

Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting of December 4, 2014
3:06 – 4:24 p.m.

The regular meeting of the Faculty Senate took place Thursday, December 4, 2014 in room 201 of Buckingham. Senate Chair William D. Rich called the meeting to order at 3:06 pm.

Of the current roster of 63 Senators, 49 were present for this meeting. Senators Cutright, Ducharme Freely, Holliday, Kemp, Migid-Hamzza, Riedl and Schulze were absent with notice. Senators Braun, Klein, Osorio, Schwartz and Youngs were absent without notice.

I. Approval of the Agenda

Senator moved to adopt the proposed agenda. The motion was seconded by Senator.

The agenda was adopted without dissent.

II. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes were adopted as amended without dissent.

III. Remarks of the Chairman

Chairman Rich remarked as follows:

On the agenda for this meeting we have

- A proposal to rename the Department of Associate Studies in the College of Applied Science and Technology to the Department of Applied General and Technical Studies;
- A number of curriculum change proposals; and
- The December degree candidate list.

As you should have been aware, the draft report to the Higher Learning Commission was made available to the University community for review and comment. The period for submitting comments concluded yesterday. After any revisions are made, the report will be submitted to the Board of Trustees next week, after which it will be submitted to the HLC in preparation for the focused site visit in February.

The committee of chairs of the general education learning outcome committees has been meeting frequently to develop a template for submitting courses for general education learning outcome approval. The template for the communication and quantitative skills learning outcomes should be available by the beginning of the Spring Semester. The templates for the other three disciplinary learning outcomes should be available about a month after that.

The Senate's standing Part-Time Faculty Committee has been meeting frequently to develop a proposal to increase part-time faculty salaries. The minimum salaries for the three ranks of part-time faculty members have not increased during the last 13 years. As a result of inflation, the purchasing power of those salaries is now approximately two-thirds of what it was 13 years

ago. In my view, this enormous cut in the real-dollar value of part-time faculty salaries is unconscionable. I expect that in our February meeting we will receive a recommendation from the Part-Time Faculty Committee to remedy this situation.

As you may recall, last May the Senate's Academic Policies Committee reported that it had unanimously approved a proposal to move the faculty of the Criminal Justice Technology Program from the College of Applied Science and Technology to the College of Arts and Sciences to enable the creation of an integrated, interdisciplinary program in criminology and criminal justice. This approval, however, was contingent on the approval of the Buchtel College Council, which is the faculty governing body of the College of Arts and Sciences. I am pleased to report that on Monday the Buchtel College Council voted overwhelmingly to approve the proposal. Because this occurred only three days before this meeting, the proposal will be presented to the Senate for its consideration in our February meeting.

During the deliberations of the Council, a fear was expressed that any decision that allows an academic program to be strengthened is contrary to the interests of other academic programs because the allocation of resources within the University is a zero-sum game, and if a program is allowed to become stronger it will siphon resources from other programs. I was relieved to see that this argument did not carry the day, but feel the need to address it here because it was presented as a fear widely shared within the College, and because I have repeatedly heard similar arguments made at the University level between colleges. It is true that, in the short run, the allocation of University resources is a zero-sum game. In any given fiscal year, there are only so many dollars to be allocated; more dollars for one unit means fewer for another. But it is a mistake to focus excessively on the short-run. If academic programs are not allowed to become stronger for fear that they will siphon resources from other programs, the revenues of the University as a whole will suffer, and there will be fewer resources available for distribution among its academic programs. This fear, if we allow it to prevail, leads only to mutual destruction. It also makes the bottom-up, democratic process of faculty governance an instrument by which the health and, ultimately, the survival of the University is imperiled, and it thereby invites the imposition of an authoritarian, top-down governance structure. In the long run, we will sink or swim together. The ethos we as a faculty need to survive and thrive is not competition and mutual jealousy and distrust, but solidarity. We must support each other and help each other to overcome the difficulties and threats we face. Some may believe that these threats – principally those that result from the State's short-sighted and shameful disinvestment in public higher education – cannot be overcome. I do not share this belief, except perhaps occasionally in my darker moments, but I understand it and cannot prove it wrong. Still, let us swim together even if we know we may never reach the shore. Solidarity is its own virtue, a saving grace, and our only hope.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to wish you all a happy and peaceful holiday season.

This concludes my remarks.

III. Special Announcements

Chairman Rich reported the death of a member of the University community:

John Henry Ramey, Associate Professor Emeritus of Social Work died November 2nd at the age of 88.

The Senate stood for a moment of silence in memory of our deceased colleague.

IV. Reports

Executive Committee

Senator Lillie Reported for Senator Schulze:

Since we last met on November 6, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee met two times as a committee and once with the provost. The president was unable to attend. The Executive Committee first met on November 20th to prepare for the meeting with the provost. The EC next met with the provost and discussed the teaching load limit for part-time faculty, general education reform, critical needs faculty searches, review of deans, Criminal Justice Program proposal, and the status of the University Libraries dean search.

The EC met on November 25th to prepare the agenda for the upcoming Faculty Senate meeting. At that meeting the EC recommended Jon Miller to serve on the Honors Dean Search Committee. We discussed the HLC report. We also discussed the process for discussion of the president's strategic plan. It was also noted that there are overlapping time slots in the final exam schedule.

Remarks of the President

The president described his work so far and his plans for the remainder of his first year. He spent his first three months getting know the university finances and the stakeholders internally and externally. The second three months, the president started working with each college to begin developing college-level strategic plans. The president described the process, which he said is going well. He hopes to conclude the process by the end of January, so that the strategic plans can inform the budgeting process. Then, we will be able to move forward in the last three months of the fiscal year with finalized strategic plans. These will be resourced by the budget and planning process that should conclude in March.

The president also talked about plans to revisit Vision 2020, the university's strategic plan. The president will bring together a group of representative stakeholders that will meet in February to look at all of the college strategic plans, and then address the questions about whether the university's strategic plan needs to be updated. The meetings are scheduled to occur on February 13th and February 27th.

The formal budget process that will begin in January will include budget hearings with all the units. The budget office has already begun collecting the numbers and making projections. The president has already begun meeting with Faculty Senate chair, the President of Akron-AAUP, and the Department Chair Representative on the University Council Budget and Finance Committee to meet with the budget director to go over the university budget.

The Graduate Student Association invited Jeff Holman to come to campus to discuss the development of Priceline. The president enjoyed his presentation.

The university has faced challenges. One involved two of our basketball players, but the university handled the situation well. The country is experiencing struggles with race relations. The president is considering forums around the MLK holiday to address the larger issues.

Remarks of the Provost

The Provost's Office sends out the Council of Deans meetings debriefs so everyone across campus knows what topics are discussed at the meetings. Feel free to contact the provost if you have suggestions for topics that might be covered.

Next week is fall graduation. Today Faculty Senate will be asked to endorse the graduation list. The board meets next week and can take action on that prior to graduation.

The Provost discussed the results of Gallup-Purdue Index survey. University of Akron graduates had positive responses regarding experiential learning, quality of life, contact with faculty and staff, and general well-being.

The Provost thanked the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and the University Council Steering Committee for working together to draft the narrative regarding shared governance for the Higher Learning Commission. Input has been coming in from across campus and from the Board of Trustees. This will form the narrative that will be submitted to the Higher Learning Commission. Learning Outcomes Assessments were reported on; this report is accessible on the Learning Outcomes Assessment website.

The Provost congratulated Chair Rich and others who were involved in the discussions regarding the Criminal Justice program. He believes that the result will be positive.

V. Approval of Commencement List for Fall 2014 Jones Allen

Senator Jones moved to adopt the commencement list (Appendices A & B). The motion was seconded by Senator Allen.

The motion was adopted without dissent.

VI. Committee Reports

Curriculum Review Committee

Vice Provost Rex Ramsier reported for the committee.

The Curriculum Review Committee brings one motion for consideration. Faculty of the Department of Associate Studies in the College of Applied Science and Technology wishes to change the department's name to the Department of Applied General and Technical Studies. It has been approved by the faculty of the department, faculty of the college, and by the Academic Policies Committee unanimously.

The motion was adopted without dissent.

The Curriculum Review Committee brings a list of curriculum proposals that came through the system without objection for final approval (Appendix C).

The motion to approve the curriculum proposals was adopted without dissent.

Athletics Committee

Senator Lillie reported that the committee has discussed the University of Alabama at Birmingham's decision to drop football. In addition, the House of Representatives has introduced a bill to regulate NCAA sports due to some of the scandals that have occurred nationally.

VII. Report from Faculty Senate Representatives to University Council

Senator Sterns reported that, when the Development Committee of the university reported their activities, it was apparent to those present that it was actually a report from Mr. LaGuardia of his personal activities. There was concern expressed that there should be more involvement from the entire committee.

Secondly, there was a discussion of whether we should be a smoke-free campus. Because of unanswered questions about e-cigarettes, this has not happened yet.

There was also a discussion of student fees. A large proportion the "general fee" goes to athletics. There was a vote to rename the "general fee" the "athletics fee" to better reflect its actual allocation. The motion passed, and we can be proud that our students played a major part in this.

VII. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

VIII. New Business

There was no new business.

IX. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 4:24 pm.

Any comments concerning the contents in *The University of Akron Chronicle* may be directed to the Secretary, Pamela A. Schulze (x7725). facultysenate@uakron.edu