

Faculty Senate Meeting

February 20, 2014

Minutes #6

1. The regular meeting of the Faculty Senate was called to order at 3:10 p.m. in the Cherry Auditorium, Chester Kirk Building, Chairperson Byrd presiding.

All members were present except Senators Cohen, Dunn, Gallagher, Gordon, Heikes, Kusz, Matthew, Meagher, Menden-Deuer, Taveira, and Thomas and ex officio members Vice President Dougan, Vice Provost Libutti, CIO Bozylinsky, Deans Bonn, Larrat, Maslyn, Sullivan, Wright, and Zawia. Vice Provost McCray was represented by Assoc. Dean Quina; Dean Kirby was represented by Assoc. Dean Veeger.

2. Chairperson Byrd announced that the Minutes of Faculty Senate Meeting #5, January 23, 2014 had been posted on the Faculty Senate website. He asked if there were any additions, corrections to or questions about these Minutes. There were none. Chairperson Byrd ruled that in the absence of any changes or corrections, the Minutes were approved.

3. REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A. Announcements

1) Chairperson Byrd welcomed Senator Steven Irvine from Biological Sciences, College of Environment and Life Sciences who replaces Peter Paton from that College. His term runs through Spring 2015.

2) Chairperson Byrd announced that elections would be held at the meeting today for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Senate for Academic Year 2014-15.

3) Administrator Evaluation Coordinator, Senator Bahram Nassersharif, reported on the ongoing evaluations of six University administrators. The surveys are completed (closed) and survey data have been distributed to the respective committees. The committees are analyzing the results and plan to complete their reviews and reports by the end of March. They will deliver their reports to and meet with both the administrator they reviewed and his/her supervisor, the Provost or President.

4) Chairperson Byrd reminded the Senators that a forum on the General Education revisions would take place at the meeting today and a vote on the revisions is scheduled for the March 20, 2014 Senate meeting.

5) Chairperson Byrd expressed his appreciation to Dean Ray Wright for agreeing to sponsor the reception at the University Club after the meeting. He encouraged everyone to attend and noted that the reception gives Senators, ex officio members, and guests an opportunity to meet one another in an informal setting.

6) Chairperson Byrd asked everyone to remember to wait to be recognized by the chair before speaking. He noted that it would be very helpful for participants to identify themselves before they speak.

B. Vice Chairperson Rice announced that the Minutes of the 2013-14 Executive Committee Meeting #22 were available on the Faculty Senate website. He asked if there were any questions. There were none.

C. Vice Chairperson Rice moved approval of the appointment of Gerry Tyler, Professor Emerita, Political Science and Al Killilea, Professor Emeritus, Political Science as the University Ombuds. The motion was approved.

D. Senator Rice (acting as a member of the Nominating Committee) presented the Report of the Nominating Committee. He explained that the Senate elects the next Chair and Vice Chair of the Faculty Senate in February in order to allow time for the officers to make arrangements for the following academic year.

He placed the following Senator in nomination for Chairperson of the Faculty Senate for the 2014-15 academic year and asked him to stand: Bahram Nassersharif, Mechanical, Industrial and Systems Engineering.

Senator Rice asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There were none. Senator Rice asked for and received a motion to close nominations.

Senator Rice moved that the Faculty Senate cast the ballots of the Senate for Senator Bahram Nassersharif for Senate Chair. The motion passed.

Senator Rice placed the following Senator in nomination for Vice Chairperson of the Faculty Senate for the 2014-15 academic year and asked her to stand: Nancy Eaton, Mathematics.

Senator Rice asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There were none. Senator Rice asked for and received a motion to close nominations.

Senator Rice moved that the Faculty Senate cast the ballots of the Senate for Senator Nancy Eaton for Senate Vice Chair. The motion passed.

The Chair-elect and Vice Chair-elect were congratulated.

4. REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

A. The President reported that he had met on February 14, 2014 with Senate Chair David Byrd and Fritz Wenisch, Chair of the Constitution, By-Laws and University Manual Committee to discuss the reorganization of the structure of the Board of Education. The RI General Assembly has included new language describing the new Board in both House and Senate legislation. The details regarding the creation of a council on postsecondary education, a commissioner of postsecondary education, and a council on elementary and secondary education are enumerated in the two bills. Much of the authority of the Board will be transferred to each council. The Board will address areas of overlap between the two councils and policy issues. The President reported that the pending legislation includes additional powers of the President of the University to create and consolidate departments, divisions, programs, and courses of study. The intent was to allow routine university matters to be decided at the campus level. The President has spoken to the Board about the possible interpretation of the language to imply that curricular matters will no longer be decided through shared governance with the faculty. All parties are in agreement that the intent was not to change the practice of shared government at the University. The President indicated that the options appear to be working with the Board and the General Assembly to amend the proposed legislation or handling the issue by Board policy. Discussion ensued. Faculty expressed concern that future Board members or a future University President could hold a different understanding. Professor Kirschenbaum, URI AAUP President, expressed concern

that the language could potentially place the office of the President in dispute between a directive from the Board and the process of shared governance.

Chairperson Byrd said that the Executive Committee would continue to work with the President to achieve the mutually desired outcome.

Senator Trubiano asked if he could introduce a resolution on the matter. He was told to introduce it under New Business.

The President extended thanks and congratulations to the faculty who have worked on the General Education program. He said he was pleased with the planned program, it will help attract good students because it sends a message about what the institution values, and he looks forward to the opportunities for innovative curriculum that will be created by the plan.

B. The President reported that the legislation forwarded to him after the January 23, 2014 Senate meeting was approved except for Bill #13-14â€™13, Report to the Faculty Senate of the Constitution, By-Laws and University Manual Committee, January 2014. The President asked for a thirty-day extension on action, out of an abundance of caution, pending resolution of the general assembly issue discussed in his report.

Given the time spent in discussion regarding the Presidentâ€™s Report, the Chair moved to suspend the rule that the meeting be adjourned by 5PM if the Forum were not able to commence by 4PM. The purpose of this suspension of the rule was to allow a full 60 minutes of discussion on the proposed General Education revisions. The motion passed.

5. REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

A. Dean Killingbeck presented the Graduate Council Report No. 2013-14-4 to the Faculty Senate. He moved approval of six new courses in Business, three curricular changes, and the reintroduction of the Teacher Certification Program in Kinesiology. The motion passed.

B. Professor Brand presented the Five Hundred and Twelfth Report of the Curricular Affairs Committee. She said that Section I was informational and asked if there were any questions. There were none. Professor Brand noted that Section II required confirmation by the Faculty Senate. She moved approval of two course changes and four new courses. The motion passed.

C. Professor Maier-Speredelozzi presented the University College and General Education Report 2013-14-2 to the Faculty Senate. She said that Section I was provided as informational, a link to the University College and General Education Committee Report and Recommendations, January, 2014, the full General Education report.

Section II required confirmation by the Faculty Senate. Professor Maier-Speredelozzi moved approval of an extension of the original agreement to allow Grand Challenge courses to be scheduled for a fifth offering in 2014.

Discussion ensued. Senator Eaton moved to amend the motion to include other topics courses/ courses approved only for limited offerings. Discussion ensued. Senator Eaton withdrew the motion.

A motion was made to table the original motion. The motion failed.

The Chair called for a vote on the original motion. The motion passed.

6. FORUM

The forum on the General Education program revisions commenced at 4:10PM. Professor Maier-Speredelozzi, Chair of the University College and General Education Committee, presented an overview of the program and summarized the goals of the program (universal, flexible, integrative, and assessable) and criteria (course covers 1-2 outcomes, 3 credit per outcome, 6 credits of Grand Challenge courses, 40 credit minimum) through a brief power point presentation. She noted how the program aligns with the Academic Plan. She thanked the committee members for their hard work. 27 faculty over 5 years contributed to the effort. Discussion ensued. Senators, other faculty, and student senate representatives commented on the perceived merits and failings of the planned program. Discussion points included the role of Grand Challenge courses, seat management, the perceived depreciation of the humanities disciplines, and perceived loss of balance between general education and professional education as reflected in the outcome requirements. Chairperson Maier-Speredelozzi, answered questions and referred to power point slides to illustrate some information. Professor Foster noted some errors and inconsistencies in the text of the description of the program. Discussion continued until 5:10PM when the meeting was automatically adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Neff