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Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes – January 2010

Faculty Senators

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA
Faculty Senate

January 20, 2010
Library Auditorium
3:00 pm

Minutes

Attending: Estis, Gubler-Hanna, Axsmith, Carr, Connors, Fisher, Haywick, Hillman, Marshall, Perez-Pienda, Powers, Rowell, Shaw, Shelly-Tremblay, Summerlin, Toelken, Johnsten, Langan, McCormick, Campbell, Kinniburgh, Byrne, Lemley, Prendergast, Burnham, Kahn, Perry, Madden, Retzlaff-Roberts, D. Turnipseed, Woodford

Invited Guest: John Sachs, immediate past president of Faculty Senate

Excused: Spector, Lunceford, Kingman, Baggett, Romeez, P. Turnipseed, Omar, Finley, Bosarge, Falkos, Quereshi, Rizk, Brown, Keasler, King, Meyer

Unexcused: Adams, Ambrose, Pacheco, Wright

1. Call to order at 3:04 p.m.
2. Approval of minutes from the November 2009 meeting
When quorum was reached, a motion was made to approve the November minutes as distributed, the motion was seconded, and carried unanimously.
3. Chair's report
 - a. Delay in faculty vote on previously approved changes to the Faculty Senate Constitution re succession of Senators and succession of Faculty Senate President.
 - b. Possibility of additional proration
At the Executive Committee's monthly meeting with President Moulton, we were told that there is a growing likelihood that the University will see additional proration this fiscal year. Current estimates call for another 2 1/2 – 3%. If the estimates hold true, proration for this fiscal year would stand at 10%. The "good" news is the University budget was based on 10% proration.
 - c. Spring 2010 enrollment up @ 350 over Spring 2009
Enrollments for Spring 2010 are up over Spring 2009. Current forecasts are positive for Fall 2010.
 - d. University committee to study teaching evaluations
There have been discussions in the executive committee about the use of student evaluation of teaching effectiveness at the University. Based on our discussions, it seems that evaluations are done spottily, administered differently, and used differently from college-to-college. Faculty members have raised a number of issues about the instruments being used, the gathering of the data, and the use of that data. Last week, V.P. Johnson agreed to establish a University Committee to look at the evaluations and make recommendations. V.P. Johnson indicated that he believes there should be some questions used across college lines to allow for University-wide comparisons, as well as questions written for individual colleges and, possibly, disciplines. The Senate will have 4-5 representatives on the committee.
 - e. Paper versus electronic syllabi

Questions were raised with the Executive Committee about the meaning of the Faculty Handbook's requirement that students be provided a syllabus "in writing." Apparently some deans or chairs require a paper copy; others allow distribution electronically. The question was raised with V.P. Johnson who indicated that electronic distribution would satisfy the "in writing" requirement. V.P. Johnson indicated that he would send a memorandum to the Deans.

f. Attendance

We have some members who have never attended a meeting this year. Some give excuses; some don't. We have a problem and we need to look at that problem.

Section VI of the Faculty Senate Bylaws provides:

Any member of the Faculty Senate who misses without a valid excuse two Senate meetings (constitutionally mandated or called) during the academic year shall no longer be regarded as a member of the Faculty Senate.

That Bylaw provision has not been enforced in recent memory. We need to decide if we should begin enforcing the policy and what constitutes a "valid excuse." Currently, Senators simply email that they will not be attending and they are marked excused.

D. Haywick recommended sending a memorandum to new Senators about the attendance requirement and telling new Senators that if they are not able to attend, they should find a replacement to attend the meeting.

D. Turnipseed also suggested that the caucus leaders send a memo to their colleges prior to the March elections, telling faculty members that if elected to serve the third Wednesday of each month must be open for Faculty Senate meetings.

4. Old Business

a. Proposed amendment to Faculty Senate Constitution re Amendments – D. Turnipseed

Proposed Language:

Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by three-fifths vote of the Senate. The amendment does not become official until a majority of the faculty has voted on the proposed amendment and a majority of those voting approve the proposed change. After approval by the faculty the proposed amendment must then be submitted to and approved by the Board of Trustees of the University of South Alabama.

D. Turnipseed announced that there was an open motion on the floor to alter the Faculty Senate Constitution's amendment procedure. A written proposal was sent to each Senate member via email and is now posted before the Senate.

D. Turnipseed noted that concerns had been raised that the amendment would allow a small group of angry faculty to change the constitution. D. Turnipseed noted that even with the amendment, a majority of the faculty will still have to vote before the change can be approved.

Floor discussion raised concerns that a constitution is supposed to be difficult to change and there were concerns that faculty members could be disenfranchised if they were not given sufficient notice of a vote. Concerns were also raised about the need for a larger "buy in" for any constitutional change. Senators indicated that they would be more comfortable if language was added regarding the notification of faculty prior to a vote, including what constitutes notice (e.g., print and electronic means).

T. Shaw questioned why an amendment was needed, given that the constitution had only been amended once. John Sachs, visiting past-president, indicated that under the current system it would take caucus leaders organizing a vote or deans calling for a college wide meeting to facilitate a vote. Without a major organizing effort not enough votes will be returned to get anything done.

J. Tremblay-Shelly proposed an addition requiring some type of hearing on an amendment if requested by a faculty member.

J. Sachs indicated that he understood the concern on disenfranchisement, but indicated that when he moderated Town Halls he did not get a majority of the faculty to attend. He felt he was lucky if he got 10% of the faculty. The announcements for those meetings went through Public Relations so 90-95% of the faculty received the message. Large numbers simply do not bother to participate.

E. Madden queried whether failure to return a proxy would constitute a “yes” vote as it does in most corporate shareholder votes.

After revision, the proposed amendment reads:

Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by three-fifths vote of the Senate. The faculty shall be notified of proposed amendments by both print and electronic means at least thirty (30) days prior to voting, and an open forum to discuss same will be offered two weeks before the vote if requested. The amendment does not become official until a majority of the faculty has voted on the proposed amendment and a majority of those voting approve the proposed change. After approval by the faculty the proposed amendment must then be submitted to and approved by the Board of Trustees of the University of South Alabama.

A motion to accept the proposed modification was made, seconded, and carried. The revised proposal will be distributed via email before the February meeting, with a vote to be taken at that meeting. If the motion carries, the motion and the adopted motion on successorship will be placed for a faculty vote.

5. New Business

a. Faculty Senate elections – information needed from each College – K. Woodford

The Faculty Senate Constitution provides: Each member of the Faculty Senate shall be a faculty member. The term faculty member applies to anyone who has the rank of Lecturer, Instructor, Assistant, Associate or Full Professor, and who normally teaches six or more credit or contact hours per semester, or who performs equivalent instructional duties. This is to include Librarians, and all those below the rank of Assistant Dean or Assistant Director. . . . The colleges and divisions shall furnish the Secretary of the Senate with a list of their faculty members by January 15 . . .

The Faculty Senate Bylaws further provide: In the Spring of each year the Secretary will obtain from each college or division a list of the full-time faculty for the coming academic year. Projected loads for each faculty member will also be requested so that the number of Senators a college or division is entitled to may be established.

K. Woodford asked each caucus leader to consult with the college dean and provide the anticipated number of full-time faculty members for the college for Fall 2010.

6. Committee Reports

- Academic Development and Mentoring (Phil Carr) – No report

- Environmental Quality (Doug Haywick) – The committee met last week. The big issue is campus recycling. There are 4-5 groups working on that project. Despite what many have said, the university is quite active in recycling. Recycling is not the problem; but *visible* recycling is a problem. The second issue before the committee is water flow on campus. The committee is working with the University on mitigation. For example, the University will be rebuilding the area between Humanities and the Library. There has been no word on campus lighting issues.
- Evaluation (Amy Prendergast) – No report.
- Planning and Development (Sheryl Falkos) – No report.
- Policies and Faculty Handbook (Sam Fisher) – The University has come out with a new copyright policy that appears to correspond with the University committee's recommendation. The faculty will retain rights to on-line materials. If there is commercialization, the University must reach agreement with the faculty member as to royalties.
- Salary and Benefits (Julie Estis) - No report.
- Technology Utilization (Tom Meyer) – No report.

7. Caucus Reports

- Allied Health (Elizabeth Adams) – No report.
- Arts and Sciences (Thomas Shaw) – Met with the A&S Dean regarding implementing hybrid classes. He is going to begin scheduling the A&S Caucus meetings on Tuesdays.
- Continuing Education (Vickie McCormick) – Holding meetings regarding hybrid courses and efficiencies.
- Computer and Information Sciences (David Langan) – No report.
- Education (Dennis Campbell) – The college is still trying to merge two programs. The Dean wants the merger complete in the fall.
- Engineering (Peter Byrne) – No report, but there is a web cam for viewing the progress on the new building.
- Library (Vera Finley) – No report.
- Mitchell College of Business (Donna Retzlaff-Roberts) - No report.
- Medicine (Judy Burnham) - No report.
- Nursing (Diane Keasler) - No report.

Adjourned 4:02.