Minutes
Faculty Affairs Subcommittee of the Senate Meeting
January 12, 2005

Members present: Glen Abney, Ben Baez, Pam Barr, Harry Dangel, Valerie Fennell, Shelby Frost, Gerald Gay, Cecelia Grindel, Amy Helling, Hugh Hudson, Beth Jones for Jerry Rackliffe, Charles Marvin, Dick Miller, Dave Pavesic, Charlotte Petrek, Wayne Reed, Debra Snell, Tammy Sugarman, Cherian Thachenkary, Marta White and Armenia Williams

Members absent: Peggy Albers, Cathy Brack, Conrad Ciccotello, Nancy Floyd, Emanuela Guano, Ron Henry, Ralph LaRossa, Mona Matthews, Linda Nelson, and Jim Senn

Guest: Joan Carson

The group approved the minutes of the last meeting as amended by Cherian.

Cherian reported for the Benefits Committee. By way of history, the Executive Committee of the Senate had some issues with the Donated Leave Policy, which was approved by Faculty Affairs at the November, 2004 meeting. The first concern of the Executive Committee was that employees were required to sign up to participate in the Donated Leave Program during two proposed open enrollment periods each year. The Executive Committee felt that once an employee enrolled in the Program, he or she should remain enrolled in the Program. It also felt strongly that, to be consistent with other benefit plans, open enrollment should be once a year in the fall and should go into effect in January. There was some discussion in Executive Committee about the fact that not all employees accrue both sick leave and vacation. It was suggested that 120 hours of combined sick and vacation time should be retained in their accounts by employees who accrue both types of leave. Lastly, the Executive Committee felt that provision should be made for donated hours left in the pool should the pilot program be terminated. Their suggestion was to use all of the donated hours to fill requests until the pool is depleted, should the program be discontinued. Because this program would cause additional work for the Human Resources department, the Executive Committee requested a letter of approval from Human Resources indicating its support. This was received and presented.

The group approved the suggested changes of the Executive Committee. The Donated Leave Program proposal as amended will be sent back to the Executive Committee before the next Senate meeting.

Ben’s subcommittee, comprised of Marta, Debra, Shelby, Tammy, Charlotte and Dick, will meet next Wednesday at 10:00. This group is seeking to determine the governance role of non-tenure track faculty. It appears that in some departments non-tenure track faculty are dominant and are making decisions affecting tenured faculty. This issue is complicated by the fact that there are a great number of categories of non-tenure track faculty, who have different mixes of administrative and faculty functions.

The group approved the change to Section 12 of the bylaws, Committee on Faculty Affairs, adding the AVP of Human Resources, the AVP for Auxiliary and Support Services and the University Faculty Ombudsperson as non-voting members. The Director of Affirmative Action was removed as a non-voting member. The bylaws were amended to remove supervision of the Raymond F. Dominick Fund from the responsibilities of Faculty Affairs.

Last year, the Senate asked each Senate committee to look at its charter and bylaws. As part of this project, the Standards and Bylaws Committee asked if the quality of instruction should be moved from Admissions and Standards to Faculty Affairs. The group interpreted quality of instruction to mean assessment of the effectiveness of the instructor. The group supported the move the quality of instruction to Faculty Affairs. Harry felt that this would dovetail Faculty Affairs’ role as advocates for faculty. Gerald agreed that Admissions and Standards deals with undergraduate students, and instruction includes graduate students as well.
The Standards and Bylaws Committee suggested that the term evaluation processes used in the description of duties of Faculty Affairs might be too broad. The group agreed that “Evaluation process of teaching effectiveness and the triennial evaluation of administrators” was a better description.

Joan Carson asked for a subcommittee to be appointed which would look at possible changes needed in the survey format for administrator evaluations. Specifically, Joan feels that administrators should be evaluated on their responsiveness to action plan commitments. In the past, those who made commitments were not held accountable for actually implementing the commitment(s). Glen declined to chair this subcommittee, since he is retiring. Charles accepted the chair position of this subcommittee whose members include Joan Carson, Terry Ward from Institutional Research, Pam and Dick.

The group then discussed changing the evaluation period for a regular semester to begin at the end of the final exam schedule and to end two weeks after course grades become available. This would change the policy passed by the Senate on April 29, 2004, allowing instructor evaluations to begin two weeks before classes end. Three issues surfaced. The first is that this change would equalize all classes, since instructors would not be evaluated before and after the final exam. Secondly, would this change affect the response rate? And lastly, the issue of the extent to which we rely on such evaluations in rating the faculty was brought up. After much discussion, the group decided to leave the policy unchanged.

During the discussion of instructor evaluations, it became obvious that no one knows what happens to evaluations submitted after the evaluation period. Research will need to be done on this issue.