

Minutes of College of Charleston Faculty Senate

The College of Charleston Faculty Senate met Tuesday, March 29th, 2005, at 5:00 p.m. in ECTR 116. Speaker Bob Mignone called the meeting to order, and asked for corrections to the minutes of the March 1st meeting. These minutes were approved.

Reports

The Speaker noted that the By-Laws committee was at work on the question of senate eligibility, and that a motion on this topic might be forthcoming at the April meeting. He also urged faculty to make plans to attend this year's Commencement. Next, Mr. Mignone recognized the Provost, who wished to report to the Senate on the Retention Strategic Plan.

Office of Academic Affairs (Report on Retention Strategic Plan)

Ms. Jorgens told the Senate that increasing retention was a priority for the President, and she detailed the major efforts to that end that are now underway. Noel Levitz, a consulting firm, has been working with the College for almost a year now, and several individuals have been on campus to consult with the Provost's office. A statistical analysis of the 2003 and 2004 incoming freshman class may help us to identify the characteristics of the students who do or don't return after their first year, the Provost said. Our advising system has also been studied through several means, including student focus groups. Another consultant has done an analysis of all the forms of communication the College uses with students, to see how effective these media are. The retention team includes Associate Provost Amy McCandless and Kay Smith, the College's new Vice President for the Academic Experience. The Provost noted that it is beneficial for the College "both academically and economically" to keep the students we have recruited. It's expensive to recruit the new students to replace those we have lost, she said, and from an academic standpoint, it's better if we have students from freshman year on. Many transfers are good students, she said, but we can teach students more effectively when we know what their prior courses were like. "We have more to build on if we have them here all four years."

Amy McCandless reported on the goals of the retention team. The first goal is to achieve and sustain a 90% retention rate between the first and the second year. Ms. McCandless explained that within this strategic plan, the term "retention" refers only to this period. The College's current rate is 83.4%; the goal is to reach 90% by Fall 2008. Ms. McCandless said that our current retention rate makes us "competitive" with good schools, but a rate of 90% will put us up higher, with schools like William and Mary. Other goals concern graduation rates. In September 2004, the College's four-year graduation rate was 43% (43% of the students who had entered 4 years previously had graduated); our 5-year rate was 59% (of all students who entered in 1999, 59% had graduated in September 04). "Our graduation rates are good, but they are not competitive," said Ms. McCandless, noting that the goal was to have a 55% 4-year rate by Spring 2012. The Strategic Plan also calls for achieving the same graduation rates for

African American and minority students that we achieve for the student body as a whole. Retention rates for our African American students are as good as or better than our rates for the whole student body, but graduation rates are not as good, she said. Finally, she said, there are goals regarding the persistence and graduation rates of our transfer students. Currently that is 77%, and the goal is to reach 85%.

Kay Smith, the new Vice President, then addressed the Senate. Having been on campus since January, she is in the process of meeting with people in many departments at the College, she said. The Retention team held a retreat in January, and attendees decided on seven areas to work on. Advising was an area students were not satisfied with, as was verified in focus groups. Another area is the early alert system, so that students could benefit from earlier intervention if they begin to slip academically. Financial aid was another area that affects retention; students need to know what other aid to apply for in the event they lose scholarships or grants because of their GPA. Support services also affect retention, Ms. Smith noted--areas like dining services, parking, etc. Jeri Cabot is heading the committee that will address this area. Other committees are now seeking to improve the quality of the on-campus and off-campus academic experience. Undergraduate research and internships can enhance this experience, the Vice President said, and the Gen Ed committee is looking at how the general education requirements can serve our students better. There will be some Learning Communities begun this fall (a group of students taking courses in a block schedule, living in the same dorm, and sharing some enrichment experiences). Institutions that have learning communities have a 4% higher retention rate, she noted. A pilot group for women students with an interest in science and math will be launched next semester. Another idea is to help students prepare to transfer in to the College. Ms. Smith said she hoped to get Trident to offer a course that would enable students who were planning to transfer to prepare for the specific requirements of the College. Other scholarships are contemplated that are designed to improve retention of African American and minority students over four years by increasing their participation in co-curricular activities. Ms. Smith invited faculty to contact her to volunteer to serve on any of these committees.

Several faculty asked questions. Elizabeth Jurisich (Mathematics) asked whether we knew what kind of students were leaving before graduation---our best students, our worst students, or some combination. Ms. Smith said more students than not were academically eligible when they left; the Provost and Associate Provost agreed that “we tend to lose students at the high end.” Ms. Smith said that she was interested in finding out retention rates for students who live off campus. “Most of the evidence [from other institutions] is that living on campus correlates with retention.” Alex Kasman (Mathematics) noted that students had told him that they were transferring “because they want to major in a subject we don’t offer.” Ms. Jorgens noted that “we can’t worry about students who have that career path,” and that this reason had not emerged as a factor in very many of the students who have left recently. “We are tracking students who ask the Registrar’s Office to get a transcript sent elsewhere,” she said, and asking them why they are transferring. “If it’s because they are going to engineering school, fair enough. But if they want to leave because they don’t feel safe in the residence hall or don’t feel challenged in their classes,” then we need to do something to change that, she said. Kay

Smith noted that nationally, about 50% of college students attend more than one institution. Another senator noted that some people transferred *into* the College to pursue majors we offer that are not available elsewhere. Would such transfers be restricted in the future? The Provost said that “we will always need transfers,” and that students with such defined career goals were usually the ones we would welcome most.

Reid Wiseman asked about advising. “In many cases I don’t see my advisees for years,” he said. Is it incumbent on advisers to seek out students, or is it their responsibility, he wondered. Ms. Smith replied that in the focus groups on advising, many students said they didn’t know who their advisor was. “It’s their responsibility,” she noted, but “there doesn’t seem to be a smooth pathway to get students to know their advisors.” She wonders whether students should be required to work with a trained advisor in their freshman year, in order to help their overall development, not just course selection. Ms. Smith noted that regular faculty may not know all the opportunities available to students, whereas advisors with more expertise can help steer students towards better experiences. Terry Bowers (English) asked if the retention work were “intertwined with the Gen Ed curriculum reform.” The Provost answered, “Yes, everything is intertwined.” She added that in both areas, “the real focus is on the quality of students.” The purpose of the Gen Ed reform is to develop an approach to Gen Ed that students will find satisfying and challenging. Marty Nabors (Elementary and Early Childhood) said perhaps freshman should be required to see an advisee, noting that with the advent of online registration, we all are seeing our advisees more rarely. Ms. Smith said she agreed that freshman would particularly benefit from advising, especially if they could be advised by the same person throughout the year.

New Business

Committee on Nominations and Elections

Rick Heldrich, chair, proposed a slate of nominees for Senate committees. The following committees were elected:

Academic Planning

Terence Bowers, Associate Professor, English
Carol Ann Davis, Assistant Professor, English
Jose Gavidia*, Assistant Professor, Management and Marketing
Chris Hope, Associate Professor, Sociology
Elizabeth Jurisich, Associate Professor, Mathematics
Elizabeth Martinez-Gibson*, Associate Professor, Hispanic Studies
Todd McNerney*, Associate Professor, Theatre

Committee on By-Laws and Faculty/Administration Manual

Frank Kinard, Professor, Chemistry and Biochemistry
Frank Morris, Associate Professor, Class. Germ., Ital., Japn Russ.
Trevor Weston*, Assistant Professor, Music

Budget

Erin Beutel, Assistant Professor, Geology and Environmental Geosciences
Edith Ellis, Assistant Professor, Phys. Ed. and Health
Charles Kaiser*, Professor, Psychology
Jennifer McStotts, Assistant Professor, Urban Studies and Historic Preservation
Valerie Porcello, Assistant Professor, French
D. Reid Wiseman, Associate Professor, Biology
Paul Young, Professor, Mathematics

Next, Mr, Mignone invited additional nominations to the 2005-2006 Committee on Nominations and Elections. This committee will be elected by the faculty at the April 11 Spring Faculty Meeting. The following nominations had already been received:

Marion Doig, Chemistry & Biochemistry
Susan Farrell, English
Frank Morris, Classics, German, Italian, Japanese, and Russian
Michael Phillips, Library
The following additional nominations were made from the floor:
Bev Diamond, Math
Annette Godow PE and Health
Karen Berg, Hispanic Studies

These seven names formed the slate that the Senate will nominate to the Faculty at the Spring meeting.

Faculty Educational Technology Committee

On behalf of the committee, Myra Seaman (English) made the following motion:

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1. Amend the committee membership to include a faculty member from each academic school, one from the graduate school, one from the library, and a student.
 2. Amend the charge to include participation as regular members of the President's Information Technology Council, representing the faculty in strategic and tactical IT policies, projects, and planning.

Rationale

The change in membership will ensure a broader representation and should enhance the leadership of the FETC in the development of future academic IT services on campus and allow to the committee to have input on all IT services provided to and/or affecting students and faculty members.

Ms. Seaman explained that the motion was a change to the committee's original charge. Tom Kunkle (Mathematics) asked what was meant by the stipulation that one faculty member be "from the graduate school." Could this be anyone who was eligible to teach graduate courses? Ms. Seaman said that the committee had not really clarified this point.

David Gentry (Psychology) asked if this proposal was to be sent to By-laws after the Senate approved it. Yes, said the Speaker; all changes to the By-laws automatically must go through that committee, and that the proposal today “is being offered for information.” Glen Lesses (Philosophy) said that these kinds of requirements on committees made it very difficult for the Nominating Committee to find enough people to serve on them. Ms. Seaman said that the committee was seeking to make sure that the faculty representatives on the IT council represented a wide range of faculty, and not just a small range of departments.

Faculty Welfare Committee

Bill Danaher, chair of the Welfare Committee, displayed a proposal on how to implement the Labor Day resolution that had been passed by the Senate in October of 2004. The committee’s proposal was as follows:

The Faculty Welfare Committee moves that the Labor Day Holiday be taken on Labor Day and that the Memorial Day Holiday be moved to December 29th. Memorial Day is during Maymester and causes conflicts with classes during an already rushed semester. Labor Day is observed by many institutions in the area, often leading to family time conflicts, such as care of children. While we recognize the importance of Memorial Day, we feel as though a holiday on Labor Day would be in the best interests of the faculty.

Mr. Danaher said that Welfare had concluded that the College ought to take a holiday on Labor Day and trade that lost work day for the observance of the Memorial Day holiday. This approach, Mr. Danaher said, would have the advantage of eliminating the interruption of Maymester that is caused by the current observance of Memorial Day as a school holiday.

Mr. Mignone observed that this resolution, which was for information only, explained how to implement the holiday for staff, but that it did not address the issue of reducing the number of teaching days in Fall Semester. Mr. Danaher agreed to revisit this issue before they brought a formal motion to the Senate for a vote. David Gentry (Psychology) asked if the Senate would be able to vote on the Labor Day part of the motion separately from the question of giving up a Memorial Day observance. Mr. Mignone explained that there are a finite number of state holidays available for staff, so this needed to be accounted for in the motion.

Curriculum Committee

Deborah Boyle, chair of the committee, brought a series of proposals before the Senate. The first group of proposals was from the Hospitality and Tourism major.

1. S05-07 HTMT Hospitality Management Internship—New Course Proposal
2. S05-08 HTMT 488 Strategic Hospitality and Tourism Management Seminar—New Course Proposal

Darryl Phillips raised a question about the internship course. How would the grade be determined? “Maybe this needs to be addressed more broadly” in regard to all graded

internships, he said. John Crotts said that his department had decided to make its internship course “in alignment with other School of Business courses. Currently they are all non-credit.” With no further questions, the Senate then approved the Hospitality courses. They then approved the remaining proposals in Communication:

3. S05-09 Communication Major—Concentration in Communication Studies—Proposal to Change Degree Requirements for the Major
4. S05-10 Communication Major: Concentration in Media Studies—Proposal to Change Degree Requirements for the Major
5. S05-11 Communication Major: Concentration in Corporate and Organizational Communication—Proposal to Change Degree Requirements for the Major
6. S05-12 Communication Minor: Concentration in Communication Studies—Proposal to Change Degree Requirements for the Minor
7. S05-13 COMM 386—Proposal to Change a Course

Constituents’ Concerns

The Speaker invited faculty to raise other concerns. There were none, but Parliamentarian George Pothering (Computer Science) offered an announcement for the good of the order, congratulating his colleague Tony LeClerc on the arrival of his daughter.

The Senate adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Eichelberger
Faculty Secretary

Remaining Senate Meetings for Spring 2005:
April 19th (Agenda Deadline **April 7th**)
Spring 2005 Faculty Meeting:
April 11th (Agenda Deadline **March 31st**)

Curriculum Committee

8. S05-07 HTMT Hospitality Management Internship—New Course Proposal
9. S05-08 HTMT 488 Strategic Hospitality and Tourism Management Seminar—
New Course Proposal
10. S05-09 Communication Major—Concentration in Communication Studies—
Proposal to Change Degree Requirements for the Major
11. S05-10 Communication Major: Concentration in Media Studies—Proposal to
Change Degree Requirements for the Major
12. S05-11 Communication Major: Concentration in Corporate and Organizational
Communication—Proposal to Change Degree Requirements for the Major
13. 6. S05-12 Communication Minor: Concentration in Communication Studies—
Proposal to Change Degree Requirements for the Minor
14. S05-13 COMM 386—Proposal to Change a Course