Minutes
Faculty Affairs Subcommittee of the Senate Meeting
November 30, 2004

Members present: Glen Abney, Ben Baez, Cathy Brack, Harry Dangel, Nancy Floyd, Shelby Frost, Gerald Gay, Emanuela Guano, Amy Helling, Hugh Hudson, Charlotte Petrek, Ralph LaRossa, Charles Marvin, Dick Miller, Beth Jones for Jerry Rackliffe, Wayne Reed, Debra Snell, Tammy Sugarman, Cherian Thachenkary, and Marta White.

Members absent: Peggy Albers, Pam Barr, Conrad Ciccotello, Valerie Fennell, Cecelia Grindel, Ron Henry, Mona Matthews, Linda Nelson, Dave Pavesic, Jim Senn and Armenia Williams.

Ben moved and Charles seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting. The group voted to approve the minutes as taken.

Cherian reported for the Benefits Committee. Cherian went to Human Resources to see if, without the University sharing the cost of the premiums, domestic partners might be eligible for any other benefit plans. He learned that it is the Board of Regents and not the carriers which determines eligibility for benefits. Thus, domestic partners may only be added to plans with the Board of Regents’ approval, and any such changes would have to be System-wide.

President Patton did take the proposal regarding domestic partner benefits to the Board of Regents. There was no response from the Chancellor, and is clear that this issue is not a priority for the Board of Regents. Debra suggested that perhaps we could ask other institutions’ presidents for support. Hugh suggested enlisting the support of the research universities’ senates/academic councils. Debra believes that offering domestic partner benefits would be a factor in attracting and retaining quality employees. Ben moved to initiate discussion with the other research universities, and indeed any other System schools, to determine the interest in changing Board of Regents’ policy on domestic partner benefits. Hugh seconded the motion, which the group approved.

Cherian then presented the pilot program for donated sick leave, which was sponsored by Staff Council. The first draft of the pilot allowed for individuals to solicit leave donations from coworkers. The Benefits Committee did not feel comfortable with the solicitation aspect of the plan and suggested a leave bank or leave pool concept. Human Resources and Staff Council agreed. The proposal now called for two open enrollment periods (January and July) during which faculty and staff may deposit a minimum of eight hours of sick pay to the leave pool. Additional deposits, in eight hour increments, are also welcomed. Employees suffering a catastrophic medical event could then draw from this pool when they had exhausted all their sick and vacation pay. The Benefits Committee suggested that the Certification Committee, which will review all requests for donated leave, have a member from Faculty Affairs. Staff Council agreed. If the Certification Committee approves, the employee may then draw leave from the pool. Three applications for donated leave may be made in one year, and the requests can be consecutive. Each request will be for a maximum of 160 hours. A faculty or staff member must have donated a minimum of eight hours of sick leave to the pool in order to make a request for donated leave. All donations to the leave pool will be irrevocable. Amy brought up the fact that members of ORP. who cannot convert unused sick leave to service credit, might be willing to contribute more than eight hours to the pool. Amy pointed out, however, that the ORP may, in the future, be modified to be more like TRS, in which case a faculty member might wish that he or she had saved that leave rather than donating it. Glen liked the idea of designating one’s sick leave deposit to a specific person, rather than to the pool. Hugh thought that we might consider quarterly donations, which might have the effect of going to a specific person without necessarily identifying that person. Wayne suggested having Human Resources solicit all faculty and staff for donations by advertising a need via GroupWise on an as needed basis. Debra called the question, and Ben seconded. The motion passed.

Nancy reported that she will have a report next time. There had been concern over the ASUR report, which identified the fact that those with a problem don’t understand the functions of the offices of Legal Affairs, the
Ombudsperson, and ODEP (formerly Affirmative Action) in handling complaints. Additionally, there was concern about investigations of faculty and staff without the faculty/staff employee having knowledge of an investigation taking place. There was clearly confusion regarding official and unofficial complaints.

Hugh made a motion that Faculty Affairs approve the change in the method of processing senior administrator evaluations to the eListen process of on-line evaluations. Since the mainframe used for processing the administrator reviews is decommissioning at the end of this year, another method for processing is necessary. Ben seconded the motion, which the group approved.

Hugh then discussed the background on the need for a governance document regarding the role of non-tenure track faculty and part-time instructors. Last year a Senate subcommittee was formed to look into faculty roles. This charge seemed very vague, and the subcommittee sought clarification. Before receiving an answer, a new Executive Committee was installed. The new Executive Committee now wants to know how non-tenure track faculty fit into governance. For example, should non-tenure track faculty participate in the search for tenure-track faculty, in the search for a dean, or in committee selection? The new subcommittee will have to look at creating a top-level policy that would apply to all settings. Or perhaps the policy would be to delegate to the colleges with expectations. Apparently, there is concern that some departments are being “run” by non-tenure track faculty.

Hugh mentioned that in Arts and Sciences, for example, there is a huge scope of duties being performed by non-tenure track faculty. The subcommittee should determine exactly what the current situation is. Data has been collected, which will help to develop a reasonable approach to structuring a policy. The following members of Faculty Affairs volunteered to serve on this subcommittee: Ben, Marta, Debra, Shelby, Tammy, Charlotte and Dick. Ben volunteered to chair the subcommittee. Dick requested that a status report be presented at the January meeting.

In closing, there was continued discussion about the timing of the student evaluations of instructors. The paper evaluations were always distributed prior to finals. Some members feel that the on-line evaluation period, in order to be consistent with the paper evaluations, should not be open for completion once the final exam period begins. Discussion on this topic was shelved until the next meeting.