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USU FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
December 10, 2007, 3:00 p.m.
Champ Hall Conference Room

Present: President Stan Albrecht, Provost Raymond Coward, Doug Ramsey, Byron Burnham, Steve Burr, Daren Cornforth, Jake Gunther, Ed Heath, John Kras, Pat Lambert, Mike Parent, Flora Shrode, Vincent Wickwar, and Andi McCabe

Invited Guest: Francine Johnson, Noelle Call, Patti Kohler, Mike Lyons

Doug Ramsey called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes of November 19, 2007

Mike Parent motioned to approve the November 19, 2007 minutes. Flora Shrode seconded the motion; motion passed with one abstention.

Announcements - Doug Ramsey

1. There were no announcements.

University Business

1. President Albrecht shared some legislative issues coming up in the next few weeks including the governor's release of his budget just this morning. At this very early stage, the compensation package is about 4% plus an increase in health benefits. The governor also recommends \$12 million for university faculty retention and merit. The governor is pretty much where the Regents were with mandated costs with only one exception – the governor has zeroed out the requested increase in operating costs. Most of the student financial aid packages that was requested the Regents are included in the governor's budget. The \$17.5 million Institutional Priorities budget requested by the Regents was reduced to \$4 million, which does not leave much for our \$3 million request. We will have to do the same as last year and run some separate bills. The governor also zeroed out the statewide infrastructure priorities, which includes the academic library consortium. The governor's requested budget for higher education ended up being \$66 million of new funding, not including the part of the compensation package that would support our health benefits. There are no buildings included in the budget for higher education.

About the series of legislative fiscal audits conducted over the course of the summer, one dealt with our vacant pool, one with lapsed balances, and the last with the liability created by our early retirement option. Concerning the vacant position pool, the president stated that we are addressing those issues brought forth in the audit in time before the legislative session begins so the legislators do not feel they need to pass a bill that would direct us in how to deal with our vacant position pool.

Information Items

1. **Council on Teacher Education** – Chair Francine Johnson presented the University Council on Teacher Education Report for Academic Year 2006-2007. Approved program changes included the School Psychology program now offering an Educational Specialist degree (EdS) rather than an MS. She explained there is concern regarding the possible elimination of future teacher education programs at USU because teacher education enrollments are not historically high when you compare them to other programs that a department may have. This concern will be brought to the Deans Council because there is a critical shortage of teachers upcoming.

John Kras motioned to place the Council on Teacher Education Report on the Consent Agenda item of the January 7, 2008 Faculty Senate meeting. Mike Parent seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

2. **Retention and FYE Report** – Noelle Call, director of the Office of Retention and First-Year Experience, presented some of the new programs implemented this last year. One is the Early Alert Program where faculty can e-mail the retention office if there is a concern and they will in turn alert the student about his/her academic progress. These students will be tracked to see if the retention office has made any difference as they start some longitudinal studies with this. They encourage more faculty to participate in this program. Noelle will try to disseminate the program's information by sending it out to all faculty.

The Office of Retention and First-Year Experience at USU experience collaborates extensively with a myriad of departments, offices, and individuals from across the university to identify and implement programs and initiatives meant to enhance the capacity of the institution to contribute to student success and mitigate student attrition.

Enrollment is up and, subsequently, so are the numbers of students entering Connections, participating in SOAR, and also the number of parents attending orientation on campus.

Noelle Call also distributed the list of books to be reviewed for prospective selection for the 2008 Common Literature Experience. Any of the books can be picked up at the Office of Retention and First-Year Experience in TSC 314. They will make their selection in January.

John Kras motioned to place the Retention and FYE Report on the Consent Agenda item of the January 7, 2008 Faculty Senate meeting. Mike Parent seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

Provost Coward added that the Deans Council has adopted a schedule of retreats held in August so they will not conflict with the Connections in Fall of 2008. Connections will be August 20-23.

3. **Scholarship Advisory Board** – Patti Kohler, new scholarship counselor, was present to give the report. Undergraduate scholarship awards are given out by the Admissions office according to legislative mandates and university policy. College and departmental scholarships are awarded at the college/departmental level from college cash accounts or endowments. The total amount given out to USU students in 06-07 was above \$25 million, up from the previous year, due to enrollment and tuition being up, which positively affects the waiver fund. Athletic scholarships are in the Athletic budget separate from the Admissions budget.

Provost Coward stated that waivers are not just 'funny money', that at USU the money does have to come from somewhere to pay the waiver and it comes from our discretionary money. He also stated that athletic scholarships are in the Athletic budget separate from the Admissions budget.

John Kras motioned to place the Scholarship Advisory Board Report on the Consent Agenda item of the January 7, 2008 Faculty Senate meeting. Steve Burr seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

Key Issues and Action Items

1. **BFW Items – Conflict of Interest Recommendations** - Jenny Norton, chair, was charged to review the Conflict of Interest policy, particularly as it relates to the choice of textbooks and the adoption of textbooks in classes where the instructor chooses his/her own textbooks and financially benefits from that choice. There is a \$500 limit that appears in the Conflict of Interest disclosure form, but not in the policy. BFW considered many issues while looking at this policy and among their recommendations are that any substantial changes should go through the Faculty Senate and that if this \$500 was going to be a strict limit, then that should be added to the policy.

Bryon Burnham motioned to place the BFW this on the Key Issues and Action Items agenda of the January 7, 2008 Faculty Senate meeting. Jake Gunther seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously. Mike Parent then moved to reconsider this motion. John Kras seconded the motion; motion passed unanimously. Mike Parent then moved to place the four recommendations by BFW on the Consent Agenda. John Kras seconded this motion; motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

1. **Course Evaluation Form** – Mike Lyons, chair of Faculty Evaluation Committee, gave background on this form back to going back to when Janis Boetinger was Senate President. Survey of the faculty resulted in widespread dissatisfaction in the current process. The FEC committee looked at faculty responses to the survey and the majority favored reducing the form down to include one question on the quality of instruction, which would be quantitative and open-ended questions on what students liked or disliked about the course. The committee next decided to survey the administration and determined that most of the administration looks only at the summary questions. The committee drew up a new evaluation form simplifying the questions and did a pilot test in about six courses in summer of 2006. Both forms were used in this study and found very little difference in the results. Most students didn't care but for those who did preferred the shorter form. Nothing was done last year but Mike recommends to the Senate this shortened form with one or two changes in regard to the letter grades. This has never been formally addressed in the Senate and the executive committee asked Mike Lyons to take this back to his committee for renewed consideration.
2. **LEEDS Certification** – John Kras motioned to place a resolution on the agenda of the January 7, 2007 agenda under Old Business. Mike Parent seconded the motion; motion passed unanimously.

New Business

1. **Ombudsperson Code Review** – Mike Parent brought forward from his college proposed word change in the Ombudsperson code. John Kras motioned to place this on the Faculty Senate agenda. Ed Heath seconded the motion; motion passed unanimously.
2. **Faculty Forum Attendance** – Doug Ramsey asked for ideas for improving Faculty Senate attendance. Suggestions were to send out flyers and to get real hot topic items, maybe get questions ahead of time and include the Faculty Senate in planning the forum.

3. **Salary Compression** – Doug Ramsey asked for suggestions on what we can do with this. Provost Coward stated that the department heads council voted to have an open discussion on this issues in February. They have started pulling the data by college. This has also been put on the Deans Council Retreat agenda in January. He said not all compression is wrong. It has to get down to the individual case. The university has also commissioned a national study on compression with a national consortium called the Leadership Council that we are part of. Provost Coward will address this to the Senate under University Business at the January meeting to update them on what is currently taking place with this issue.

Adjournment

Doug Ramsey asked for adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Minutes Submitted by: Andi McCabe, Faculty Senate Executive Secretary, 797-1166