

Faculty Senate Minutes for Jan. 28, 2009 College of Journalism and Communications

The meeting was called to order at 12:35 p.m. by Chair Mary Ann Ferguson.

Members present were: Johanna Cleary, Julie Dodd, Mary Ann Ferguson, Robyn Goodman, Bridget Grogan, Mike Mitrook, Henri Pensis, and Kim Walsh-Childers. Also in attendance: John Wright, Linda Hon, Tom Krynski and Churchill Roberts.

Acceptance of the minutes from the Dec. 11, 2008 meeting was postponed until the next meeting.

T & P Report – Kim Walsh-Childers

Walsh-Childers noted that the committee is working to resolve issues surrounding Article 19, the tenure and promotion provisions of the UFF contract. She said the University says the individual deadlines are up to the individual unit to determine. It is the responsibility of the department chair to get outside evaluator letters assembled by the time they are needed. She noted that the official policy says the evaluators must only be asked to evaluate research and scholarship. However, she noted that it is important to present the context in which the candidate was expected to perform (i.e. if the candidate was asked to prepare six new classes when the typical expectation is three.) Interim Associate Provost Angel Kwolek-Folland advised that it would be appropriate for the department chair to address the candidate's scope of teaching assignments in the letter to evaluators. Walsh-Childers said that she expected there would be a revision proposed for the standard letter as a result.

Recommendations from the Constitution Committee for voting on amendments to the College Constitution – Robyn Goodman

Goodman reported the Constitution Committee will soon propose a date for an informational meeting for the faculty to explain its proposed resolution on the voting process. Their recommendation is that we follow Roberts Rules of Order, which requires a voice vote followed by a show of hands. She said that the current Constitution requires that we vote on the new Constitution through a mail ballot. (They are still determining whether this requires that ballots simply be returned in a double envelope or if an assembly has to be called for ballots to be cast.)

Budget Discussion – Led by Mary Ann Ferguson

Ferguson passed out seven documents related to the University's budget situation. The documents included the budget timeline from President Machen's website (<http://budget.president.ufl.edu/2009/01/20/projected-budget-timeline/>); Provost Joe Glover's Letter to administrators outlining how proposed cuts should be prioritized (also found on the website); the UF Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement related to layoff and recall issues; a description of the UF Faculty Senate Budget Council; a copy of the

College of Education's Guiding Principles for Budget Decision Making; the Faculty Senate's Budget Principles and Comment; and the UF Constitution Committee's working draft regarding changes to units.

Ferguson asked the Senate to express an opinion on what its input should be in budget cut decisions. She said that her preference was that the Senate and the Budget and Long-range Planning Committee suggest guiding principles rather than specific budget cuts, but asked for feedback about that from senate members.

Ferguson asked Dean John Wright to update the Senate about the latest on the budget cuts.

Report from John Wright

John Wright said that if the budget cuts did end up being 10%, it would equal \$909,000 for the COJC and that we would be "deep into a layoff situation." He noted that with first two earlier cuts this would be a total of 20.26%. Wright also noted that before our earliest reduction, 94% of the College's state budget funds were in salaries. With the previous two reductions, this new cut will be leaving little choice but to cut people. He added that administrators have been told to prepare contingency plans based on cuts of 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10%.

Wright noted that the College has some unique issues facing it, including where those holding titles such as "assistant in" and "associate in" fit on the potential layoff hierarchy. He noted that he is talking with HR, the UF general counsel and the provost to determine that.

Wright noted that the Provost has said that cuts should be made so that they have the least impact on student credit hour (SCH) productivity and doctoral education. He said he is concerned that "more and more will be heaped on the backs of fewer faculty." Wright noted that the administration has asked that the decisions be made in an atmosphere of transparency.

Wright said that he does not anticipate that the College plan will "take out a department because we would lose more than we would gain" and that we have to think strategically in making cuts. He also noted that he believes it is very important to put someone in charge of distance education – serving both on and off-campus students – but that it would have to be someone with a teaching assignment. He noted that it was important to maintain junior/senior student credit hours during this process. He added that the telecom department is setting up a Media Studies track, which could be very helpful in generating SCHs.

Churchill Roberts said that he believed there was a perception problem when the University is continuing to build new buildings and hire new faculty at the same time it is laying off existing faculty. Wright responded that the seeming contradiction was due to

the fact that the legislature had allocated money to lower student-faculty ratios and had refused to rescind that decision even in light of other budget needs. He also noted that President Machen has said that there will not be across-the-board cuts, but that “some units could be cut 100% and others cut 0%.”

Tom Krynski asked if, when we consider layoffs, we will note the effect on the curriculum and the rest of the department? Wright said that he will have to consider that within the confines of the limitations with which he is working. For example, the College cannot hire adjuncts to teach classes for laid-off faculty for a period of two years after the layoff. (Graduate students can be used to teach these courses.)

Bridget Grogan asked if any colleges are considering salary reductions in lieu of personnel cuts? Wright said everything has been discussed including furloughs, salary reductions, giving back sick leave, shutting down operations for a period of time, etc. but those are not likely to be solutions.

Wright said that the College’s specific budget cut proposals will be posted online by the third week in March. Ferguson suggested that someone be appointed to track comments and questions that are posted about our College on the University’s budget website and respond as appropriate.

Wright noted that there are some “frozen salaries” that will help reduce the amount that needs to be cut, but it is unclear what that will be. He also noted that an announcement will soon be made regarding putting someone in charge of the Student Services Office and that the arrangement is different than having an eventual position of Undergraduate Dean.

Ferguson asked if it would be possible for the Budget Committee to meet with Wright to come up with recommendations that the Senate could then review at a subsequent meeting. She also noted that the survey on the budget cutting process from the Academic Policy Council will have to be filled out by the Senate by March 18th.

Ferguson noted that, given the tense atmosphere in the College over this situation and the difficult economic situations we’re all facing, we should all make an effort to be collegial and show support for each other.

Meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Johanna Cleary