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Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes - August 1997

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Approved Minutes 13 August 1997

1 and 2. Call to Order and of Roll

The regular meeting was called to order by Suzanne McGill, Chair, at 3:00 p.m. in Library 5.

The Secretary called the roll:

Present: Allison, Arata, Ardell, Ballard, Bell, Broadus, Chrystlee, Daughenbaugh, Davidson-Shivers, Dilsaver~aver, Dorman, Engebretson, Foster, Frederick, Fruh, Hain, Haywick, Honkanen, Lally, Langan, LeDoux, Martin, Matthews, McAfee, McGill, Mitchell, Moak, Moore, Mulekar, Rodgers, Sauer, Sweet, Swint, Sylvestre, Thurston, Van Haneghan, Vetrosky, Vinson, Weston, G. Wilson, Yeoman, Zhang

Absent (excused): Aucoin, Brandon, Cronwell, Donovan, Douglass, Evans, Hamm, Isom, Izenburg, Krueger, Kulkarni, Labbe, McIver, Parker, Simpson, Tucker, C. Wilson

3. Completion of Pending Business

Minutes of the regular meeting of 9 July 1997 were approved for distribution to the University Faculty.

4. Report from the Chair

Suzanne McGill reported that the Sr VPAA had been assigned as a full-time faculty member, professor of chemical engineering, and that no interim SrVPAA appointment was being considered. George Uhlig has been assigned responsibility to coordinate the semester conversion. A search committee for SrVPAA has been appointed, the Senate chair is a member, and the committee has met once. There is no information with respect to a search for VPMA, but there is an interim appointment currently in the position.

McGill expressed concern about the new title of "associate vice president for academic affairs--enrollment services" which was announced by the president today as part of a promotion for David Stearns. The concern relates to the addition of "academic affairs" into the title, a matter of more than mere semantics as it signals a change in nomenclature for the position. Such a change indicates, even to the casual observer, that the holder of this position would be involved in the academic affairs of the University, a participation not hitherto a part of Stearns' job description which had been restricted entirely and properly to enrollment services. "Academic affairs" is normally defined as including--minimally--faculty recruitment and evaluation and curriculum development. McGill also expressed concern about a reported significant increase in Stearns' salary, which, together with salary increases for two new assistant vice presidents in finance, gives one pause to query how these events could

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transpire when there is no plan existing to implement raises for faculty. McGill commented that Stearns' new title may signal a major shift in administrative structure, a move made without consultation with the Senate. McGill took umbrage at not being consulted.

McGill then invited John Filer, special assistant to the president, to address the issue. Before Filer spoke, the

Senate discussed briefly the practice of allowing officers of administration to attend senate meetings, and an informal consensus developed that any senator could express privately to the chair a reservation about any such administrator's attendance, upon receipt of which the chair would invite the administrator to leave. Filer was invited to remain. He said he would attend Senate meetings upon invitation and would be pleased to attend all or any portion of a meeting in order to serve as needed.

Filer reported that Stearns approached the president the day before the latter was to depart for travel, and asked the University to make a counter-offer to one Stearns had received from the University of Oklahoma. Stearns had to reply to Oklahoma before the president was scheduled to return to campus. An acceptable counter-offer was negotiated, partially meeting the salary offered by the competition, and agreeing to a promotion in title from assistant to associate vice president. Stearns has a good reputation for enrollment services and retention, and the president did not want to lose him, especially but not only because the University faced semester conversion without a SrVPAA. The change in status for Stearns includes a title change and increase in salary only, but no change in duties; he is not involved in faculty recruitment and evaluation or in curriculum development. Stearns does not hold rank and tenure as a regular member of the faculty.

Discussion among senators following Filer's remarks focused on the desirability of reviewing the nomenclature for officers of administration reporting to the SrVPAA, and identifying by a title including "academic affairs" only those officers whose job description involves faculty recruitment and evaluation and curriculum development. Presumably any holder of such an office would also hold rank and tenure as a regular member of the faculty. McGill was asked to discuss this issue with the president .

Filer was then invited to make comments as he pleased. He reported that the University would appeal to the 12th Circuit Judge Hand's ruling that held only the Alabama attorney general can file suits on behalf of the University. This ruling is crucial not only to the University's suit against tobacco companies to recover expenses attendant upon treating indigent cancer patients, but also with respect to the University's defending its academic integrity. Admired as the attorney general may be, no one wished involvement of that state office in decisions about academic affairs here at the University.

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5. Reports of Senate Standing Committees

Evaluation. Tom Hain reported that his committee was at work on an agenda as previously announced.

Planning and Development. Douglas Haywick reported that his committee was studying space allocation and space adequacy in anticipation of the proposed semester system conversion.

Policy/Handbook. Richard Daughenbaugh reported that his committee would place the handbook (in its current version! on the faculty Senate web page to enhance accessibility.

Salaries/Benefits: Phillip Bell reported his committee was studying salary discrepancies and compression because the five year plan of salary adjustment has run its course. They are developing non-medical data bases and plan to make the data available to faculty, although there is some limitation in the effectiveness of the data because the data bases are three years old and not current. The committee also plans to study the TIAACREF matching plan and the vacation and leave policy as now included in the handbook.

6. Reports of Caucus Leaders

No reports were made.

7. New Business

McGill reported that in discussion with the president she learned that the tenure cases for 1996-97 had been reviewed but not the promotion cases. McGill was asked to communicate the sense of the Senate that the promotion cases should also be reviewed.

8. Communications from the President

No communications were reported.

9. Adjournment

McGill adjourned the meeting at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully
submitted, T. Lally,
Secretary

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