

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes March 19, 2014

Rap Session 3:30 PM

Provost James Henderson spoke at the rap session. He discussed the need to develop a policy for revising the faculty handbook and asked the senate to consider its role in this and other issues of shared governance.

Senate Meeting called to order at 4:17 PM

Approval of minutes: A correction to the February minutes was made noting that there was a report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Status of Underrepresented Faculty Groups. George Wooddell moved that the minutes of the February meeting be approved as amended. The motion was seconded by Monica Tauzin and passed.

Executive Officer report:

Prof. McDonald reiterated a topic discussed during the rap session - the need and opportunity for faculty participation in shared governance, specifically at present for developing policies for revising the faculty handbook and for participating in strategic planning.

He noted several ongoing issues that had come before the senate previously, including post office policies, the possibility of pooled sick leave, and possible senate action regarding the optional retirement plan.

Reports of Senate Committees:

Committee on Committees: no report

Ways and Means: no report

Academic Planning and Development: no report

Governmental Concerns: written report submitted. It was pointed out that the written report contains a list of bills submitted for this legislative session. Faculty should review the list to see which bills the Faculty Senate should take action on or encourage active faculty response. There is also information about pending bills on the Board of Regents website. The committee will report updates as appropriate before the April Faculty Senate meeting.

Faculty Advisory Council Representative: written report submitted. David Yarborough and Monica Tauzin attended the FAC meeting on Feb. 27. A link to actions of the Board of Regents of the Louisiana System is given in the written report.

Ad Hoc Committee on Proposed Merit Raise Procedure: the committee will meet with the Provost.

Ad Hoc Committee on Status of Underrepresented Faculty Groups: written report submitted.

Ad Hoc Committee on Status of Women: no report

Reports of University Committees:

Curriculum: Kay Riedel reported that the committee had met and approved a multitude of changes.

Faculty Grievance: written report submitted

Faculty Benefits and Welfare: no report

Library: no report

Academic Affairs and Standards: no report

Parking and Planning: no report

Student Evaluation of Instruction: no report

Distance Learning Leadership Council: Luke Dowden reported that the website distancelearning.louisiana.edu is a site aimed towards faculty members. There is a different site directed towards students.

Strategic Program Review: no report

Unfinished Business:

Optional retirement system: G.H. Massiha reported that a representative of the LSU faculty senate is interested in visiting the UL Lafayette faculty senate to speak about actions of the LSU senate regarding this issue. LSU faculty senate action is posted on the LSU faculty senate website. It was noted that a legislative bill, HB 6, was introduced that would establish a minimum employer contribution.

G.H. Massiha repeated his suggestion that new faculty should be given all information regarding the optional retirement plan, including the option of the state to reduce the state contribution and be given the history of state contribution for each past year. He then made a motion that "All faculty and staff should be informed that the state may reduce its contribution to the ORP and often has in the past and also be informed year to year what the most recent changes in the state contributions have been" Kay Riedel seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

New Business:

G.H. Massiha suggested that faculty be given one course off in one semester to take required training for teaching online courses if they want to get certification for teaching online. Discussion followed. Various options for funding including use of department online fees for purchase of equipment such as an ipad were mentioned. The executive officer said he will discuss the issues with Luke Dowden and the distance learning council and report back at the next senate meeting. A question was then raised about support for improvement of traditional classroom instruction since faculty members often do not receive formal training in classroom instruction. Should support for classroom instruction methods be any less than support for online instruction methods? It was suggested that the university establish a "Center for Teaching Excellence" that would cover both traditional and online teaching.

Faculty Handbook: Senator Slater recommended breaking up the faculty handbook into sections and working on suggestions for changes one section at a time. Senator Wooddell reported that he sent a request to the Provost to review the faculty handbook and compare it with the AAUP "red book". Prof. McDonald stated that the executive committee will be meeting with the Provost next week. For now the handbook will be compared with AAUP policies and a committee will be appointed to work on the issue of revising the handbook further during the summer.

Meeting adjourned at 5:23 pm.

Kathleen Knierim
Secretary