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Faculty Senate

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CALL TO ORDER

President Larry Branch called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. after which introductions were made.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes from the meeting of July 23, 2008 were approved. Secretary Michael Barnett suggested an addendum for meeting minutes. Discussion was held and the decision was made that Administrative Specialist Ann Pipkins will add a new section to the minutes titled “Items to Follow-up.” These issues will remain on this list until they are resolved.

REPORT FROM PROVOST RALPH WILCOX

• Provost Wilcox acknowledged Drs. Graham Tobin and Linda Whiteford for their work in the Provost’s Office. Dr. Whiteford explained that the mission of the Global Strategies and National Affairs is the result of a recent report recommending that the University of South Florida (USF) create a position for someone to facilitate global activity for students, faculty, and research from a system-wide perspective including the regional campuses. Provost Wilcox added that global literacy and global impact are integral parts of USF’s strategic plan, and the school’s vision for the future includes expanding global opportunities and global competitiveness. It is an integrated mission that focuses not only on student access, success, and student but also research collaborations in a global sense.

• Provost Wilcox distributed copies of a one-page summation of the State of Florida’s current fiscal year and the outlook for the following year. During the 2007-08 fiscal year, a budget approved by the State Legislature in March 2007 was a little more than $2-billion more than revenues collected that year. To balance the budget, the State decided to dip significantly into “rainy day” or non-recurring funds. That left $327-million in reserves compared to $4-billion at the beginning of last year. Next year’s budget is expected to have a $1.1 billion deficit. Where does that put USF? Last year USF lost nearly 11 percent of its base recurring budget, but the university set aside 15 percent, so there is currently four percent in reserves. To fill that nearly $1.5 billion deficit, school officials anticipate that beyond the four percent budget reduction, they are
also going to have to figure out an additional six or seven percent in reductions, maybe as high as 10 to 15 percent, added on top of last year’s nearly 11 percent reduction. USF is looking at a 20-22 percent base budget reduction by the state, all driven by shortfalls in tax revenue collections. The Provost is confident that as long as the deficit does not grow beyond $1.5 billion the institution will be able to move forward without becoming once again engulfed in budget reduction scenarios.

Secretary Barnett asked the Provost about the university’s response to budget cuts in terms of what it means for reduction in student enrollment. Referring to the Fall 2008 Drop/Add Enrollment Profile that was distributed during the meeting, the headcount increased in every category except non-degree seeking students. Provost Wilcox explained that the front page of the Enrollment Profile contained a summary of all USF campuses. The second page listed a more modest growth with tightly managed enrollment on the Tampa campus. The across-campus increase is in a large part attributable to a 6 percent growth at the USF-St. Petersburg campus; a 38 percent growth in Lakeland, USF Polytechnic; and a 3.5 percent growth in Sarasota. The Provost added that the university has done a remarkable job in keeping enrollment in check because it has a sufficient number of students to meet funding levels. At the same time, the campus could not grow too much because any growth would be absent of appropriate funding. What allowed USF to keep undergraduate enrollment steady is that the university had differential tuition this year, which brought in significantly more revenue. The student headcount for Tampa this year was the lowest growth in the past five or six years and it was quite deliberate. In addition, the university needed to get as close to zero growth as possible because once the school’s enrollment drops, the State will ask for that growth enrollment money back.

Provost Wilcox pointed out that there were several things to be proud of in the Enrollment Profile, but there were also a couple of disappointments including the declining numbers at the doctorate level. Another disappointment is in the decline of African-American freshmen and African-American transfer students. After peaking last year, the university was not able to sustain those numbers. He believes the decline in freshmen has in large part to do with the turnaround at Florida A&M University (FAMU). FAMU admitted 400 more freshmen this year, and Provost Wilcox surmised that by far the largest majority of those freshmen would have been African American. Those students have been drawn away from the State’s three largest public universities, all of which saw a decline in African-American freshmen enrollment. Provost Wilcox said that was not an excuse, but the university would have to work harder if it is committed to providing opportunities for all students including those that are traditionally underrepresented in public higher education.

Positives among the enrollment numbers included a 38 percent increase in African-American graduate students. At the undergraduate level, the average SAT score is now at 1165 for freshmen students admitted. In the Honors College, where they admitted 472 students, the average SAT score is 1353. Those numbers were higher than the average SAT scores for the incoming freshmen class at New College.
This year marked the first time that USF’s freshmen retention rate climbed above 82 percent. The plan is to push the retention rate, that is, the number of students enrolled in summer and fall classes who return the following fall, to 90 percent. He stated that is a high priority for the university because it is a very strong indication of student success.

- USF upgraded fifty classrooms this past summer with new instructional technology packages. This completed a project to enhance 140 general-use classrooms by the beginning of fall semester, a commitment the Provost made earlier this year. Seminars on the use of technology in the classroom will continue to be offered and the Provost would like to see more faculty attendance at these seminars. Suggestions are welcomed on how to increase attendance.

- Progress is being made on faculty retention and recruitment. The Provost is hopeful that a two or three-year agreement between the United Faculty of Florida and USF will be reached in the very near future. Faculty recruitment will be scaled back due to the financial outlook. Deans have submitted their requests with 30 percent being funded. Sixty to sixty-five faculty tenure track lines will be available next year.

- Supplemental travel funds for faculty to present their research will be turned over to the deans to determine how it should be distributed.

President Branch added that he has spoken with Dr. Glen Besterfield with the Dean’s Office of Undergraduate Studies regarding the scheduling and there were no excessive glitches to report.

**ITEMS FROM SENIOR VICE PROVOST DWAYNE SMITH**

a. **Faculty Handbook**

The Faculty Handbook has been distributed for review. The Provost’s Office will revise and send the handbook back to the Faculty Senate. President Branch reminded everyone that the document is filled with URL addresses and will need to be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

b. **Special Emeritus Professor Request**

Senior Vice Provost Dwayne Smith received from Dean Patricia Burns of the School of Nursing a special request to bestow Emeritus status upon Ms. Katherine Echevarria, a retired instructor of the College. Dr. Smith explained that current university policy defines “faculty” qualified for membership as those holding tenure. Rather than making a unilateral decision, Dr. Smith asked the SEC for guidance on how to respond (either approve or not) to this request. Discussion was held. It was agreed to ask the Committee on Faculty Issues to re-examine the Emeritus policy. CEPI Chair Donchin agreed to work with the committee.
c. Mission Differential/Campus Tenure Standards

Regional campus officials have approached Vice Provost Smith about developing differential tenure and promotion criteria, and he asked the SEC for input on where to begin. Working with the Sarasota campus, the School of Business has developed such a model which will now serve as a case study of how such a proposal can be pursued. Dr. Smith would like to vet this through the faculty, beginning with the appropriate Senate channels. Any differential changes would be approved by the Senate with formal recognition by the BOT. His role would be to facilitate the process of having this considered, leaving any arguing of the case to those making the proposal. Provost Wilcox added that during the process there are a few things to be considered: a clear timeline; guidelines for differential criteria should fit the missions of the campuses; and there is an element of risk. A motion was made and seconded that Vice Provost Smith will form an ad hoc committee with membership consisting of three faculty from the Committee on Faculty Issues plus Vice President Permuth. The motion passed.

d. Year-Round Pay for Faculty

President Branch received a request from Senator Sang-Hie Lee about revisiting 12-month pay for faculty. There are some members in the old College of Visual and Performing Arts who want their nine-month contract distributed over a 12-month interval. Discussion on why this could not be changed at the present moment was due to the fact there are faculty members who have research dollars involved in their salary. In addition, the USF Credit Union has a deposit schedule already in place to assist faculty with this issue. Another point was made that the individual members could just set aside the money once it has been deposited. No motion was made, but the Provost agreed to take this under consideration. He noted that such a practice is common at other universities and would have positive financial benefits for the university, but it would require renegotiation of myriad benefits contracts.

REPORTS BY OFFICERS AND COUNCIL CHAIRS

a. Senate Vacancies (Michael Barnett)

Secretary Barnett received three self-nominations to fill open positions in the College of Arts & Sciences, College of Engineering and FMHI. The appointments will be until the end of this academic year when elections are held. A motion was made and seconded to accept these three nominations (Sondra Fogel, Chris Ferekides, and Oliver Massey, respectively). The motion was unanimously passed. There are still vacancies in Architecture, and the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Education, and Medicine.

b. Proposed Bylaws Amendment on Resolutions (Michael Barnett)

Secretary Barnett presented a draft proposal which would create a process on how the Senate handles resolutions. The proposal has not been through the Bylaws Committee; therefore, it was not up for vote at this time. It addresses “how does the Senate do what it
does” as the faculty voice to the administration. Part of the process will include: how to get faculty input; how to effectively communicate with faculty; how does the Faculty Senate itself work and how is it relative to the SEC. In addition, how should progress between the administration and Faculty Senate be tracked on various issues? The proposal will be posted on the Faculty Senate Blackboard discussion board. Secretary Barnett encouraged all members to read the document and provide him with feedback.

At this time, President Branch asked to have three changes made to the Bylaws and the Constitution. However, because the SEC members did not have either document in front of them or the recommended changes, Secretary Barnett asked President Branch to post the proposed changes on the Faculty Senate Blackboard discussion board to allow for Senate-wide comment; therefore, the proposed changes were not acted upon at this time.

c. Committee on Committees Report (Ellis Blanton)

Committee on Committees (COC) Chair Blanton provided a handout describing the thirteen Faculty Senate Standing Committees and Councils. The Faculty Senate is currently soliciting to fill vacancies, and a slate of nominees will be presented to the SEC at its October 29th meeting.

Chair Blanton next discussed the re-structuring of the committees. He advises that the charges of each committee may not change, just the roster. He also warns that all committees will be impacted by the realignment, but to what extent is not known until the final structure is in place and it is determined how many faculty members are in each college. President Branch expressed his concern that there will not be enough volunteers to fill committee slots. Chair Blanton responded that if there is someone who is nominated for a particular position and is not selected, the candidate is offered a slot on another committee. More times than not, they accept the alternate. The idea is not to turn people away but to have more people be nominated than less. However, the committee cannot move forward until a final count on faculty is made. No action on any COC business was needed at today’s meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

a. Revised University Structure Proposal (Emanuel Donchin)

Council on Educational Policy and Issues (CEPI) Chair Donchin presented the latest draft of the University Structure Change policy. Most of the changes that were recommended at the Senate meeting were incorporated into the latest document. There were two major changes to the statement on page 2, paragraph 2 so that it now reads “Any official whose authority includes suggesting, or implementing, changes in the status quo must follow these guidelines.” Chair Donchin commented that the basic change philosophically is that this set of guidelines/policy is directed at people who believe that they have the authority to make changes or force changes or implement changes, these are the guidelines they should follow, but it does not bind anyone to listen to that person.
The document came to the SEC from CEPI with a motion to approve and forward it to the Faculty Senate. The motion was seconded and the floor was opened for discussion. Another issue from CEPI was whether the document should be proposed as guidelines or as a policy. One suggestion was that the document be called a guideline. Chair Donchin said there are advantages and disadvantages to that recommendation. A policy is binding, but in order to be a policy it must be promulgated and the implication has been it will never be promulgated. However, if the document is set up as a guideline promulgation is not necessary, and it can be put on the books as guidelines adopted by the Senate. There was a call to question. A vote was taken on the motion from CEPI and passed.

b. Update on Survey of Administrators (Paul Terry)

Professor Terry, Chair of the Committee on Faculty Issues, was not at today’s meeting; therefore, this item was tabled.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Faculty Senate Logo

The Faculty Senate Office has been contacted by Marshall Center Operations to find out if the Faculty Senate has a logo to display along side the other governing groups in the new Marshall Center. Currently, there is no Faculty Senate logo. Although President Branch has asked the two Senators from Visual and Performing Arts if they would be willing to work on this, there has been no reply. Discussion was held regarding formal procedures that need to be followed and who could assist in creating a logo. Administrative Specialist Pipkins was asked to work with University Relations on the design and cost of a logo.

REPORT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM FACULTY SENATE PRESIDENT LARRY BRANCH

President Branch informed the group that student evaluations of faculty will soon be posted on the Internet. The Faculty Senate requested that the process be administered through Academic Affairs and not through Student Government. Anyone who has Internet access can visit the website and read the evaluations. Only the mean scores will be shown, not student comments. President Branch stated that he would forward the e-mail regarding this issue.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:25 p.m.
ADDENDUM
Follow-Up Items

1. Committee on Faculty Issues, along with CEPI Chair Donchin, to re-examine Emeritus policy.

2. Ad hoc committee to be formed by Vice Provost Smith to develop differential tenure and promotion criteria for regional campuses. Committee will consist of three members from the Committee on Faculty Issues, plus Vice President Permuth.

3. Reply to Senator Sang-Hie Lee on her request to revisit 12-month pay for faculty. Reply sent on September 8, 2008, by President Branch

4. Formal procedures for creating a logo.

5. E-mail to be forwarded to SEC from President Branch regarding student evaluations of faculty available on-line.

6. Proposed changes to Bylaws and Constitution from President Branch to be posted on Faculty Senate Blackboard discussion group for Senate-wide comments.