

Apr. 6, 2011

Faculty Assembly Executive Council (FAEC) Meeting

Present: Jim Morley, Jeremy Teigen, Sam Mustafa, Alex Olbrecht, Jillian Weiss, Elaine Risch,

Not Present: Max Goldberg, Ruma Sen

Secretary: Kristin Kenneavy

1. Minutes

Minutes approved.

2. FGRC Amendments

A clean copy of the current by-laws has been posted to the Faculty Assembly website.

The final version of the proposed amendments to the FA by-laws had been received from the Governance Review Committee (GRC).

Several representatives noted that the language used in some of the amendments was still unclear (e.g. Amendment 9, pertaining to Article 8). The effectiveness of the content of some amendments was also questioned (e.g. staggering elections, mandatory meetings with administrators). Debate revolved around whether the amendments should be voted on “as is” without further comment from the Faculty Assembly or whether the amendments actually constituted a decision item on the agenda, necessitating a discussion in the assembly, followed by a vote. A third viewpoint was that the FAEC might edit the language of the amendments for clarity, but this suggestion was discarded, the reasoning being that it is was the GRC’s charge to craft the amendments.

Those representatives in favor of including the amendments as a decision item (with discussion) pointed out that Robert’s Rules of order specify that a discussion must accompany a decision item. Those opposed argued that there would not be sufficient time in any Faculty Assembly meeting to deal with nine separate discussion and voting processes, given that each would likely have amendments proposed from the floor. Given that there were a number of potential items on the FA agenda, worry was expressed that there would not be enough time to both discuss the amendments and complete other pressing business. In general, most representatives indicated that they did not particularly want the amendments to be pushed until Fall 2011. A second point on which most representatives seemed to agree was that the flowchart (an appendix to the proposed amendments) was not to be included in the mail ballot as something on which to be voted. In terms of providing a rationale in advance of an FA decision item, the discussion of the amendments by the GRC at the March 23rd FA meeting was thought to constitute such a rationale.

Following the above discussion, a vote was taken on whether the amendments would be included on the April 13th FA Agenda as a decision item.

4 representatives voted in favor of inclusion

2 representatives voted against inclusion

Representatives also discussed when the duties of the GRC would officially be at an end and when the committee members could be discharged from their duties with thanks for their hard work. It was also noted that the materials on the GRC website would need to be archived.

3. Annual Report 2010-2011

Discussion to be held next week.

4. Review of Rep. Weiss's Spreadsheet of Agenda Items

Discussion to be held next week.

5. Preparation for 4/13 Faculty Assembly Meeting

See discussion throughout these minutes for items designated for inclusion on the FA agenda 4/13.

6. Winter Term Report

Rep. Teigen looked at calendars to see what benefit there would be in compressing the grading schedule at the end of Spring semesters in order to obtain a lengthier Winter break/online session. This research was undertaken using the assumption that commencement is not to be moved and that the reading day is to be preserved.

The results are that there are inconsistencies from year to year in terms of the potential gain in length. For instance, in the 2011 calendar year, there would have been no gain in the length of Winter Break, but for the next two years, the break could be made longer by several days. A second source of variability is when Martin Luther King Jr. Day falls.

Rep. Teigen also consulted Registrar Cynthia Brennan on this issue; the registrar's office would prefer that the status quo be maintained and provided rationales for this opinion based on a number of constraints. Grades cannot be due on a weekend or on commencement. The registrar also needs one day to finish business on the winter term. As it is, some faculty members disregard the due date for grades. It does not appear possible to institute rolling due dates that would be linked to the timing of exams (such that those with earlier exam slots would turn in grades earlier, and vice versa). Currently, the time that a faculty member has to submit grades varied widely – from 4 to 10 days, depending on how one's final exam slots fall. Furthermore, finals week can't be compressed. Five distinct days are needed for final exams because they take longer than class periods (two hours as opposed to one and one half hours).

In summary, there does not appear to be much advantage to compressing the grading period unless if commencement can be moved to the third weekend in May.

It was pointed out that moving commencement later may be problematic if the first summer session is to avoid July 4th weekend.

It was stated that this item would not be put on the FA agenda until the assumptions outlined above could be explored.

7. SBR Report

Rep. Mustafa reported regarding the progress of the taskforce. Provost Beth Barnett has been present at the meetings regarding this issue. The SBR funds are controlled by the Provost's Office, hence the need for collaboration between faculty and administration on this issue. Consequently, the Provost has been asked a number of questions regarding the possibilities for dispensation of these funds and she plans to report back to the taskforce with information. It is hoped that SBR could be treated more like the deans' travel money, with reimbursement based on receipts. Eddie Saiff will act as the AFT point person on this issue. The taskforce plans to meet one more time this semester and continue work in Fall 2011. A to-do list has been created.

8. Report on Spring Faculty Conference

Aaron Lorenz will facilitate the discussion of "Academically Adrift"; he will provide a summary of the text. It is possible that faculty members may engage in small group discussion of the book.

On the topic of assessment, President Morley suggested that a book by Babich that is critical of the "No Child Left Behind" be included as suggested reading. Kathy Yeaton was suggested as a potential facilitator.

Alex Urbiel will act as facilitator on the topic of reforms to the Curriculum Enhancement Component (CEC).

9. Vacancies: Faculty Assembly Secretary and All-College Rep.

Elections for these positions will be held on April 13th during the FA meeting.

It was unclear which faculty members were willing to run for these positions. There was some discussion as to whether the all-college representative needed to have over 11 years of service. It is not yet known whether Rep. Teigen will be serving during Fall 2011 as he is waiting to hear back regarding his application to the Fulbright program. Given that this information may not be known prior to next week's meeting, it is likely that the representative being elected will need to have been at the college for 11 years or longer, pursuant to the by-laws.

10. Academic Review Committee (ARC) Proposal for Special Education Masters Program

There was some discussion of the Special Education Masters Program in light of whether it is feasible from a fiduciary perspective. However, given that the monetary aspect of masters programs is outside the purview of the faculty (who decide curricular and academic matters), the program will be included as a decision item at the next FA meeting. Rep. Risch agreed to speak with the Graduate Council regarding whether they had made any decisions regarding the program. It was observed that this

program appears to call for faculty who would only teach graduate-level courses. The question was raised as to how this program relates to the Teacher Education certificate in SSHS.

ARC has also asked that another CEC decision item be included on the agenda. There was some confusion as to what this decision item entailed, given that the FA had just voted on a CEC decision item at the last meeting. Pres. Morley agreed to ask Emma Rainforth for clarification on this matter.

11. Faculty Assembly Agenda, 2011-2012

There was a discussion of whether the FAEC should be (and is) proactive versus reactive. FAEC is reactive, not proactive. There was disagreement among representatives as to the above. It was pointed out that the FAEC is potentially missing opportunities to engage faculty in issues over which they should have some decision-making power. Power is currently spread among ambiguously overlapping bodies and, as a consequence, is too diffuse.

Further discussion to take place at April 20th FAEC meeting.

12. Online Course Manual

Rep. Weiss raised the issue of the role of deans in the online course assignment process and noted that feedback provided by the faculty to the ARC regarding this issue had been disregarded by the Provost's Council. The Council voted to adopt the ARC online course manual as originally written. Rep. Weiss viewed this decision as problematic and suggested that the FAEC look more closely at this issue.