SENATE FACULTY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
MINUTES
October 18, 1999

Members Present: Jean Bevis, Yezdi Bhada, Barbara Carroll (for Larry Kelley), Myra Carmon, Marsha Clarkson, Carolyn Denard, Valerie Fennell, Bernadette Hartfield, Juane Heflin, Julie Hotchkiss, Hugh Hudson, Phyllis Johnson, Marian Meyers, Richard Miller, Gabor Patonay, Dave Pavesic, Charlotte Petrek, Jim Senn, Veda Storey, Roger Weed, Diane Willen, Carol Winkler


The meeting was called to order at 12:05 p.m. by the chair, Diane Willen.

The first item of business was the approval of the September 21, 1999 minutes. The minutes were approved with one correction, removing Hugh Hudson's name from the list of absent members.

Diane Willen reported that the executive committee had reviewed the FacAffairs proposal to change the annual faculty report to include international activities. After discussing the proposal, the executive committee asked that FacAffairs delay submitting its motion until the full senate meets in December. The delay will allow FacAffairs to solicit and receive feedback regarding the proposal.

Subcommittee reports:

Dick Miller reported for the Benefits subcommittee. The subcommittee met and reviewed several issues on the agenda from last year. The family/maternity leave issue, passed by the Senate in Spring 1999, was discussed in terms of its impact on tenure. The subcommittee is revisiting the issue of domestic partner benefits and will soon make its recommendations to FacAffairs. It was noted that this issue, like the leave issue, affects the definition of family in the faculty handbook. Dr. Willen has referred the handbook issue (501.01) to the Benefits subcommittee, per a request from the Provost's office.

Professor Miller further reported that the subcommittee discussed retirement benefits for faculty who are not members of the Teachers' Retirement System, particularly the credit for sick-leave time. The subcommittee will pursue the possibility of raising the one million-dollar cap on benefits from the BOR insurance plan. There was also talk about the governor's plan for one universal health plan and its relation to faculty. A benefits survey, conducted last year by Human Resources, found that GSU did well in most areas. The subcommittee will look more closely at the survey to determine if any areas need improvement. Cost of insurance was discussed. The BOR is running short of reserves and may elect to reduce the amount of funding for its insurance program, therefore causing an increase in premiums. The committee would like to know at what point they can have input into the process of raising premiums and possibly set forth a policy that disclosure of premium increases would be made before the open enrollment period. Kaiser increased its premiums 70% last year. The committee received a request from the Cultural Diversity Committee to revisit delaying the tenure clock with reference to the Medical Leave Act of 1993 and change the extended leave to include sickness of family members. Dr. Bhada asked the Benefits subcommittee to review the faculty handbook (501.01) and consider a proposal from the Provost's office to change the definition of family.

Juane Heflin reported for the Conflict of Interest subcommittee. Two open hearings were held on draft policies but were sparsely attended, possibly due to communication issues. Another hearing will be held on October 27, 1999. The hearings suggested support for the long version of the policy. The Deans Group, however, favors the shorter version of the policy because this version would promote a decentralized approach and provide flexibility to accommodate the differences among the colleges.

Marsha Clarkson reported for the Evaluation of Administrators subcommittee. The subcommittee submitted a proposal to modify the evaluation procedure for the university Librarian. Part one of the proposal allowed for expanding the designated evaluators to include other faculty outside the library. A motion to this effect was put to a vote and approved by FacAffairs. The second part of the proposal was to eliminate the requirement that the ad hoc evaluation committee in the library consist only of tenured faculty. This motion was also approved by FacAffairs.

Carolyn Denard reported for the Evaluation of Instruction subcommittee. The task of the subcommittee is to consider the SGA proposal for five standardized questions for faculty evaluations across all colleges. Dr. Denard noted that the subcommittee is sympathetic to the proposal, but the issue is effectiveness of the evaluation as a result of the change. The subcommittee has invited a representative from each college to attend the next meeting. Dr. Patonay
recommended the subcommittee seek advice from experts before moving forward with any changes. Julie Hotchkiss volunteered to represent the School of Policy Studies on the committee. Jim Senn warned the committee that changing the evaluation could have implications on promotion and tenure, salary, and annual faculty evaluation. Dr. Denard noted that the subcommittee may only make a recommendation for rearranging questions.

Jim Senn reported for the Bookstores subcommittee. He noted the bookstore has three separate systems to collect faculty book orders. They include systems operated by Auxiliary Services and Follett Bookstore, and the old paper system. The problem is that the systems do not work together. The bookstore is aware of the problem, and staff are attempting to coordinate the systems. Jim Senn acknowledged that the bookstore played a special role during fall semester in extending credit to students during the financial aid crisis. Dr. Winkler asked the committee to continue to discuss class histories and the availability of books for classes added at the last minute. Dr. Hartfield commented that sometimes historic information is incorrect and the bookstore needs to look at this issue in greater detail.

Dick Miller reported for the Mentoring of Graduate Students subcommittee. The subcommittee is a joint committee which includes representation from Research and APACE. It is in the process of developing guidelines/principles for the university. The subcommittee hopes to have some recommendations by early next year.

Marian Meyers reported for the Sexual Harassment subcommittee. The subcommittee has yet to meet, but Dr. Meyers has been gathering information and consulting with John Marshall on sexual harassment issues. Her research indicates that the university is not in compliance with the recent Supreme court ruling. The committee goal will be to develop clear guidelines for victims of sexual harassment which includes liability, training faculty, and tracking cases.

Dr. Winkler provided an update on the university's strategic planning committees. The goals of the next five years are currently being discussed and available for review on the university's web page.

The last order of business was a proposal from the Provost's office that the faculty handbook be modified (401.01) regarding syllabi for courses that are cross listed as undergraduate and graduate courses. The proposal stipulated that requirements affecting the graduate students be included in course syllabi. The proposal was approved by the committee.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 16, 1999.

There being no further business, Dr. Willen adjourned the meeting at 1:20 p.m.

Gary Longstreet  
Committee Assistant