

1-24-2008

## Minutes, Arts & Sciences Executive Committee Meeting, Thursday, January 24, 2008

Arts & Sciences Executive Committee

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## **Executive Committee of the Arts and Sciences Faculty Minutes for January 24, 2008**

Members Present: Don Davison, Rick Vitray, Paul Harris, Sharon Carnahan, Wendy Brandon, Lewis Duncan

Visitors: Debra Wellman, Jim Eck, David Remington,

- I. Call to order – Davison called the meeting to order at 12:35 PM
- II. Approval of Executive Committee Minutes from December 4, 2007 – The minutes were approved as corrected
- III. Old Business

1. AAC—request to create Department of Classical Studies

Carnahan reported that AAC voted against changing from program to classics. Brandon asked if there will be something in the by-laws. Carnahan noted that there already is and the AAC decision follows the by-laws. Davison added that both last year and this year PS and EC have interpreted the by-laws to forbid hiring a tenure track position into a program. Converting a program to a department was not a good idea in this case. Procedurally, this is no longer a governance issue unless there is a dramatic change in circumstance. Duncan asked whether AAC turning down the request should end the process. Since we act as a faculty as a whole, a committee generally does not have the power to stop a new department. Davison noted that creating a department would be a by-law change. Brandon stated that there is some confusion about the process for creating a new department. Davison agreed he will refer the by-law issue to Professor Newman for further study. Carnahan inquired if AAC or PSC vote against a new department does that prevent the issue from going to the floor. Davison commented that even by-law changes may be presented on the floor with proper notification and that it's apparently possible to create a department without a curriculum.

- IV. New Business

1. Merit Task Force

Davison reported that the merit task force has been constituted and the members are Susan Libby, Richard James, Ryan Musgrave, David Charles, Robert Smither, and Kathryn Norsworthy. The committee has met several times with Barry Levis, Don Davison and Laurie Joyner in attendance. They have interviewed 10 colleges and are creating a report. However, the report will not be done by Jan 31 consequently he proposes that the Jan 31 faculty meeting be cancelled. Davison proposed the following revised schedule: During week of Feb 4, the task force will be distributed to faculty. On

Feb 12 in the common hour the task force will meet with faculty to share information. Department chairs will meet on Feb 14 to continue the discussion if necessary. There will be a special faculty meeting on Feb 19 dedicated to the merit issue. At that meeting the question will be put to a vote. Trustees meet Feb 21-21. The all college meeting will be on Feb 26. The next regular faculty meeting will be Feb 28. A presentation on the strategic initiative will be on March 4 from 3:30-5:00.

Carnahan commented that AAC has an upcoming proposal that all courses that count for more than one hour and are graded must be taught under a department. Davison noted that this issue can be placed on the Feb 28 faculty meeting agenda. The revised schedule was approved.

## 2. Budget update—Finance and Service

Vitray reported on the latest meeting of the Budget and finance committee. Three issues have arisen since the last meeting in the fall: increased health care premiums, increased cost in the tuition remission program, and a 100 student short fall in Holt enrollment. Duncan commented that the short fall is on the order of 1% of the total budget and that although the budget is still in balance these three issues will likely require a draw down of the contingency fund.

## 3. PSC

Brandon commented that there is an issue with on line evaluations in that faculty don't know how to frame the data and how to make use of it. There should be an ongoing training program on how to use and understand this data. This task is beyond the scope of PSC. Also, there should be research on how on-line evaluations relate to gender and race inequities. Further, the cumbersome data downloading should be streamlined but IT needs oversight to do this. Harris commented that the measuring system has overrun the capacity of the users to use it which is not uncommon. He opined that a tutorial should be created for the faculty. He also noted that this would help to ensure that FEC's use of the data will be consistent everyone else's use. Carnahan noted that using numeric data to make these kinds of decisions requires a cultural shift. Harris added that the on-line evaluation is only one source of information. It is not peer review. It is not a decision machine. It is just one piece of the information about a faculty member.

Brandon pointed out that this is a pressing issue. The tutorial materials have to be put somewhere, perhaps someone to answer faculty questions. Faculty need to be informed on how to use the data with other information. Harris noted that a bigger issue beyond the new form is how can we better assess teaching. Davison stated that an expert is needed to develop training material on how to effectively use the data. Brendan agreed and noted that this has to happen each year as new people come in and membership in FEC rotates. Davison asked that Brandon and Harris get together and formulate specific recommendations on steps needed to develop faculty support for on-line evaluations.

Brandon asked when the family leave policy should be brought to the Executive committee? Davison commented that it should go before the Budget and Planning

committee before going to the faculty. He asked whether it had been reviewed by the human resources department and Brandon replied that it had.

c) Brandon reported that about \$93,000 for 23 Critchfield grants have been asked for this year. Current funding \$68,000. How do we improve faculty development without increased funding. Duncan added that although he is more than happy to respond for a year or two from the presidents budget we do not want the presidents office to supplement this long term. It needs to be on budget. There is an accepted policy that discretionary funds will not be used in any continuing way. He noted that trustees have questioned expenses for lab expenditures and costs for Cornell scholars showing up more than three years in a row. Harris commented that last year not very many people got the full funding and PSC still had to go to the president. He added that the proposals were remarkably good. Davison asked whether the Cornell innovation grants were supposed to be sustainable? Duncan responded that they have received \$300,000 this year and will get more funding in the next two years. His task as president is to find a permanent endowment to continue the program beyond three years. He noted that it was never intended that the grants would be forever. Davison commented that the initial information did not make that clear. Brandon asked whether there was an advisory role for PSC regarding these proposals. Duncan expressed the hope that there would be an oversight committee primarily composed of faculty. Davison directed Brandon to have PSC track the amount of money granted over the last three or four years and provide that data to Dean Joyner to present to the Budget and Planning committee. Eck pointed out a Critchfield grant that relates to student outcomes could qualify for support from money designated to advance the QEP. Brandon agreed to review the proposals to see if some of them fall in this category

V. Adjournment 1:50 pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Richard Vitray  
Acting Secretary