

Minutes of Fall 2003 Meeting of Faculty

The Faculty of the College of Charleston convened at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, September 22 in Physicians' Memorial Auditorium.

Speaker Hugh Wilder called the meeting to order. After welcoming the faculty to the new academic year, Mr. Wilder announced that at the September Senate meeting, Bev Diamond had been elected as Speaker *pro tem* (designated to preside over meetings in the Speaker's stead should he be unable to do so). He noted that George Pothering will serve this year as Parliamentarian, and Deb Vaughn will again serve as Faculty and Senate meeting webmaster, displaying relevant documents from the Senate website. The Speaker then asked for any corrections to the minutes of the Spring Faculty meeting; the minutes were approved as submitted.

Reports

President Higdon

Mr. Wilder called on President Lee Higdon to make a report to the faculty. Mr. Higdon greeted the faculty, offering a special welcome to new colleagues. He also welcomed Provost Elise Jorgens, here at the College since July, and said he looked forward to working with all faculty this year. Normally, the President said, this Fall report consisted of updates on the College's progress, but today he chose to address the topic of the proposed minor in gay and lesbian studies that had been much discussed both on and off campus in the past weeks. First, "No one should doubt my commitment to an open, welcoming, affirming community." He said that he wanted the College to be a place where all were welcome, because "diversity is our strength," Next, he continued, "shared governance is absolutely critical for our institutional effectiveness." He noted that his administration "has shown itself to be willing to listen to faculty," and that he recognizes "the primacy of faculty" in creating curriculum. "This is not a top-down process," the President said. "I trust you . . . to carefully consider the merits of any program." What, then, happened in the case of the GLBT minor? "We lost control of the process," Mr. Higdon said. "It would be preferable to me if the normal, deliberative faculty process could have occurred," but in this case "other factors came into play." Noting that "we were dealing with very extraordinary circumstances," the President said he hoped that the "normal faculty selection process" will now continue. Stressing his desire to reaffirm this belief, Mr. Higdon advised faculty not to hesitate in bringing their concerns about any aspect of the College to him, as they have in the past.

Mr. Higdon then reported on good news the College has received. One survey places our institution in the top five in "student satisfaction." In another study, 98% of our alumni who were surveyed are either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their overall experience and with their academic experience here. This fall our entering class is better than it has ever been: the SAT average is above 1200 and the collective GPA is around 3.75. The President noted that this may be the highest average of all South Carolina state-supported institutions. He noted that our retention rates are also improving; this past year's Commencements included over 260 more graduates than we have ever had in a year. The

retention rates for freshmen and sophomores are up 3% this year, and they rose 4% the previous year. “We’re certainly pleased with this progress,” the President said. He also noted that the Master Planners will be on campus this fall to report on their work, and “what I have seen is very exciting” so far. The President looked forward to integrating this Facilities Master Plan into the College’s Strategic Plan, and to working with other committees that are studying salary, workload, and other issues related to the Fourth-Century Initiative. The President is happy to have our new Provost here to join him in this effort, he said.

“Our major challenge is financial and fiscal,” said Mr. Higdon. The state has already sequestered 1% of our budget against future economic shortfalls, and even though they may not take that away from us, we will need to remain fiscally prudent while waiting to see how the state’s economy fares. So far, though, “we’ve been able to handle the state’s cuts. . . and not be moved off course.” The President thanked all the faculty for their ongoing work towards the College’s continued development.

The Provost

Mr. Higdon formally introduced and welcomed Provost Elise Jorgens, who in turn recognized deans for each school. Department chairs then introduced their new colleagues, who totaled 56 new faculty. A list of this year’s new faculty appears at the end of this document.

Faculty Technology Institute/WebCT

Bob Mignone, who participated this summer in the College’s Faculty Technology Institute, presented information about the new instructional interface, WebCT, which is now available for all courses. Mr. Mignone explained that every course at the College now has a WebCT account containing all its registered students. There is also a shell where faculty may place their syllabus and other instructional material, and tools for sending mail to students, receiving documents electronically, and facilitating discussions and other communications with students such as grade reports. Mr. Mignone told faculty that training was available for anyone who was interested in learning to use WebCT, and that mentors from every discipline would be offering assistance later in the semester.

Ad Hoc Committee on Undergraduate Research

Rick Heldrich announced that the deadline for applying for grants in support of undergraduate research was November 7th. Noting that there will be 28 grants awarded this year (up from 20 last year), Mr. Heldrich urged faculty to consider applying. He also noted that all departments should be represented on the Faculty Liaison Committee for Undergraduate Research; departments without representation should step forward now.

Announcements

Skip Godow reminded faculty of the United Way campaign, stressing that businesses who donate to the College notice our level of participation in this campaign. Some area institutions have much higher rates of participation than does the College, and Mr. Godow urged faculty to change that this year. He also noted that all United Way Funds are now distributed like grant funds, rather than being automatically assigned to existing

organizations. Groups must make proposals and demonstrate that they have used their United Way money effectively in the past. Many deserving people in our community benefit from United Way contributions, he concluded, and he hoped everyone would participate this year.

For the Good of the Order

Dave Marshall (Communications) announced an upcoming workshop on service learning, sponsored by CETL. Next, Mr. Marshall presented a concern to faculty. He noted that at Convocation, an event he had enjoyed, an entering student had pointed out to him that as she looked at the stage during the ceremony, she saw that there were no African American trustees or senior administrators here at the College. Mr. Marshall said he hoped the Faculty Senate would take up this matter in its deliberations this year, since he felt that in the fourth century of its history, the College ought to try to have a different appearance than the one it had in its first and second centuries.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:25 PM. (Faculty repaired to a reception sponsored by the Office of the President.)

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Eichelberger
Faculty Secretary