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Minutes, Arts & Sciences Executive Committee Meeting, Thursday, January 22, 2009

Arts & Sciences Executive Committee

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**Approved Minutes
Executive Committee
January 22, 2009**

Membership Present: Barry Levis (acting chair), Susan Libby, Wendy Brandon, Marissa Germain, President Lewis Duncan, Provost Roger Casey, Paul Harris, Dean Laurie Joyner, Mike Gunter (acting secretary).

I. Call to order—The meeting was called to order at 12:38 PM.

II. Approval of Minutes from:

November 4, 2008
November 13, 2008
December 4, 2008

All three sets of minutes were approved with amendments to spelling errors as well as an adjustment to the 11/4 minutes discussion on tenure and promotion regulations within the faculty bylaws. Specifically, Dean Joyner asked striking reference to “isolated incident dealt with by a Dean requires further investigation or changes may be brought up late” as this did not occur.

III. Announcements

January 29 Faculty meeting will begin at 12:45pm because of Walk of Fame ceremony commemorating Annie Russell along with the work of Jennifer Cavanaugh and her student Joseph Bromfield.

IV. Old Business

A. none

V. New Business

A. Finance and Service—resolution for faculty seats on Board*

Provost Casey stated the data collected by Finance & Service did not support the argument for membership on the Board in “keeping with precedent established by both peer and aspirant institutions.” He also cautioned that the Board would not take this faculty proposal seriously as such. President Duncan added he could not support the resolution on behalf of the faculty as it stands now, that he believed non-voting participation on the Education Committee would be useful whereas a

faculty trustee would not. He added the faculty, of course, may proceed along this route if they wish, but that he believes it will backfire. Gunter pointed out that the record of peer and aspirant institutions is indeed mixed when it comes to faculty membership on the Board as a whole, roughly half and half. He also contended that the data showed these same institutions overwhelmingly include various Board committee memberships for their faculty. Duncan noted the Board already regularly invites faculty to present before their Education committee and cautioned that not all this committee's business would be appropriate, i.e. the final faculty tenure approval stage takes place during the February meeting. He then added there could be a danger of counter expectations by the Board and that they might want to get involved in such areas as determining if a 12-1 faculty-to-student ratio was preferred to a 10-to-1.

Levis changed gears a bit and suggested changing the word "propose" in the resolution to "request." Brandon also asked about the language, specifically the phrase "to enhance efficiency and communication," stating it took a confrontational tone. She then asked about how faculty membership would be determined, if that would go through the existing faculty governance structure. Gunter responded that Finance & Service had discussed that and hoped to make such a connection, but after consulting Don Davison believed the precise structure could be worked out afterwards – if in fact the faculty decided they wanted to proceed with the membership request.

Levis then asked if the Exec Committee wanted to take this resolution to the faculty if it was doomed to failure. Duncan said he does not want an adversarial connection. Brandon added there seems like an agenda here. Duncan further added the minutes of the Board are open anyway, except for its Executive Committee. Joyner suggested perhaps someone from the executive committee should go with Gunter back to Finance and explain the committee's misgivings. Duncan suggested if the real goal was to get someone into the Education Committee meeting this February he can ask the Board to invite two faculty members. He then recommended at the very least that these faculty prep themselves by getting the minutes of the Board beforehand. He also asked for advice on what to do about Crummer and Holt, noting the Education Committee addresses more than Arts & Sciences.

Gunter then asked Duncan if there were any committees other than the Education Committee he thought it appropriate for faculty to request participation. Duncan stated Business and Finance could be one, but that they mostly discuss endowment issues. Brandon then asked if the Board committees are static over time in their approach. Duncan replied that Education is the most agile although this can vary as committees' agendas tend to be dominated by the chairs. He then added Trustees are not there as generalists. They bring special expertise and experience to the Board. When an opening occurs we look for specific talents.

Harris replied to Duncan's question as to whether it would be good idea to invite two faculty to the Education committee for this February. Harris said he was not sure, that he liked the idea of an invitation but that faculty might not think that was a good idea.

Levis suggested a colloquium on the topic so that faculty as a whole could hear this discussion and avoid the mentality of those that would storm the gates like the Bastille. Duncan agreed saying he was particularly anxious this not happen, that it does far more harm than good. He said he would much rather have faculty and trustees promote each others' roles. Joyner noted that invitations were routinely extended. Casey added Andrew Czekaj's position is to bring faculty in, that Thom Moore has presented along with Carol Lauer, and others for curricular review. Before the Board wanted to hear about technology in the classroom, particularly with Bush 120 so that we brought in faculty for three to four minute presentations but mostly discussion over the next hour. A student summary of here's what's on their agenda has been done. Faculty could do the same.

Brandon asked again what dominated the agenda here, that we should not be combative. Casey stated he believed the debate on faculty merit stirred the pot. This arose on the floor of faculty meeting with a request by Charlie Rock. Duncan suggested sending back to Finance & Service was not a good idea. He recommended it go to another committee for consideration. In the meantime, he asked for recommendation on whom to ask to go to meet with the Education Committee of the Board. Harris then asked if we had an agenda of the Board yet. Casey responded that the set agenda he knew of was tenure and promotion, a report from SGA, and other issues Andrew Czekaj wants to consider, i.e. one of these is a carry over from last time regarding changes in the Olin library.

Harris then asked whom would the faculty send in February. Finance & Service does not seem to be good idea, he said. Should it be someone from AAC and another faculty standing committee, the chairs perhaps? Levis then recommended that the chairs of Student Life and AAC represent the faculty in February, but that it was not appropriate for them to take part in the tenure discussions.

At this point, Levis suggested we need to find a topic to discuss at the next faculty meeting as this resolution is not ready. He asked Duncan if he would speak on the financial situation of the college. Duncan replied he was happy to, and a conversation about the current economic state of the college ensued. Duncan explained we will be asking the Board for 4% raises for faculty, but that he cannot find any other school doing more than 2%, adding some are doing 0%. Trustees will want to know why we should increase tuition 5.25% in this context.

Casey then expressed frustration with the sentiment that this process is a mystery among the faculty. He explained transparency exists, that the Planning and Budget Committee, which has faculty representation by Don Davison and Mike Gunter, has heard the exact presentation which will go to the Board. He further

added that it is easy to make available minutes to the Board committee meetings. He would be glad to sit down and share those.

Duncan asked what the preference would be for the Trustee meeting this February then. Would the Exec Committee recommend he ask for two faculty participants in the Education committee this February? He should also ask a student and Crummer faculty if so, Duncan added. Germain explained that the SGA focus was on building connections with Trustees. Levis asked for a motion on how to proceed. Germain made a motion that the Finance and Service resolution be forwarded to other committees for consideration, namely AAC and Student Life as previously suggested. She also agreed with Joyner that sending a Exec Committee representative to Finance and Service would be helpful. Brandon then added a recommendation that structure of representation be added to the proposal to detail how representatives should be selected. Levis disagreed. Joyner did as well, noting past precedent was to go in stages. The motion passed.

Levis then returned to the question of what to do with the next faculty meeting. He suggested we cancel it or have the President talk about the College's financial status. Levis believed this would be helpful to ease fears such as those circulated in end of the world doomsday memos. Casey reiterated his point that faculty should not feel left out of the process here. He explained how the Planning and Budget Committee has done a responsible job, that led by two VPs it includes the president of the faculty, the finance and service committee head, and the Dean of the Faculty. The issue at stake, he added, seems to be dealing with promoters of paranoia.

Levis suggested some faculty are not in this camp; they are simply concerned. Brandon said we need to have more committee reports to let faculty know what is going on. Duncan said he was more than happy to give a report. He said the general consensus was that we are better off than others. He could talk about the process we are going through and added Don knows as much about the process as I do. Joyner noted every day people are watching on the news about yet another institution in trouble. She said she was willing to help present if needed too.

Duncan then said he would ask to schedule more colloquia this semester like in the fall. His original intention for this year was to treat these talks more like a fireside chat but that he believed the economy was dominating people's minds. Casey said along those lines the institution needs to culturally look to those who know what is going on. That's what we need to reinforce. Germain said she was surprised there were no faculty reports to aid in this process. Joyner replied she thought there were, that actually that was the entire intent of Don's presidency: to do regular faculty committee reports on their business. My read of past minutes, she said, is we are doing that more, but that this past year has been dominated by big issues.

Duncan suggested perhaps one of the weaknesses here is the Committee as a Whole approach. Perhaps a Senate would be better. He added he will be coming out with a “state of the union” letter soon and that this letter will note this is a time of caution, not panic. Levis then said we would have the faculty meeting agenda changed to accommodate time for Duncan to address the faculty.

Conversation then turned to an email Levis sent Joyner on staffing Honors and RCC. Levis requested future position hires be tied to contributions to the greater good of the college. Joyner responded unfortunately some departments are asserting they are going to concentrate on their majors. This goes against everything this faculty is working towards with curriculum renewal, she added. Libby asked what about other programs like Women’s Studies and African American Studies? Casey said in past we talked about allowing no more than five courses in the same prefix. Duncan added he has seen this debate at other institutions and relayed a story about a history department that lamented the general world history knowledge of its students. This department wanted additional positions to meet this demand because otherwise faculty would be teaching outside their expertise. Harris pointed out that some departments are stretched thin here, that the Psychology department has difficulty meeting staffing needs for their major and outside needs. Levis added the frustration I have is with people that want to teach in Honors or RCC but are told by their department that they have to serve their major. Joyner noted after all we are educating toward a degree at Rollins College, not just in the major. Duncan agreed this was a key point, one that simply more staffing could not answer.

***Finance and Services Resolution:**

To enhance efficiency and communication, and in keeping with precedent established by both peer and aspirant institutions, the Arts & Sciences Faculty propose the addition of two members of full time teaching Faculty to the Board of Trustees as well as at least one faculty representative on relevant standing committees of the Board.

VI. Adjournment—The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Gunter
Acting Secretary