene the hearings to attempt to gather input broadly. Faculty affairs committee of A&S will also convene two meetings to attempt to gather faculty input, especially from junior faculty. A query on the timeframe for the survey was made. The intent is to collect data from the faculty by mid-November. This will give faculty members about a five-day turnaround. The planning effort is not a one-time event, but rather the beginning of an ongoing annual process. A comment on the keeping the planning process going despite the very difficult economic situation confronting us. We were cautioned to remain enthusiastic about the process, despite the current economic situation. Comments about the sample survey instrument should be directed to Tom White. He will continue to work with Katherine on the survey. Individual units will decide on how many different ways data should be collected over and above the aforementioned devices. Several members provided favorable feedback on the sample survey. Katherine reported that we could permit folks to go back once they begin the survey, but then all their responses will be erased. A suggestion to randomly reorder the survey items was made, since the current order seemed to suggest prioritizing the items in a certain order. Several other suggestions concerning item formats and clarifying items without bulleted points were made. The bullet points help clarify the intent of those items. The College's Steering Committee is currently working with about 14 challenges, many mirroring those in our survey. A

suggestion was made to put up a trial test of the survey prior to the general administration. It was noted that permission must be obtained from The Human Subjects Committee

5. A proposal for a college-wide education abroad committee was made. The proposal originated in a letter from the Reves Center director to the Provost and Assembly President in 2007. The executive committee of the assembly, in its role as committee of committees, approved the concept in the spring of 2008. Questions about the proposal and its intent were posed. A discussion ensued about the specific charge of the committee. Concerns were expressed about the intent of such a committee. It was agreed that the charge and intent must be clarified. A motion to refer this to the Academic Affairs Committee, which would consult with the director of the Reves Center and draft specific charges of the committee, passed unanimously.
6. President White provided some history and background on the support of previous years' Assemblies' endorsement of health benefits for domestic partners that began 15 years ago. The assembly is being asked to reaffirm its support of this issue. Although there is a prohibition against providing such benefits in the commonwealth, members of the assembly voiced their support of the proposal as an issue of fairness and encouraged support. It was moved that the assembly reaffirm the position approved and affirmed three times in the past 15 years that Domestic Partners should receive health benefits. A unanimous vote of those present reaffirmed the support of health benefits for domestic partners.
7. Committee reports: Tom White reported on the work of the executive committee in constituting the members of the Strategic Planning Committee. Adam Potsky reported on the work of the Academic Affairs Committee, specifically on meeting to discuss the bias reporting website, its origin and the philosophy. Evidently the site is not being used because of lack of student confidence. Shaun Glover communicated the need for an Ombudsman to act on behalf of students who have experienced any instances of bias. The problem exists, but it is evidently not a pressing problem. A suggestion was made to invite Shaun to the Assembly to discuss diversity issues, our concerns as well as her concerns around these vital topics. Lisa Landino summarized the work of the Faculty Affairs Committee of the Assembly. Special kudos to Barbette Spaeth and Katherine Kulick for their efforts in structuring the strategic planning survey for the assembly. Gene Tracy reported on interaction with the Academic Affairs Committee of the BOV in September.
8. New Business:
 - A query was made about the Assembly's role in promoting more specific nondiscrimination language in the college's literature to include transgender discrimination. The personnel policy committee is the appropriate venue to begin the process of changing the language of the handbook to include such discrimination.
 - A reminder that our next meeting will be on November 18.Motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and approved at 5:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Mike DiPaola
Secretary, Faculty Assembly