Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes February 25, 2015

Senate Meeting called to order at 4:00 PM

Approval of Minutes: It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the January 21 meeting be approved. The motion passed.

Executive Officer report:

Prof. McDonald reported that he has emailed Suzanne Ward, chair of the Committee on Academic Affairs and Standards regarding the matter of plus/minus grades that was raised at the previous faculty senate meeting. CAAS will study the issue. Prof. McDonald reported that the Parking and Planning committee will be meeting and that he is now on that committee. He also reported that the Strategic Planning task force is not yet at the stage of having anything to present to the senate, but that a draft report is expected to come from the task force in the future and that may be an appropriate time for the senate to consider formally submitting input to the task force. He stated that the governance task force is currently talking in generalities discussing the need for shared governance, transparency – need for increased discussion between different parts of the university, and the need to improve sharing of information, in particular online information, in order to have better informed decisions.

Next Prof. McDonald reported on his inquiries regarding the evaluation of administrators in response to questions raised at the previous faculty senate meeting. He was told that the university is moving towards an online evaluation which would be completed by all, not just a sampling as with the old paper system. The administrative analyst who was working on the system left the university so the move to online evaluation has not been completed. McDonald reported that Dr. Henderson said some changes to evaluations from the higher administration are needed; the university council will discuss the problem. Discussion from the floor followed this portion of the Executive Officer’s report. Comments were made that since faculty are evaluated, administrators should be evaluated in the same way, if necessary using the old paper system. Several faculty members stated that they have had no opportunity to evaluate any administrators in several years. A few senators reported that in their department there had been an opportunity to evaluate the department head within the past couple of years.

Reports of Senate Committees:

Committee on Committees: no report
Ways and Means: Written report submitted. Jean Kiesel presented the committee’s recommendations for a few modifications to the Provost’s proposal for the QSN committee for a search for the Dean of University College. Senator Wooddell questioned whether the Ways and Means Committee had checked with the deans of other colleges not listed as represented on the proposed QSN committee, about whether they had a problem with not being represented. Dr. Kiesel stated that they had not consulted those colleges. Senator Wooddell then asked that the committee check with those colleges not having designated representatives on the proposed QSN committee. A question was then raised about item #8 on the Ways and Means committee’s report which recommended a representative from among employers in the community. After discussion including questions about how an outside representative would be chosen, Chad Parker made a motion to remove #8 from the Ways and Means proposal. G.H. Massiha seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Academic Planning and Development: no report
Governmental Concerns: Bill Davie reported that the committee is working on a resolution regarding the upcoming legislative session that would request that there be no further cutting of higher education. The resolution would be distributed to the Acadiana delegation. Senator Wooddell suggested including language in the resolution about restoring funding from cuts that have already been made. It was also suggested that the resolution be distributed through blogs and local media.

Faculty Advisory Council Representative: no report

At this point it was noted that there was more to cover in the Ways and Means committee report so discussion returned to Ways and Means. Their first priority for future plans is to draft an amendment to exclude certain administrators from membership in the faculty senate. Prof. McDonald reported that some associate deans and similar ranks do not have any faculty reporting to them and do not see themselves as administrators. Other senators commented that the senate should follow common practice and AAUP policy and make a firm cutoff prohibiting senate membership above department head. Senator Wooddell moved for a straw poll that no one above the rank of department head be a member of the faculty senate. A poll was taken and the consensus was that no one above department head be a member of the faculty senate.

Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of Underrepresented Faculty Groups: no report
Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of women: the committee has received updated information from Ellen Cook and expects to have a report prepared before the end of the academic year

Reports from University committees:
Curriculum: no report
Faculty Grievance: no report
Faculty Benefits and Welfare: no report
Library: no report
Academic Affairs and Standards: no report
Parking and Planning:
Student Evaluation of Instruction: Written report submitted. The committee had been dormant in the recent past, so the survey has not been reviewed or updated recently. A question was raised about whether there should be a cutoff on reporting small numbers of responses for a class. Senator Autin reported that the committee is in the very beginning stages of looking at the system and needed changes. A question was raised as to what the student viewpoint is regarding the method of evaluation.

Senator David Baker made the following motion: “I move that until a systematic new evaluation system of administrators is conceived and implemented, a paper based evaluation should be conducted with all line reports of each administrator regarding the performance of their supervisor and Dean.” The motion was seconded by George Wooddell. The motion passed.

Since the time at this point was past 5:30 no further items were discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 pm.

Kathleen Knierim
Secretary