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Minutes of November 10, 2016, Faculty Senate Meeting

Members Present:

Garen Evans, Lorraine Gardiner, Ben Laughter, Tami Tomasello, Anna Hart, Cecile de Rocher, Kent Harrelson, Regina Ray, Gail Ward, Sarah Mergel, Christian Griggs, Cathy Hunsicker, Lee Ann Cline, Richard Hambrock, Vince Postell, Nicholas Gewecke, Jean Johnson, Chuck Fink, Annabelle McKie-Voerste, Chris Wozny, Robin Roe, John Gulledge, Baogang Guo, Gene Powers.

Absent: Christy Walker, David Williams (2), Sarah Min, Jacquelyn Mesco (3), Jane Taylor, Gene Mesco, Norm DesRosiers, Matt Hipps.

Meeting called to order

Senate President Sarah Mergel called the meeting to order at 3:17. She asked for approval of the minutes of the October 13 meeting; the minutes were approved by voice vote.

Syllabus Statements

Sarah distributed the syllabus statements from the old faculty handbook. Dr. Venable and Dr. Chute both stated that they would like to reinstitute the faculty handbook. Sarah asked whether the college should create a universal statement on ethical conduct, to be included with the current syllabus statements.

Tami Tomasello and Chris Wozny suggested a universal policy to which individual faculty members could make additions if they wished. Chris mentioned the need for the college to maintain a record of a student's ethical violations.

Kent Harrelson moved that the faculty senate create a universal policy on ethical conduct. The motion was seconded by Chris Wozny and discussed by the senate.

In addition to this specific policy, discussion involved the question of putting all such syllabus statements online, rather than printing them in each class syllabus, and the question of setting all syllabus statements for the academic year well in advance rather than making last-minute changes and additions.

The motion to create a syllabus policy for students' ethical conduct was approved by voice vote; it was referred to the Academic Conduct Committee, which will develop a specific wording.

Committee Reports

Ad hoc bylaws committee

Chris Wozny presented the committee's recommendations to date; the committee had made revisions to the first two articles of the bylaws. He mentioned four major changes the committee recommends:

1. The elimination or modification of the "at-large" senator positions; senators holding these positions have never been elected according to the procedures in the current bylaws. Moreover, the positions are not actually at-large, since each position has been assigned to a specific School.
2. Since the senate president is expected to be an impartial moderator of discussions, the president cannot serve as an effective representative of the department or school that elected her/him. Therefore, the department or school should be allowed to elect an additional senator to serve as its representative.

3. Since administrators such as department chairs cannot be senators, they should not serve as proxies for senators.
4. Finally, the committee recommends placing descriptions of specific committees in a separate document so that the bylaws will not have to be revised each time a change is made to a committee.

Senate president Sarah Mergel spoke in favor of keeping the committees in the main document of the bylaws to lend them greater legitimacy. Since the committee did not send its recommendations to the senate by the one-week deadline, no vote was taken; the committee expects to have its full recommendations to the senate before the January meeting.

Academic Conduct Committee

Sarah Mergel spoke for committee chair James Wright, who was unable to attend. The committee has worked to reword the student misconduct policy; the modified policy was distributed prior to the meeting. Discussion of the new wording followed. Some members of the senate stated that the new policy puts the faculty member's word against the student's; others questioned whether faculty members are required to report incidents of student misconduct.

The senate felt that the document's wording still needs clarification; Sarah will refer the document back to the committee.

Faculty Development Subcommittee

Christian Griggs stated that the subcommittee is focusing on three areas: the Center for Academic Excellence, the Scholarship Showcase, and methods to improve leadership skills on campus.

Faculty Welfare Subcommittee

Sara spoke for chair Matt Hipps, who was unable to attend. The subcommittee is working on the following issues: reviewing the new college statutes, revising the faculty handbook, planning the academic calendar, and faculty workload.

International Education Committee

Baogang Guo stated that the week of November 14 is International Education week and asked everyone to encourage students to attend.

Faculty Resource Committee

Tami Tomasello stated that the committee is working on a revision of library policies and a survey to assess faculty technology needs. She said that the committee has asked OCIS to keep faculty informed of any ongoing problems with classroom equipment; she also stated that OCIS is replacing the hard drives in classroom computers to reduce login time.

Evaluation Committee

John Gullede said that the committee is working the following issues:

1. a revision of the student evaluation process; the committee is looking into evaluation instruments being used at other schools that may be more statistically valid than our current one,
2. the possible implementation of a peer evaluation system, and
3. an examination of the usefulness of the current goal system for annual evaluations.

Tami Tomasello spoke of the advantages of a paper-based evaluation system and mentioned that Florida State tried an online evaluation system and then went back to paper for its higher response rates.

USG Faculty Council

Sarah Mergel reported on the recent meeting of the Faculty Council, which consists of senate presidents from throughout the USG. One topic of concern was the number of college and university presidents who were appointed by the chancellor rather than selected by the institution. Dr. Wrigley, the incoming chancellor, said that the system does prefer to hire presidents through searches rather than appointments.

Sarah also said that vice chancellor Houston Davis is leaving the USG; the faculty council is requesting faculty input in choosing his replacement.

Other topics discussed by the council include legislation on weapons on campus, diversity in hiring, summer pay, and employee benefits including health plans.

Adjournment

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 4:40.

The next scheduled senate meeting is Thursday, January 12, 2017.

Respectfully submitted by Kent Harrelson, Secretary