

UMW Faculty Senate
Wednesday 03 October 2007, 16h00
Red Room, Woodard Campus Centre

Steve Fuller (President) called the meeting to order at 16:01. The minutes of the September meeting were approved after some trivial changes.

Reports

Report of the Interim Dean of the Faculty

Dean Barra said that the budget cutback had been reduced from 7.5% to 6.25%.

Report of the President of the Senate

Prof. Fuller spoke of the new member orientation and Board meeting, which contained the programme for Board development.

Report of the President-Elect

Prof. Riggsby spoke of her experiences at the Faculty Senate of VA meeting, and drew the Senate's attention to the Legislature's passing of an order for SCHEV to undertake a competitiveness study. She has also been appointed to a task force to study the VA Tech security situation.

Report of the Student Representative

This report was included in the agenda packet.

Standing Committees

Academic Affairs Committee

No questions were asked.

Curriculum Committee

No questions were asked, though the question of whether questions could be asked was raised. Questions could have been asked, but were not.

Faculty Affairs Committee

Angela Gossetti-Murrayjohn(CPR) asked about the distribution of merit pay. Prof. Mellinger said that this was in progress and that a more formal and complete motion would be brought forth next month.

General Education Committee

No questions were asked.

Race and Gender Committee

No questions were asked.

Speaking Intensive Committee

No questions were asked.

Environmental Awareness Committee

No questions were asked.

Writing Intensive Committee

No questions were asked.

Old Business

Prof. Morello arose to speak about the changes in the General Education requirements. The report in question is an interim report and not the final motion, and thus commentary on them did not constitute voting on the final motion.

Angela Gossetti-Murrayjohn(CPR) wondered whether it would be possible for the Curriculum Committee to consult the CPR department about language issues, as they also teach languages.

David Long(MUSC) wanted clarification on whether changes could be made to the proposal by the faculty at large as well as the Senate: the answer was yes.

Eric Gable(SOCANTH) asked about the Global Inquiry requirement: what was the justification for this requirement? He recommended that the requirement be removed. Prof. Fallon said that the committee generally agreed with the General Education report, and thus kept the requirement.

Charles Sharpless(CHEM) felt that the language about inequality was very specific in relation to the general language about humanities and social sciences. Prof. Marsh said she felt that all of the points were couched in very general terms. Prof. Gossetti-Murrayjohn asked whether the language was a result of the committee's deliberation. Prof. Fallon answered that this was in response to a motion to reintroduce the Race and Gender requirement, and that this general language was intended to make the spirit of the requirements more clear. Prof. Long said that his department, like the original chairs' committee, was fully in favor of eliminating all of the ATC requirements. It was generally agreed that the language was intended to increase awareness of inequality rather than to create inequality. Melina Patterson(GEOG) said that she would be disturbed if the final General Education statement did not include a statement about inequality.

Tom Sheridan(H&PE) wanted to know if the CC had discussed the possible elimination of the PE requirement. Prof. Fallon answered that the committee had felt that the H&PE department was not concerned with retaining the requirement, until they received notice after their meeting that the H&PE department was in fact so concerned. He said they would address the issue at their next meeting.

New Business

The Academic Affairs Committee motion about IT proficiency was brought to the floor. Angela Gossetti-Murrayjohn(CPR) wanted to know how the system was arrived at. Prof. Houghtalin said that the original requirements represented a Tier One but wanted to allow departments leeway in how they chose to understand the Tier Two requirement. Both tiers would be under the purview of departments and there would be no across the curriculum requirements.

Karen Anewalt(CPSCI) wanted to know the rationale for the departmental rather than university-wide plan. Prof. Houghtalin answered that students complained that the old system had fallen behind students' general skill levels.

Gary Stanton(HSPRES) wanted to know who evaluated whether the departments actually did this, and on what standards. Prof. Houghtalin answered that there were no standards nor oversight. This was a result of waiting on SCHEV for a sixth competency requirement: SCHEV has yet to do this. There is no reason the university could not ask for a report, but there is also no formal system for such. Prof. Stanton said that it seemed odd to specify a two-tiered structure when nobody would be

evaluating this. Prof. Houghtalin suggested that Prof. Stanton propose an alternate wording. Steve Watkins(ESL) wanted to know whether this new system was in response to an actual problem. Prof. Houghtalin said no. He asked whether this was being driven only by SCHEV. Prof. Houghtalin answered that the committee felt it was appropriate to expect that the faculty would insert this requirement into the program: only as a “murmur in the background” were they motivated by SCHEV’s sixth competency.

Kristen Marsh(At-Large) suggested whether academic departments might be given the option of instituting a strategy rather than being required to: it seemed a needless addition to the workload. Prof. Houghtalin felt that departments were already doing this. Dean Barra said that the SCHEV report had not yet been finalized, but that it would include six competencies for the next cycle. She continued by clarifying some of the issues relating to SCHEV.

Prof. Long quoted from the previous report of the chairs and said that while this sounded wonderful in theory, the new SCHEV system might include another assessment requirement, and that this would place an undue burden on departments. Prof. Houghtalin said that the committee wanted maximum control in the hands of the disciplines.

Alan Griffith(BIOL) said that his department was concerned about resource availability, and felt that the motion was premature until SCHEV made its decision. Prof. Morello said that he was on the committee that developed this proposal: it is in the spirit of the statement regarding identity, power and inequality – that is, an expression of core values. One of these is technology: the idea behind the two-tiered approach to IT on the departmental level is to encourage departments to consider what skills and programmes they would offer to their students.

Prof. Gable offered a friendly amendment: to change the language to “CAN institute a strategy” or “SHOULD institute a strategy”. Prof. Houghtalin felt that this was not a friendly amendment and that students should be learning these things and departments should be organizing this. She chose to accept the removal of “two-tiered” as a friendly amendment.

Prof. Griffith said that while he understood the conceptual basis of the requirement, he could not get his department to agree that this competency requirement was a good idea, because they were concerned about the clear connection between the motion and SCHEV’s requirements. Dean Barra asked whether Prof. Griffith could find SCHEV in the rationale. He agreed that he could not, but that his department couldn’t find a way around this.

Prof. Gossetti-Murrayjohn said that all disciplines, even classics, would be rooted in technology in the immediate future.

Prof. Erchull said that the language should be amended to include the words “...appropriate to its [i.e., the department’s] disciplines” so as to clarify the specificity of IT requirements. Prof. Houghtalin accepted this as a friendly amendment.

Prof. Rigsby wanted to call the question.

Prof. Sharpless noted that the motion said “UMW” rather than “CSAS”. Prof. Houghtalin accepted this as a friendly amendment.

The specific language of the proposal was debated for some time.

Prof. Patterson asked if departments were required to evaluate competencies in other areas. Dean Barra said that this was accomplished by committees in the case of the sciences, and that SCHEV would only say what the general criteria would be for that assessment.

Prof. Stanton wanted to know whether and where this requirement would lie, so that future faculty would know whether these requirements exist. Prof. Houghtalin said that there was no document that would contain them. Prof. Stanton suggested that each department report to the dean. Prof. Houghtalin said that there was no reason why the dean couldn't ask for a report.

Margaret Ray(ECON) wanted to know whether it would be assumed that Tier One was taken care of prior to matriculation. Prof. Houghtalin said that this could be dealt with individually as far as remedial skills acquisition was concerned. Margaret Mi(BUAD) said that her department performed this kind of evaluation on its entering students, and that these evaluations had evolved over time.

Prof. Gossetti-Murrayjohn noted that students would still be taking courses across the curriculum and would hopefully be experiencing technical competencies across a variety of subjects. Prof. Ray feared that a student would declare a major and then be told that she had been expected to have a certain competency, and that this might prove problematic. Prof. Mi said that her department had remedial training to address this.

Prof. Watkins said that there was nothing in the language of the motion that would prevent it from becoming problematic for departments, especially in terms of foundational skills. Prof. Morello answered that it had been originally believed that the foundational skills as well as the advanced skills were department-specific. Prof. Gossetti-Murrayjohn pointed out that the Senate had removed the Tier One requirements last year from across the curriculum evaluation and reiterated her support for the motion as it stands.

After much debate, the motion was carried by general acclaim.

Debate then shifted to the second motion, on requesting the dean to distribute official minutes of the chairs' meetings to the entire faculty.

Prof. Marsh wanted to know what the dean thought of this. Dean Barra said that she had no problem: the purpose of the chairs' discussions was to address issues germane to all faculty, and that it had been intended that the chairs disseminate knowledge to their faculty.

The motion was carried by general acclaim.

Prof. Fuller adjourned the meeting at 17:29.