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SEC Minutes

February 2, 2000

SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

February 2, 2000

MINUTES

Present: Jesse Binford, Jim Carey, Julian Dwornik, Mary Evans, Suresh Khator, Janet Moore, Ona Riggin, Ed Silbert, Pamela Tucker, Nancy Tyson, Jim Vastine, Fredric Zerla

President's Office: Jose Porteiro

Provost's Office: Thomas Tighe, Phil Smith

Guests: Robert Sullins, Laurie Woodward, Sammy Kalmowicz, Christopher Cook

The meeting was called to order at 3:07 p.m. The Minutes from the meeting of January 12, 2000 were approved as presented.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS (Jesse Binford)

President Binford announced that on January 27, 2000, the Presidential Search Advisory Committee-Faculty Senate (PSAC-FS) submitted its recommendations to the Regents Selection Committee. He commended Dr. Nancy Tyson, Chair of the Presidential Search Advisory Committee of the Faculty Senate, and members of that committee for a job well done during the search activities.

Registrar Angela DeBose has replied to President's Binford inquiry on monitoring the process of returning a copy of the change of grade form to the initializing faculty member. The Registrar's Office has worked out a system for that process. However, in her reply Ms. DeBose indicated that the M grades would not be changed because there are so many of them. This, in turn, raised the question of why there are so many M grades which indicates that the grade is not turned in on time in most cases. Ms. DeBose agreed to meet with Drs. Ed Silbert and Fredric Zerla to discuss this issue. A report on the result of this meeting will be given under New Business.

PROVOST'S REPORT (Thomas Tighe)

Provost's Tighe's report consisted of the following items:

- Since last summer, through a great deal of effort on the part of deans, department chairs and faculty, the University of South Florida (USF) has progressively closed the

gap between the planned figure and actual enrollment; therefore, reducing the amount of budget reduction to be paid. Current enrollment figures show that USF is 18.5 full time equivalent (FTE) below plan which represents an approximately \$150,000 reduction. USF is within plan at every other level except at the upper level. It is felt that is due, in part, to the change in course leveling which took effect last year. The good news is that through good cooperative efforts, USF has been able to reduce what could have been a sizable budget reduction. Chancellor Herbert is under a proviso language restriction that requires him to redistribute any enrollment funding that is available, by level, within the system. The enrollment numbers for the spring are still preliminary, so there is a possibility that USF could reduce the 18.5 FTE and come in close to budget.

- Copies of the list of Priority Issues 2000-2001 Budget were re-distributed because there was a chart missing from the copies which were distributed at the January meeting. This chart, Attachment IV of the handout, shows that USF comes in third in average faculty salary, trailing the University of Florida and Florida State University. In addition, this chart has an analysis done by the Board of Regents (BOR) staff which shows the need for research laboratories at each university. Given that USF is classified as a Research I institution and should be on a level playing field, this chart shows that in terms of competitive faculty salaries and the availability of laboratory space, USF is off the scale with the urgency of its needs. Statistics also show that USF is considerably behind its sister institutions (University of Florida and Florida State University) in terms of funding dollars per student FTE at the graduate level. These differences were pointed out by the Provost to the State Senators, and he emphasized that in order for USF to be a Research I institution, there needs to be a more level playing field.

REPORTS BY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

There were no reports presented at today's meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

- a. Faculty Advisor Resolution (Fredric Zerla and Ed Silbert)

The Faculty Advisor Resolution was approved at the January 12, 2000 meeting of the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) contingent upon the addition of a statement in the resolution that this assigned option is allowable as defined by the BOR and the United Faculty of Florida. Therefore, a proposed substitute for the second Whereas was presented at today's meeting. Dr. Silbert pointed out that the basic thrust of the resolution is to urge the Faculty Senate to be supportive of more utilization of assigned duties in the faculty advising category for student organizations on campus. He indicated that this resolution coming from the SEC would have the faculty note their support for faculty service as advisors, that it be stipulated on the assigned duties forms, and chairs and deans would also be supportive. The proposed change to the second Whereas makes it clear that the Faculty Senate recognizes that when a faculty member agrees to serve as an advisor to a student organization a percentage of time should be noted. This change also encourages deans to be supportive if a faculty member chooses to be a faculty advisor to a student organization. Dr. Zerla added that by passing this resolution it shows that the Faculty Senate is behind the idea that faculty work with student groups outside the classroom, and it should be an appreciated and valued activity by deans, directors and chairs. The motion was made and seconded to accept the revised resolution to be presented at the Faculty Senate meeting on February 16, 2000. Ms. Woodward pointed that this mentoring between

faculty and students could be used as a form of enrollment management by keeping students on campus. She indicated that student organizations are a unique and powerful way to keep the better students on campus and keep them involved. Dr. Tyson called to question. The motion was unanimously passed.

b. Proposal to Implement a Plus/Minus Grading System

A proposal to implement a plus/minus grading system has been accepted by the Undergraduate and Graduate Councils. Dean Sullins has been in touch with the Registrar's Office to find out if this proposal can be implemented with the current computing system. Dean Sullins indicated that the Undergraduate Council is looking at two minor refinements to the proposal: (1) C- grades will be used to satisfy specified minimum requirements for grades of C (e.g. Gordon Rule and common prerequisites). (2) There is some discussion about changing the numbering system from 3.33 and 3.67 to some other systems. This item will be discussed further by the Undergraduate Council. Dean Sullins pointed out that if this numbering system changes, the proposal will also have to be approved by members of the Graduate Council since they approved the original proposal as presented.

At this time Mr. Sammy Kalmowicz, Student Government Senate President, distributed copies of a resolution which states that the Student Government Senate is completely against the proposed plus/minus grading system; in particular, the minus aspect of the system. However, the students would favor a plus-only system. Mr. Kalmowicz indicated that the two councils involved with the proposal did not seek input from any student or the Student Government. He expressed that students should have some say in how a new grading system should be implemented. Another concern from the Student Government is that there is an A- but not an A+. In addition, if the new grading system is not mandatory for all faculty to use, this could harm a student's grade point average in terms of receiving a scholarship or possibly being put on probation. Internship programs would also be affected. Student Government also feels that a C is a C whether it is a low or a high C. If a student receives a C- in a course, that student should receive credit for passing that course, especially if it is a Gordon Rule or a required course. Mr. Kalmowicz stated that just because other Florida State institutions are using this system, why should USF try to fix something that is not broken. He indicated that if USF is striving to be a university of first choice, then students should be given a reason to attend. Mr. Kalmowicz pointed out that if the system is changed, it should be changed to benefit, not hurt, students.

Mr. Christopher Cook, Student Government Senate Vice President, made the following comments regarding the plus/minus grading system. Mr. Cook indicated that he has talked with quite a few students and some of them agree with the system, but most of them do not. The majority of the students disagree with having a minus system. Mr. Cook pointed out that the students support pluses and not minuses because they do not want their grades lowered.

Sergeant-at-Arms Fredric Zerla stated that rather than take the time of the SEC to do committee work, it would be a reasonable thing for a group of faculty and students to meet, come up with a common resolution that both sides can agree to, and then present it to Student Government and the SEC. He indicated that there are two questions that need answered: (1) Do the students want a more expansive system than the proposed one? (2) Once the students decide that they do, what style would they want? He pointed out that if the students do not like the proposed style, it does not mean that they are against the entire system, but it does require that reasonable people sit together and see if they can come up with something that both agree to, i.e. a

compromise.

President Binford presented a sample of grade calculations based upon the proposed plus/minus grading system. He expressed his concerns at trying to go from a 100 point scale to a 5 point scale, and the fact that a larger number of A's would be given because there is no A+. His purpose for doing this was to illustrate that every professor will need to figure out his/her own grading scale under the new system.

Discussion was held regarding how the plus/minus grading system would affect transfer students. Undergraduate Council Chair Ed Silbert explained that with the transfer students the proposed system has created a standard by which different plus/minus systems are meshed. He indicated that if this system is introduced to USF, this will be the standard for all transfer students, that is, they will map into this system. Dr. Silbert feels that the plus/minus grading system would give professors the ability to provide better discretion in regards to grades.

Past President Janet Moore asked Dean Sullins if there is a nationwide trend for the plus/minus grading system. Dean Sullins responded that although he did not have current information, it is believed that the majority of universities have plus/minus grading. He added that the system would not hurt graduates either way – transfer students coming in and/or graduates from USF. USF and the University of Central Florida (UCF) are the only universities within the State University System without a plus/minus system. UCF hopes to have the system in place by Fall Semester 2000. Dean Sullins indicated that if USF would have had the proper computer system, the plus/minus system would have been in place before now.

Past President Janet Moore recommended that an ad hoc committee be appointed to work on this issue with a student committee to look into current national trends and discuss it together. She emphasized Dr. Zerla's comment that students need a voice and an opportunity to think through everything thoroughly. Mr. Kalmowicz indicated that the students would be willing to collaborate with the Faculty Senate on this issue. He agreed to select two students from the Student Senate and President Binford will appoint two Faculty Senators. Dr. Silbert expressed concern that the examinations of such a committee that should happen quickly will not and the progress made up to this point will, once again, be lost. Dr. Moore clarified that the ad hoc committee could either make a decision or table the issue at which time the issue could be re-examined before the proposed implementation date of Fall Semester 2000. Dean Sullins added that any changes should involve the Undergraduate and Graduate Councils by having some members of the groups as a core of the ad hoc committee. Mr. Kalmowicz suggested that instead of forming an ad hoc committee, have the people who are involved in the proposed plan attend a Student Senate meeting to educate the Senators, listen to their concerns, and have those concerns taken back to the Faculty Senate. Graduate Chair Ona Riggan indicated that this would be a logical approach to present the findings of the Undergraduate and Graduate Councils to the Student Senate. Dr. Moore added that in this way the focus will be more on educating each other about this issue and finding out if one claim clearly does rise above the other. In addition, the complexities of the issue could be prepared in a better way so that all of these things that made the two councils make their decisions could be better brought out.

The decision was made that President Binford, Undergraduate Chair Silbert and Graduate Chair Riggan would be on the agenda for the Student Senate meeting on Tuesday, January 28, 2000, at 8 p.m., to give a fifteen minute presentation on the proposed plus/minus grading system. Dean Sullins will revise the proposed plan on

page 2, number 3 to read "Grades of C- will be used to satisfy specified minimum requirements for grades of C (e.g., Gordon Rule courses and common prerequisites)." In addition, an A+ will be added to the grade point average and be assigned 4.00 quality points. The motion was made and seconded to include the proposal (with the above-mentioned modifications) to implement a plus/minus grading system on the Faculty Senate agenda for the February meeting. The motion was unanimously passed.

c. General Counsel Policies and Procedures

Past President Moore asked for clarification on policy 30-008, Recreational Facilities License, as to what the ranges are of recreational facilities and whether or not they include the Marshall Center, the marching band practice field, and other common grounds. A letter will be sent to the Office of the General Counsel requesting clarification. The deadline for feedback on all the proposed policies and procedures to the Office of the General Counsel is February 16, 2000.

d. Budget Dialogue with Provost

President Binford has received a copy of the 2000/2001 Enhancement Plan. He is willing to meet with a couple of SEC members to reduce it to an understandable size. President Binford pointed out that these are extra funds which allow for a degree of freedom in proposing how these funds should be spent. He will send out an e-mail message to the SEC members with his ideas on specific projects and ask for feedback.

NEW BUSINESS

a. a. Written Report from Ad-Hoc Committee on Broadcasting Recommendations

In 1998, the administration of the university broadcast stations, WUSF FM and WUSF TV was moved from Academic Affairs to University Advancement. At the March 17, 1999, Faculty Senate meeting Professor Manny Lucoff of Mass Communications spoke in opposition to this transfer. He objected on the grounds that editorial autonomy is compromised when a purportedly neutral broadcast facility reports to that of the university responsible for promoting its own image. In response to this opposition, Faculty Senate President Janet Moore appointed an ad-hoc committee to make recommendations on the issue to the Faculty Senate. The written report submitted for today's SEC meeting is a result of that committee's work. The motion was made and seconded to include this report on the agenda for the February 16, 2000 Faculty Senate meeting with the stipulation that at least one of the members of the ad-hoc committee be present to answer questions. Mr. Phil Smith pointed out that in this report there is reference made to the survey that the committee made, but it does not identify the institutions. It was recommended that the committee identify the institutions to make the report more informative. The motion was unanimously passed.

b. Easing Deadlines for Submission of Course Grades (Ed Silbert)

The following report on easing deadlines for submission of final course grades was submitted by Dr. Silbert:

Drs. Fredric Zerla and Ed Silbert had a good consultation with Ms. Angela DeBose, University Registrar. She is very sympathetic with faculty needs to have sufficient time to evaluate student efforts (final exams and projects) before posting final course grades. Ms. DeBose explained that students need to have their semester grades soon

after finals week in order to meet with advisors about revising their registration for courses in the forthcoming semester prior to the time they leave campus for Christmas or post-Spring Semester break. The present system calls for faculty submission of course grades by 9AM the Monday after Finals Week. Ms. DeBose noted that it would help her operation if department personnel would forward completed grade sheets regularly during the Finals Week, and not hold them back as a departmental set until Monday at 9AM. Ms. DeBose has a group of "runners" whom she can send to collect the grade sheets for small departments that cannot spare personnel for daily carries to the Registrar's Office. Drs. Zerla and Silbert each expressed a willingness to bring this matter to the attention of the Faculty Senate.

For faculty who have wondered if there is any relief for those whose courses are assigned designated times late in the Finals Week Schedule, and for those who are dealing with evaluation of large classes, Ms. DeBose agreed to do the following:

She is willing to note her e-mail address on future guidelines to faculty regarding submission of final grades with the acknowledgment that any faculty member who has a class with a final exam late in the Finals Week may simply advise her by e-mail that they need additional time, and can count on having until Noon (three hours beyond the posted deadline). Ms. DeBose is also willing to work with those faculty who have high enrollment sections and late-in-finals week exams if they would e-mail her and request time beyond the official deadline. For this latter group (as long as the number of faculty remain relatively small), the extended deadline could carry over to Tuesday morning (but no later than noon). Ms. DeBose expressed her willingness to alter her directions to faculty (as noted above) on a trial basis. Clearly, if the exceptions become the general rule and most faculty submit their course grades after the official deadline, the efficiency of the operation will suffer and students will either get more assigned M's or delayed access to their final grades.

This report will be on the agenda for the February Faculty Senate meeting and copies will be included with the meeting materials.

c. Presidential Search Advisory Committee-Faculty Senate (PSAC-FS)

Past President Moore commended the PSAC-FS for a job well done. She pointed out that it should be recorded that the committee did an exceptional job of bringing out information from each of the candidates in an organized fashion and presenting it in such a way that was helpful to the overall Search Advisory Committee.

d. Agenda for the February 16, 2000 Faculty Senate Meeting

The following items will be on the agenda for the February Faculty Senate meeting: Faculty Advisors Resolution, Proposal to Implement a Plus and Minus Grading System, the Written Report from Ad-Hoc Committee on Broadcasting Recommendations, and a report from Dr. Ed Silbert on Easing Deadlines for Submission of Course Grades.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5 p.m.

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