

Minutes of the Faculty Senate
Wednesday 06 September 2006, 4:00 pm
Red Room, Woodard Campus Center

Stephen Fuller (FSP) called the meeting to order at 4:06 pm and introduced the new members of the Senate. The minutes from the 05 April 2006 meeting were discussed. Stephen Fuller (FSP) found a problem on page 4 where the words “motion sent to FOC” and “motion sent to Academic affairs” were found. Stephen Fuller (FSP) believed the motion had only been sent to FOC. The minutes were subsequently approved.

Special Order of Business

The Senate was pleased to welcome Dr. William Frawley, the University’s new President, to his first Senate meeting since taking office last July. President Frawley began by having the members of the Senate introduce themselves. He then spoke to the Senate about his own experiences in faculty governance and asked questions about the UMW Faculty Senate. He stressed the importance of credibility and communication, and he hoped that he could contribute to a substantive discussion.

President Frawley then entertained questions from the faculty. Stephen Watkins (ENLS) asked whether President Frawley was interested in attracting more diversity by allowing departments to advertise at the Associate Professor level. President Frawley answered that this entailed many separate questions, and said that such a decision lay primarily with the Dean and the VP and that he had full confidence in these officers. He emphasized his interest in maximum self-sufficiency for units, however, and that any such decision have justification. “I trust things to run well beneath me, and I trust those people.” Stephen Watkins (ENLS) asked whether, if they wanted to take it further, the President would be willing to listen. President Frawley answered yes, providing that such issues had already been fully discussed at the appropriate level. He emphasized that he encourages flexibility and self-determination in departments as well as aggressive, positive recruitment.

Gary Stanton (HISPRES) asked whether the President could explain whether there was a domain in which the Senate should engage the President directly or whether all such issues were under the purview of another member of the President’s team. The President answered that by engaging the people on the President’s team, they were engaging the President himself, and that there was a certain inherent danger or difficulty in engaging the President directly rather than through the appropriate channels, with respect to information flow.

Jason Davidson (PSCI) asked about domain and the budget process. He said that he understood that with respect to the budget, the faculty should have some input into the decision making process. He asked for commentary on whether, in the case of a major disagreement, the Senate should be able to express its views directly to the President rather than go through the structure. The President agreed but said that he was very interested in the activities that precede such an action, especially the discussions with the structure. President Frawley then spoke of discussions he was having with respect to academic self-sufficiency implying a certain level of input into the budget process. Progress on such matters implies a certain amount of disagreement, and President Frawley hoped that such discussions would be as clear as possible.

Marie McAllister (At-Large) asked to what extent the President would like to be made aware of the past history of conflict between the Senate and the administrative structure. President Frawley said that he believed he was aware of most such issues, and that he would want to know insofar as they impacted where UMW was going. He said that his regular Monday meetings addressed such issues but that he trusted that the most important issues would be brought to his attention should the need arise.

Angela Gossetti-Murrayjohn (CPR) mentioned the state of the University address and the President's desire to replace task forces with thought groups. She wondered what role the Senate could play out in the President's idea of how such issues could be addressed. The President said that some of the rhetoric in that speech was directed to the public. The President said that he believes smaller groups are much more effective. He stressed the need for mutual education with respect to what kinds of groups are most productive. He was very interested in looking at the Gen Ed group and what is counted as minors or majors, as well as in our teaching load and professors having the opportunity to do research. He was also interested in having faculty do real research. How this was to be addressed was more a question of how the faculty and administration felt about the issue than something directed specifically by President Frawley. He stated that fewer things might get done because he emphasizes only doing those things for which the resources exist.

Stephen Watkins (ENLS) asked about the President's thoughts on UMW's standards for merit – specifically, what the President's comment about meaningful standards might imply. President Frawley answered that merit raises implied genuine merit, and that formulaic allocations do not provide incentives for achievement. Though he realized there was a history behind the distinctions of merit, he believes that the reward for merit should be a meaningful reward. How that plays out is a matter for discussion between the faculty and administration. The President's goal is to provide the most possible funds and to have them correlate with performance. He suggested the possibility of a "special merit" category and of "one-time bonuses" for particularly meritorious achievement on the part of faculty.

Prof. Watkins asked a follow-up about the extent of the President's involvement in the merit process. President Frawley said that he felt the President's office was too involved in local issues at UMW, and that it was not the President's job to reach all the way down into departments. He felt it was a matter for the institutional structure, though in cases of exceptions he was willing to listen. Prof. Watkins followed up again by pointing out that the merit structure came from the state and that the faculty had been in favor of smaller differentials in merit pay in the past, and that the President had been involved in merit pay decisions in the past. President Frawley felt that merit should not be given as a means of catching up after the years of pay freezes, but that his job was to provide more money for the faculty in general. While he wasn't dismissing the issue, he felt that differential reward was a key factor in the progress of the institution. He feels that as a Dean, he was a decision maker, but that as a President, his main responsibility was to set overall tone more than involve himself in the details of policy.

Thomas Sheridan (H&PE) asked for the President's views on what he would like to have achieved in three or four years. President Frawley answered that he would hope that we would be the number one public liberal arts school in the country and that this fact were well-known. He hopes that we would have significantly more endowment and that our physical structure expand while remaining beautiful, and that the faculties at both campuses be integrated and operating well and without duplicative functions. He hopes that we would be come a leading

edge university and a model of how to conduct academic business and that the faculty would be empowered in new ways and teaching in new ways and in contact with their profession, and that the Governor might say to other to look at UMW if they want to do things right. He also suggested that the relationship between town and university is “curious” and needs to move forward. He believes we know the answers to most of our questions.

President Frawley asked what physical building the University needed most. David Hunt (THEA) said that a new performing arts facility was most needed. He spoke of another university (Christopher Newport) where such a facility was already attracting new students. President Frawley asked the overall question of how such a hypothetical goal might be attained, and how any such project implied a fund-raising process that would impede President Frawley from interesting himself in the internal workings of departments. For example, the residence halls are in need of repairs and President Frawley intends to bring some of the Board of Visitors to a residence hall in order to impress upon them the need for “multifunctional, multimodal” learning facilities. Such a decision requires the approval of the faculty, and President Frawley suggested that such allocation decisions lay within the purview of the Senate, but that such issues needed to be addressed fairly quickly so that progress might get underway. One advantage of UMW is that it provides “Colgate-style” classical liberal-arts education in an environment where there are considerably more activities outside the university; since there is so much to do in the Fredericksburg area, UMW can do even better.

Marie McAllister (At-Large) asked how the Senate might best help the President. President Frawley answered that he had issued a “Core Plan” including goals to his senior staff, and that the Senate needed to help make these goals happen. Specifically, to come up with some specific goals with respect to Gen Ed would really help, as well as the question of faculty workload. The merit issue merits a serious discussion, and President Frawley thinks we also need to unify the two campuses in a legitimate way and remove duplicate institutions.

President Frawley asked the student representative what students might do, and the student answered that student voices would probably help. President Frawley felt that the role of an administrator is to come to the table with ideas, and that this entailed more than signing papers. President Frawley retired from the meeting to the applause of the Senate.

Report of the Academic Affairs Committee

Leann H... from Roy Gordon talked about rewritten rules for promotion, suspension and dismissal, Stephen Watkins (ENLS) said that several members of his dept were concerned about the inclusion of unapproved minutes being included in the agenda packet. Stephen Fuller (FSP) said this was an artifact of the time constraints surrounding meetings. Alejandro Cervantes-Carson (SOC-ANTH) suggested that a proposal be made that addressed such issues comprehensively.

Report of the Curriculum Committee

Gary Stanton (HPRS) wondered whether the course deletion memo was now online under Forms. Andrew Dolby (BIOL) wrote the memo and said it was just reminding chairs to think about catalogue entries, and that it was not a formatted memo.

Report of the Faculty Organization Committee

Jason Davidson (PSCI) asked about the budget committee issue. Stephen Fuller (FSP) said that the Senate would discuss the matter later in the meeting.

Report of the Global Awareness Committee

Marie McAllister (At-Large) wondered why documentation on students who failed to have transfer credit recognized as global awareness credit contained the names of those students, while similar documentation from other fields did not list the students' names. Nabil al-Tikriti (HIST) felt it was more useful to have more information rather than less, but did not know whether this trumped privacy concerns.

Report of the Race and Gender Committee

No report.

Report of the General Education Committee

Melina Patterson (GEOG) wondered where this report was going other than to the Senate. Stephen Fuller (FSP) was unaware. John Morello said that when the assessment approach for GenEd was undertaken, it was done with the expectation that the results would be provided to department chairs for the purpose of clarifying expectations and that the reports were collected for the purpose of providing data were the Gen Ed requirements to be formally discussed.

There were no other reports.

Old Business

The question from the April meeting on the set of criteria regarding composition of the Promotion and Tenure Committee arose. Stephen Fuller (FSP) spoke of putting "division level" in quotation marks. He referred to Jeffery Edmunds' memo. In the April meeting there had been questions about the report and a request for the chair of the Faculty Organization Committee to come and speak.

Ray Scott (CHEM) spoke about the issue. He said that it had struck his dept as odd that the current makeup of the Promotion and Tenure Committee had a rather lumpy distribution, with no representative from the sciences. His proposal in April was not intended to re-introduce divisional structure to UMW and that it was meant to have an equitable distribution of disciplines on that committee. He spoke of other concerns that had been raised: a significant number of professors see this as an important issue because they believe that an evaluator needs to understand what they're looking at in order to properly evaluate the performance of a colleague.

Thomas Sheridan (H&PE) asked a question about whether this was more related to tenure than promotion. Prof. Scott said that it had more to do with tenure.

Charles Sharpless (CHEM) wondered about "pseudo-divisional structure". Prof. Scott said this implied groupings of disciplines that had a common thread.

Andrew Dolby (BIOL) suggested a scheme more in line with the current Gen Ed goals and disciplines that had a common thread.

Stephen Fuller (FSP) asked for a motion on the floor.

Kristin Marsh (At-Large) wondered whether Prof. Scott could expand on why such a structure was needed for only the P&T committee. Prof. Scott said that another committee's decisions were less likely to have serious career repercussions for an individual faculty member.

Stephen Watkins (ENLS) wondered were we were procedurally and wondered why the issue was being discussed. Stephen Fuller (FSP) said that Prof. Scott was here largely to bring new members up to speed. Prof. Watkins replied that this was an issue perhaps better addressed within the committee structure Promotion and Tenure Committee. Prof. Fuller said that since this was important to the Senate, every Senator ought to be on the same footing.

David Long (MUSIC) said that the issue was whether the Faculty Organization Committee was actually fulfilling its charge in overseeing all balloting by the faculty. He quoted the Faculty Handbook: "The committee shall encourage the electorate to cast their ballots in order to ensure appropriate representation of academic areas."

John Morello said that the group appeared to be behaving as a committee of the whole and that Prof. Watkins was generally correct.

Gary Stanton (HPRS) wondered who the Parliamentarian might be. Prof. Fuller said that this was part of the business of the meeting. Prof. Long, the former Parliamentarian, demurred when it was suggested that he continue.

Stephen Fuller (FSP) suggested that Prof. Jennifer Jakubecy, the chair of the Faculty Organization Committee, answer questions. Prof. Jakubecy graciously agreed.

Somebody from Computer Science said that a colleague of his had said that the process was broken when it was determined that there was no evidence of an empirical problem – nobody had been hurt by the current structure of the committee – and that also, members of the committee might tend to unduly defer to the committee member who was in the candidate's division were a divisional structure to be applied.

Stephen Watkins (ENLS) asked Prof. Jakubecy whether anyone had indicated that there was an empirical problem. Prof. Jakubecy said that nobody had said there was any kind of significant problem.

Mary Rigsby (ENLS) asked whether too many people were being promoted, or whether there was a sense that anyone had been unjustly rejected: whether there was any sense that nominations to or voting for that committee had been compromised.

Charles Whipkey (ENVS-GEOL) brought up a particular case where a colleague was denied promotion, which was later reversed on appeal. He said the general idea of his colleague was that if the committee had had representation of someone from the sciences, they might have better understood the issue. He said the reversal on appeal was an indication that there might have been a problem.

Jason Davidson (PSCI) said that we were in fact debating the issue, and asked Prof. Jakubecy about two core issues: whether it made sense to have representation across disciplines, and whether it could be done. He wondered, with respect to the second issue, when the Faculty Organization Committee said it couldn't be done without divisions, why the Faculty Organization Committee couldn't come up with some kind of divisional structure. Prof. Jakubecy said that they responded to what was proposed to them, which was the divisional

level, which doesn't exist, and the building level, which seemed like a less than representative way of dividing up disciplines.

Dean Barra said that the Senate was out of order and that the system worked with respect to the case from last year.

Stephen Fuller (FSP) said that we ought to be able to ask questions of the committee. Dean Barra said that we could ask questions, but not discuss the matter. Stephen Watkins (ENLS) agreed with this. Galen DeGraff (BUSAD) suggested we move to a committee of the whole. Jason Davidson (PSCI) seconded this. The motion was defeated.

David Hunt (THEA) asked Prof. Jakubecy whether the committee had had trouble with providing genuine representation in the past. Prof. Jakubecy said that she didn't have a great deal of historical perspective but that in her experience they had trouble getting nominations for committees in general.

Galen DeGraff (BUSAD) asked Prof. Jakubecy whether there was a sense that the committee provided instructions for candidates.

Charles Sharpless (CHEM) asked what Prof. Jakubecy thought of the phrase "appropriate representations from academic areas". She replied that the Faculty Organization Committee encourages nominations from the University as a whole.

Angela Gossetti-Murrayjohn (CPR) asked Prof. Jakubecy whether she thought members of the Senate might encourage their colleagues in underrepresented divisions to nominate themselves. Prof. Jakubecy replied that this would be a wonderful idea.

Mary Rigsby (ENLS) asked Prof. Jakubecy whether she thought the fault lay more with candidates than with the Senate. Prof. Jakubecy said that she encouraged faculty members to nominate themselves.

Charles Whipkey (ENVS-GEOL) asked Prof. Sharpless about the language of the handbook. Prof. Sharpless said the text says voters are encouraged to cast their votes in a manner to ensure equitable representation.

Nabil al-Tikriti (HIST) asked whether someone from the sciences had run and lost. The answer was yes.

Stephen Fuller (FSP) thanked the representatives from Faculty Organization Committee and the Promotion and Tenure Committee for their presence.

New Business

Stephen Watkins (ENLS) was nominated and seconded to be the new Parliamentarian. Nobody else was nominated, and Prof. Watkins was elected by acclamation.

Budget Committee

Prof. Jakubecy talked about the proposal to create a budget committee. She said the Faculty Organization Committee was researching the idea and had already begun meeting with the administration.

Dean Barra said that the establishment of a budget committee will take some time. The administration is eager to meet with the core planning group and wishes the faculty to have information on and input into the overall budget process. She therefore needs the committee to

be created immediately and to be composed of five members from CAS and two from CGPS. She would like the committee to come from the Senate and solicited volunteers from the Senate. David Hunt (THEA), Galen DeGraff (BUSAD), Stephen Watkins (ENLS), Charles Sharpless (CHEM) and Kristin Marsh (At-Large) graciously volunteered to represent the Senate on the committee. Dean Barra thanked them.

Academic Affairs

Thomas Sheridan (H&PE) asked a question about the Academic Affairs proposal to change the manner in which GPA and probation status are calculated. He wondered whether the issue of retention had been discussed during the committee's discussion. Leann Rotollun [sp] representing Academic Affairs said that they had been more concerned with students who had already done too much to lower their GPA. Prof. Sheridan asked for numbers, and Prof. Rotollun said they were small but that she did not have specifics.

Gary Stanton (HISPRES) asked whether if depts only offered courses in a single semester and the proposal had the effect of damaging students further, especially in smaller departments. Prof. Rotollun said that she had not seen this as a potential problem because the number of courses that were offered so infrequently was small.

Thomas Sheridan (H&PE) asked Prof. Rotollun whether she was making the proposal to change the suspension/probation policy based only on 15 or so students per year. Prof. Rotollun said that no, this was not the case: that GPA was only part of it. She said that things have changed as far as being able to alert students when they were in trouble much sooner, and that the proposal was an attempt to bring policy in line with this. They're referring back to 1998, the last time such things had been restructured, when the committee response had been so far behind. Now that we can give instant response to students, we want to

Gary Stanton (HISPRES) asked Prof. R about on page 9, where new language said "A student placed on probation is required" to check in with Academic Services, but now it says is "expected". Why was this changed? Prof. R said that there had previously been no punishment for not checking in and that "required" was thus meaningless.

Thomas Sheridan (H&PE) asked about transfer students and their treatment; they, as well as freshmen with AP credit, are penalized by this change. Why haven't we addressed this? Prof. R replied that her concerns were soothed as numbers were crunched. Students who come in with transferred credit have a GPA calculated only on how they do once they get to UMW. The concern is that students show improvement based on all the credits they transfer in. The idea is to avoid having them drop so low that they can't catch up. Prof. Sheridan thought that this implied that this was holding native UMW students to a higher standard than transfer students.

Stephen Watkins (ENLS) introduced a motion to postpone in order to discuss the matter further. This motion passed.

Stephen Fuller (FSP) mentioned the new faculty reception on Friday 08 September.

Dean Barra reiterated the September 15 deadline for submission of Freshman Seminar proposals.

Stephen Watkins (ENLS) motioned to adjourn. This motion was seconded and passed by acclamation. The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 pm.