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**SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES**

March 9, 2005

Present: Michael Barber, Glen Besterfield, Elizabeth Bird, Laurence Branch, Ellis Blanton, Susan Greenbaum, Steve Permut, Christopher Phelps, Andrew Smith, Gregory Teague, Tom Terrell, John Ward

Provost's Office: Matthew Buyu, Bob Chang, Renu Khator, Phil Smith

Guests: Darlene Bruner, Hampton Dohrman, David Hoffman, Kathleen Moore, Brent Weisman

The meeting was called to order at 3:12 p.m. The Minutes from the meeting of February 2, 2005, were approved as presented.

REPORT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM FACULTY SENATE PRESIDENT SUSAN GREENBAUM

President Greenbaum called everyone's attention to two pieces of legislation: (1) House Bill 1001 ("Governance of the State University System") which would return control of the university to the legislatures and would make the Board of Governors (BOG) USF's employer rather than the Board of Trustees (BOT). This bill would call into question the collective bargaining agreement. (2) House Bill 837 ("Academic Bill of Rights") is designed to curb the right to offend certain students. There is a sense that faculty should not go beyond their expertise in saying things that may be offensive. President Greenbaum encouraged SEC members to familiarize themselves with these bills.

President Greenbaum made the following announcements:

1. The Ad Hoc Committee on Community Engagement has been constituted and the charge finalized. This committee will run through the end of the Spring 2006. Its goal is to come forth with recommendations about how to strengthen USF's efforts in regard to community engagement.
2. The Committee on Faculty Issues has met only once since its creation last year as a Faculty Senate Standing Committee. The delay has been due to waiting until the report by the Associate Deans on career status for instructors was complete. However, that report is going to be delayed even further. Therefore, President Greenbaum will ask Chair Laurence Branch to call a meeting to move that function forward.

3. Vice President Steve Permut has been asked to take over organizing a meeting of the college councils. It is anticipated that a meeting will occur before the end of this semester.

REPORT FROM PROVOST RENU KHATOR

Provost Khator distributed copies of proposed bills for the 2005 Legislation. The first section was Sponsored Legislation. The second was other legislation of interest.

She announced that the BOG will meet here on the Tampa campus on March 24th. This is an open meeting to which everyone was invited to attend.

Provost Khator distributed copies of a memorandum from Vice Chancellor R.E. LeMon with a requesting all SUS institutions to identify ten peer institutions for each of the seven accountability measures. USF included two additional institutions, the University of Florida and Florida State University. All ten institutions are a constant for USF for each accountability measure.

The SACS accreditation team will be on campus April 13 and 14. There are two parts of the accreditation application: compliance and the quality enhancement plan. The compliance part has already been addressed by the university. The quality enhancement plan will be the team's main focus. The enhancements have been published on the Provost's web page and she encouraged everyone to review them.

At this time, before moving on to council reports, President Greenbaum introduced Professor Brent Weisman who was sitting in for Graduate Council Chair Carnot Nelson. In addition, Dr. Matthew Buyu was asked to attend the meeting on behalf of Provost's Office.

REPORT BY OFFICERS AND COUNCIL CHAIRS

a. Committee/Council Nominations (Ellis Blanton)

Committee on Committees Chair Blanton presented a slate of nominations for the University-Wide Committees and Councils which came with a motion from the COC to approve. The motion was seconded with discussion. Chair Blanton pointed out that there were a total of 87 vacancies, but with these nominations that amount was reduced to 71. There was a call to question. A vote was taken and the motion to approve the slate of nominations was unanimously passed.

Chair Blanton announced that March 16th was the deadline for receipt of nominations for the new General Education Council. Approved nominations will be forthcoming from the COC for the April meeting. He encouraged SEC members to solicit colleagues to self-nominate for this council.

b. Research Council Membership (Gregory Teague)

Chair Teague explained that because council membership appointments are three years, this exempts individual members from being considered for internal awards, and hence, also creates difficulty in recruiting people to serve on the council. The council discussed the issue and felt that the rule of ineligibility for internal awards must be kept. Therefore, the Research Council membership recommended that a two-year appointment be offered with an option to renew if someone is not interested in an internal award. At this time, the floor was opened for discussion.

SEC members agreed that the Research Council charge is appropriate, but decided that the advertisement process needs to reflect the change in term limits and what potential nominees should expect as a member of the Research Council. COC Chair Blanton recommended that people who are nominated should be referred to the Faculty Senate web site to read and understand the charge for the committee they are interested in serving on. A statement such as “I have read the charge and agree to its content” could be added to the nomination form. Term limits for the Research Council could be listed in its charge on the web site, so people can indicate their length of commitment.

Chair Teague will take these suggestions back to the Research Council and give a follow-up report.

c. Research Survey (Gregory Teague)

Research Council Chair Teague explained that the council has been working on a draft survey that will be web-based to solicit feedback to understand what faculty experience, help or hindrances, when doing research. If anyone is interested in looking at the survey, they should contact Chair Teague.

d. Research Incentive Plan (Gregory Teague)

Research Council Chair Teague reported that although the SEC wanted the Research Incentive Plan distributed via the Provost’s Office, Provost Khator did not think it was a suitable approach. After discussing it with President Greenbaum, Chair Teague contacted Assistant Controller Mr. Nick Trivunovich who is willing to work with him to have the survey distributed to the associate deans. The survey will be updated and presented at the April SEC meeting.

e. Instructional Technology and Distance Learning Council (Tom Terrell)

Chair Terrell explained the issue discussed a year ago of combining the Academic Computing Committee (ACC) and the Instructional Technology and Distance Learning Council (IT-DLC). Although joint meetings were tried, they were not successful due to communication issues. The differences between the two have faded into practicality over the years. Therefore, the chairs of both groups would like to request that the ACC and IT-DLC be combined into one council with one chair. At this time, the floor was opened

for discussion of this request. The main concern focused on membership which between the two groups equals approximately 40 people, including ex-officios who are currently attending two meetings. It was suggested that the Graduate Council be used as a model which is a main council with subcommittees. This would eliminate the need for everyone to show up for each meeting. Chair Terrell will rewrite the charge to combine the ACC and IT-DLC and process it through the correct channels for approval.

f. Blackboard Financials (Tom Terrell)

IT-DLC Chair Terrell briefed the SEC members on the decentralized computing services funding and that Academic Computing now does not have enough money to keep Blackboard running. Without funding, parts of the license will be cut. He emphasized that Blackboard needs to be centralized; otherwise, the ability of students and faculty to use Blackboard will be impacted. Vice President Permut asked Chair Terrell to circulate an articulated e-mail to the SEC members stating the problem and offering a solution. It was recommended that the cost be indicated and that a coalition-type of letter with the students be done. Chair Terrell will work on a resolution and report back to the SEC at its April meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

a. Proposed Change to Grading Scale (T. Hampton Dohrman)

Student Senate President Pro Tempore Dohrman presented the following proposal to the SEC:

Student Government of the University of South Florida recognizes and values the importance of a teacher's right to academic freedom. We feel that the grading scale should reflect this freedom, and appreciate the Faculty Senate's cooperation in originally implementing the scale. Although we value the diversity of the plus/minus scale, the student body feels that the method in which the grading scale is applied has resulted in several unintended consequences:

- "A+" grade distinction carries only theoretical value, and is not equitable with other "plus" grades.
- It is hypothetically possible for a student to receive 119 hours of "A+" grades and one "A-" and not graduate with a 4.0 grade point average.
- This has the effect of hindering our very brightest students, and making them less competitive in applying to graduate schools or seeking national fellowships.

To provide the best possible results for students, faculty, and the University community, Student Government proposes an amendment to the current scale to allow the "A+" grade to carry a weight of 4.33.

- The proposal will be non-retroactive.

- The provision will be made for a student's *GPA not to exceed 4.0* in either semester or cumulative averages.
- This provides equitable compensation for students earning these grades, and as it moves to achieve a more fair grading scale, yet it will not result in grade inflation.
- The proposal is in line with other similar universities that have recognized the inequity in a system like the one we currently utilize (i.e. University of Georgia, University of Alabama).
- If this proposal is adopted, Student Government will pass a resolution that encourages future administrations to allow an appropriate amount of time before attempting to make any changes to the scale.

Student Government believes the adoption of this proposal will provide for a more appropriate grading system, while still maintaining the highest degree of academic freedom for our professors.

Mr. Dohrman explained that this proposal is the result of a collaborative effort by the Student Government (SG). Starting with an overview, he pointed out that the grading scale is not a new issue. The main problem is the inherent inequity within the system in that the A+ grade is no different than and "A" in terms of quality points. The SG proposal would weight the A+ grade at a 4.33, non- retroactive, and the provision would be made that it could not exceed 4.0 in either semester or cumulative averages. This provides equitable compensation for the students earning these grades and moves to achieve a more fair grading scale. The grading scale should be engineered to provide motivation for students to strive for excellence. In a recent study, over 3,700 students voiced their support for this proposal which is more than 10 percent of the Tampa campus population.

In summary, the benefits are obvious – motivating students, equitable grading system, achievements, twenty percent of universities using this system. The best source is USF's own data, GPA trends are declining, the relative stability of A+ grades as a percent of total grades, and the increased aversion to issuing the grade as its value rises. These points indicated that the implementation of this policy will have very minimal, if not completely inconsequential, effect on the overall GPA levels. SG feels that the benefits far outweigh the cost. At this time the floor was opened for discussion of the proposal.

It was the general consensus of the SEC members that approving this request would have very little impact on grade inflation. In addition, the equity issue would be solved if it stops at "A". There was a call to question. The motion was made and seconded to approve the change from 4.00 to 4.33 grade points with the provision that total grade point average cannot exceed 4.00 in a semester overall. The motion passed with one no and one abstention. Mr. Dohrman was asked to break out the data into graduate and undergraduate for presentation at the April Faculty Senate meeting.

b. Program Expansion (Steve Permuth)

At the request of President Greenbaum, Vice President Permuth established an ad hoc committee on program expansion to develop a policy for Faculty Senate consideration dealing primarily with a protocol for the expansion of an existing USF degree program across and among campus sites where there is no existing policy. To aid in his presentation, two documents were distributed. One was a letter to President Greenbaum, the other a draft policy on expansion of degree programs across campus sites.

Vice President Permuth emphasized two elements. The first is that with the newly approved Inter-Campus Academic Relations (ICAR) document, there are now two systems to look at in the framework of the committee – the University of South Florida (Tampa/Lakeland/Sarasota-Manatee) and the University of South Florida-St. Petersburg. The second element is that there are no substantial statements at either campus about what an existing program is. Vice President Permuth asked that the SEC review the documents and to send him any comments. He will have a revised version for the April meeting.

c. Summer Salaries (Steve Permuth)

Vice President Permuth distributed a list of five criteria for supplemental summer assignments for Summer 2005. Although it is clearly legal that there is not automatic assumption of summer employment, there is a directive to try to hire people other than full time faculty. He pointed out that this is an issue that the union will be addressing. Vice President Permuth was granted permission by the SEC to present this issue to the Senate floor for discussion at the March meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Honorary Degree Recommendation (Darlene Bruner)

As chair of the Honors and Awards Council (HAC), Professor Bruner attended today's meeting to present the following three nominees for consideration of the honorary degree:

Frank Morsani (for Doctor of Humane Letters)

Carol Morsani (for Doctor of Humane Letters)

Thabo Mbeki (for Doctor of Humanities)

The HAC recommended that each of the nominations be forwarded to the Faculty Senate for approval for honorary degrees. The floor was opened for discussion of the nominations. A motion was made and seconded for approval of Frank Morsani for Doctor of Humane Letters. The motion was unanimously passed. A motion was made and seconded for approval of Carol Morsani for Doctor of Humane Letters. The motion was unanimously passed.

The following concerns were voiced by the SEC members over the nomination of Thabo Mbeki for an honorary doctorate. There is controversy over his approach to the

HIV/AIDS crisis which is something USF should not be brought into. His connections between South Africa and USF are not strong enough. There was also a problem with the way the nomination was structured in that it was questioned what was being honored. A motion was made to forward Mr. Mbeki's nomination to the Faculty Senate and ask for guidance. After further discussion, the motion was amended to forward Mr. Mbeki's nomination to the Faculty Senate without commentary or recommendation for approval or non-approval from the SEC. The amended motion was seconded and unanimously passed.

b. Policy on Academic Learning Compacts (Kathleen Moore)

Vice President Moore attended today's meeting to present Policy Guideline # 04.08.26 on Academic Learning Compacts. USF now has a formal requirement that all of the publicly supported universities have to have in place Academic Learning Compacts (ALCs). This is a statement for potential students to tell them what they will learn from the completion of a given B.A. program. The three areas are: (1) content/discipline knowledge and skills, (2) communication skills, and (3) critical thinking skills. The university does, however, have the option to decide whether institutional level definitions are acceptable in the areas of communication and critical thinking.

USF's charge, as an institution, is to develop an internal policy and set of guidelines and timelines for implementation of ALCs. The policy guidelines state they will be in place no later than Fall 2005. They would have to go through several layers of approval to include the BOT. This has been discussed with chairs and deans. Several questions revolve around the relationship between this and the annual assessment of student learning outcomes that USF was asked to do to comply with the SACS requirements. It is anticipated that status reports will be sent to colleges on May 1st. Vice President Moore pointed out that the goal is to keep the process meaningful and simple. She indicated that the Faculty Senate may be called upon to help with policies and procedures.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.