

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes February 26, 2014

Rap Session 3:30 PM

Provost James Henderson spoke at the rap session and addressed questions from those present. He reported that he has been looking into hiring and personnel processes and policies and learning how things work at UL. He encouraged faculty to help in bringing issues that need to be addressed to his attention and stated that he can be contacted at jim.henderson@louisiana.edu. During the rap session questions were raised about hiring policies and pay for adjuncts, about STEP funding and problems with maintaining STEP equipment, and about funding for faculty travel.

Senate Meeting called to order at 4:00 PM

G.H. Massiha moved that the minutes of the January meeting be approved. The motion was seconded and passed.

Executive Officer report:

Prof. McDonald reported that a problem with student evaluations had been brought to his attention. He also stated that in the future he will be reporting on University Council activities to the faculty senate. In addition, town hall meetings will be arranged on topics relevant to faculty. Prof. McDonald reported that the faculty senate executive committee will meet with the provost and later with the system president. Faculty are invited to discuss any issues they want brought up in these meetings with ex-comm members. The upcoming Legislative Issues Day was also mentioned.

Reports of Senate Committees:

Committee on Committees: Dr. Mary Neiheisel reported that the university committee survey will come out next week and that prompt replies are needed. Faculty can email Dr. Neiheisel directly if interested in a particular committee. Dr. McDonald mentioned that a faculty member had questioned the eligibility of department heads to serve on the faculty grievance committee.

Ways and Means: no report

Academic Planning and Development: no report

Governmental Concerns: written report submitted A discussion of an item in the written report regarding taking money from optional retirement plan contributions to fund underfunded liability of the state plan followed. There were comments that faculty, especially newly hired faculty that are required to make a choice of retirement plan, need to be given more information about this issue. William Davie announced the legislative bills relevant to higher education which have been submitted for the upcoming legislative session. These are also listed in the written report of the Governmental Concerns committee.

Faculty Advisory Council Representative: no report

Ad Hoc Committee on Proposed Merit Raise Procedure: it was stated that one more volunteer is needed for the committee - G.H. Massiha volunteered to represent Engineering.

Ad Hoc Committee on Status of Underrepresented Faculty Groups: Aeve Abington-Pitre reported that the committee is continuing its work.

Ad Hoc Committee on Status of Women: no report

Reports of University Committees:

Curriculum: no report

Faculty Grievance: no report

Faculty Benefits and Welfare: no report

Library: no report

Academic Affairs and Standards: no report

Parking and Planning: no report

Student Evaluation of Instruction: written report submitted. Committee member Jonathan Kulp stated that there was a case of mistaken identity reported on the most recent SEI. A student gave a very negative review but the comments were obviously for a different class. This is a rare problem. Changes to the SEI are being considered to encourage more students to complete the evaluations and to minimize possibility of errors.

Distance Learning Leadership Council: no report

Strategic Program Review: no report

Unfinished Business:

G.H. Massiha raised a question about the revised definition of online and hybrid courses. A discussion of changed definitions and requirements for certification for teaching online courses followed.

A question was raised about the status of the pooling sick leave issue. The faculty senate has passed and the administration approved the idea. The details remain to be worked out with the Human Resources office.

Ellen Cook addressed the recent memo from the post office about attaching a form to each mail item. She reported that campus administrators have met with post office officials and the result is that the requirement to attach a form to each piece of mail will not be put into effect. New policies will be negotiated.

New Business:

Prof. McDonald stated that faculty need to help administration to improve communication by letting them know what things need improvement.

The following items were announced:

President Savoie will be at the rap session in April.

There are new online initiatives developed for integrating items such as the university catalog and graduation course check. More information on those will be presented at a later date.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Kathleen Knierim

Secretary