Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes April 1, 2015

Senate Meeting called to order at 4:00 PM

Approval of Minutes: It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the March 18 meeting be approved. The motion passed.

Executive Officer report:

Prof. McDonald reported that ALFS, the Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates, has requested that all faculty senates in the state endorse a Legislative Pledge proposed by the ULM faculty senate to oppose cuts to funding for higher education. ALFS also has a Citizen’s Pledge for individuals to submit.

Prof. McDonald gave an update about progress on developing a shared sick leave policy. Christine Brasher and her staff have put together a draft policy which is currently undergoing revisions. When complete it will go to the University Council for a vote. Dr. McDonald mentioned that the need for a family leave policy has come up in University Council discussions and that the Provost is looking into the possibility of providing paid family leave. Dr. McDonald also reported that in University Council discussions the Provost is encouraging the development of a policy on policies. Many policies at UL are not easy to find, existing in memos and such. A policy on policies would require consistent steps for approval and publishing of new policies. The faculty senate will need to see that a new policy on policies does not conflict with senate policies regarding the faculty handbook.

Lastly, Prof. McDonald reported that the shared governance task force has submitted their final report to the strategic planning task force. The strategic planning task force will soon be putting together their overall report.

Unfinished Business:

1. The senate constitutional amendment to limit membership to faculty not serving as administrators above department chair or equivalent which was presented at the previous senate meeting was voted on. The amendment passed unanimously.

2. In response to the request made through a motion at the previous senate meeting, the Ways and Means Committee presented a motion to amend the constitution to remove the statement that the president of the university is the president of the faculty senate. After discussion of the new motion for constitutional amendment, G.H. Massiha made a motion to modify the amendment so that all references to President in the context of faculty senate president include the phrase “President of the Faculty Senate” and all references to President in the context of university president include the phrase “President of the University”. The motion to add these phrases to the wording of the amendment was seconded and passed. Next George Wooddell moved and Monica Tauzin seconded that Article III Sec.1 (which was formerly Sec.2) be modified to read
“The President of the Faculty Senate or an appointed representative shall preside at all meetings.” The motion passed.

New Business:

Senator Wooddell moved that the faculty senate endorse the ALFS legislative pledge which Prof. McDonald had discussed in his report. The motion was seconded and the vote in favor was unanimous. Dr. McDonald then encouraged senators to fill out the citizen’s pledge and to encourage others to do so through social media.

Senator Massiha alerted senators that there is an issue with the new health insurance. He stated that money contributed by him to his HSA 775 has not yet been placed in the account.

Senator Massiha noted that adjunct faculty salary will increase by a small amount starting in the fall. He suggested that those teaching in the summer should be given a similar raise. Senator Wooddell moved and Senator DeRouen seconded that the senate charge the executive officer to look into what can be done to get the same raise for summer pay as was given to adjuncts. The motion passed.

Returning to the topic of state budget issues, Dr. McDonald mentioned that there have been a growing number of articles written opposing cuts to higher education. He stated that the UL Monroe faculty senate is voting on a resolution similar to the one passed by our faculty senate regarding the upcoming legislative session. A question was raised as to whether the University Council has discussed possible specific budget cuts. Dr. McDonald responded that no specific plan will be proposed until more definite information is available on the budget. He stated that the University of Louisiana System as a whole is using a budget cut estimate of approximately 400 million dollars.

Meeting adjourned at 5:27 pm.

Kathleen Knierim
Secretary