

Minutes
Faculty Senate Meeting
December 3, 2008

Professor Stephen Silvia called the meeting to order at 2:15 p.m.

Present: Professors Stephen Silvia, Lyn Stallings, Gary Weaver, James Girard, Kiho Kim, Ira Klein, Gwendolyn Reece, William Leap, John Douglass, Leigh Riddick, Nanette Levinson, Robert Karch, Wendell Cochran, Patricia West, Stacey Snelling, Jerzy Sapieyevski, Anthony Riley, Shalini Venturelli, Joanne Savage, Steven Taylor, Dean Mardirosian, and Provost Scott Bass.

Welcome and Introduction, Stephen Silvia

Professor Silvia welcomed everyone to the meeting, and the November minutes were approved by the Senators.

Report of the Chair, Stephen Silvia

- The November Round Table meeting focused on decentralization at the college and school level. The January meeting will cover diversity in hiring and the implementation of the strategic plan at the college and school level.
- The January Faculty Senate meeting will be cancelled, and the first meeting of the New Year will be on February 4th.
- The next Executive Committee meeting will be on January 28 at 2:00, which will be followed by the Round Table meeting at 3:30.
- The issue of the bookstore will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Report by Vice-Chair, Lyn Stallings

Professor Stallings spoke on the level of commitment of the Board of Trustees (B.O.T.) to engage more with the university community. She noted that there is a sincerely expressed interest by the B.O.T. to involve the faculty more in the B.O.T. committees. Professor Stallings emphasized that it is important that the faculty appointees to B.O.T. committees attend the scheduled meetings or coordinate with the Chair of the Senate to find a faculty substitute. The B.O.T. is also wants to become more familiar with the individual schools and will do so by having their campus meetings relocated from the Butler Board Room to each school on a rotating basis.

Report by Provost, Scott Bass

Enrollment

Registration for spring is strong to date, and early decision applications are up by 11% from the same time last year. Although many of the indicators are on track, Provost Bass emphasized that the overall economic crisis has affected many universities. So far, AU has been sheltered somewhat from the downturn in the economy by its conservative budget practices, in particular, by having an operating budget that is not dependent on endowment revenue. However, AU remains heavily dependent on tuition, and if it does not meet the enrollment targets, then the economic impact will be felt. Provost Bass urged the faculty to be as active as possible in making the case for AU, given current economic circumstances, emphasizing the value of an AU education and the level of personal contact with faculty

Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan will have a parallel document which identifies specific objectives and action steps for each of the goals,. In addition to the budget, there is emphasis on relevant changes to policy and practice. A list, which will be prepared by the Provost and Office of Academic Affairs, is due to President Kerwin by January 5.

Faculty Summit

Provost Bass would like to get the entire faculty together for a Summit to discuss the Strategic Plan and best practices of other universities. The objective of the Summit is to empower the faculty by providing an opportunity for full-time faculty to engage in dialog and make suggestions for improvement. The preliminary date will be Saturday, February 21.

Enrollment

As of today, there are 300 students who have been admitted on early admissions, compared with 301 students at the end of the admissions cycle last year. The quality of the students is very good. The regular admissions deadline is January 15 and the letters of acceptance will be sent at the end of March.

Task Force Report

The committee was charged with identifying challenges that the university may face in enrollment in the coming year by looking at why enrollment was so successful last year and then identifying enrollment targets for this year.

Enrollment objectives were established:

- Fall: 1,375 new first year students, 350 new transfer students, and 75 new Washington Semester students.
- Spring: an additional 25 new transfer students and 110 transfer students.

Key findings from the report:

- Strategic use of money was the key in exceeding enrollment targets last year. There were about 1,000 “cocktail scholarships” sent, which are small monetary scholarships.

- There was an increase in the percentage of early admissions students.
- The Admissions Office looked at the demonstrated interest of students, which is a good indication for enrollment.
- The diversity of students was not favorable.
- There is a need to increase socio-economic diversity.
- There is a need to increase the yield.
- Demonstrate the value of an AU education.

Committee Reports

Update on Assessment, Stacey Snelling

It is important to include more language in the new program development about learning assessment and learning outcomes; sustainability is a very big issue for middle states.

Update on the American Senator, Wendell Cochran

Among other topics, the first issue will include an interview with Provost Bass, an article by Stephen Silvia, and a copy of the Strategic Plan.

Update from the Committee on Information Services, Patricia West

This committee, which was originally convened by Provost Broder about two years ago, was charged with the task of writing a policy on intellectual property ownership. In the section of the document called “exceptional use of university resources,” there was considerable discussion by the Senators about the definition of the words “exceptional resources” and also about extending the time frame from 30 days to 45 days. It was decided that it may be beneficial to discuss the language of this section within the individual schools, and then to bring any changes to the next Faculty Senate meeting.

Professor Weaver made a call to question. There was a vote to end the discussion today and to take up the matter at the next meeting. The vote was 14 in favor, 1 against, and 1 abstention.

Student Learning, Ira Klein

Professor Klein said that he is currently working on compiling information for a report about the bookstore not providing books in a timely manner and not providing adequate information about books. However, obtaining information can be difficult; Auxiliary Services recently cancelled a meeting with the bookstore management.

For Good of the Order

- Professor Douglass mentioned that the Wellness Committee held a Smoke-Out, and they plan on holding additional wellness programs and luncheons. They are looking into buying automatic defibrillators for the campus.
- Felicity Brown announced that the Staff Council will be holding Food Banks around the campus to raise money and donations for the needy.
- Professor Silvia suggested that it would be beneficial to sign up for the RAVE security system.
- Professor Snelling mentioned that there will be a Town Hall and Strategic Planning Meeting held by Don Myers and Provost Bass on December 4 to discuss the budget.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45.