

College Faculty Senate –Minutes for Feb. 18, 2009
College of Journalism and Communications

The meeting was called to order a 12:32 p.m. by Mary Ann Ferguson.

Members in attendance: Johanna Cleary, Julie Dodd, Mary Ann Ferguson, Robyn Goodman, Bridget Grogan, Mike Mitrook, Henry Pensis, Kim Walsh-Childers, and Mike Weigold.

Others in attendance: Linda Hon, Ted Spiker, Cindy Hill

Minutes of Feb. 10, 2009 meeting – Hon corrected the language regarding Teams and USPS layoffs. Motion by Walsh-Childers, seconded by Weigold. Approved.

Constitution Committee Voting Discussion: Robyn Goodman handed out Article 9 of the Tentative Collective Bargaining Agreement between the United Faculty of Florida and The University of Florida Board of Trustees. She noted that Section 9.1.a gives faculty members the right to vote by secret ballot on bylaws. As a result, the Constitution Committee recommended that faculty members be allowed to vote by secret ballot on the College’s proposed Constitution. Goodman noted those who wanted to sign their ballots for public record were free to do so, but no one would be required to do so. It was recommended that a double-envelope system be used in order to keep track of who had voted and ensure that faculty members only vote once. Ballots would be put in faculty members’ mailboxes with a timeline and procedure for returning them.

In light of the new Collective Bargaining Agreement understanding, Goodman proposed rescinding the motion from the prior meeting that called for following Robert’s Rules and voting by voice vote on the Constitution. Motion was unanimously approved.

Linda Hon asked if language would be added to the Constitution to reflect the change in how votes would be conducted. Goodman stated that the Constitution Committee will meet next week, review the Constitution and make sure any incorrect language regarding voting is eliminated from the document. The final version of the Constitution will be circulated before the vote.

Budget Committee Discussion: Ted Spiker, Budget Committee Chair, reported that the committee has met to talk about its role and had also met with John Wright to discuss the Budget Committee’s role in the College. Committee members expressed a desire to create a survey to gauge what types of budget cuts faculty members might support in lieu of layoffs, such as salary reductions or furloughs. Spiker said this would provide a measure of support that could possibly be used after the proposed budget cuts are made public to offer alternatives or provide “push back” to administrators. Spiker said the Budget Committee would be happy to draft a short survey if the Senate thought that was a good idea.

Walsh-Childers thought it would be a good idea to have a sense of what the College’s faculty thinks about budget cut options other than layoffs. Cleary said it would be a good way to collect quantifiable input.

Ferguson pointed out that John Wright was concerned about such a process and wondered if it could put the College in a difficult position with UF Administration. Ferguson cautioned that the College should be thoughtful about its actions and the consequences.

Walsh-Childers suggested the survey might be worded to suggest willingness to accept certain options rather than a desire to have such options implemented.

Hon pointed out that furloughs would not be an option because that would only create a one-time savings rather than a recurring savings.

Dodd noted that the budget cuts are the biggest threat the College has seen. And she thought the faculty should be able to say something about being open to alternatives.

Ferguson said the union has asked faculty members to call lawmakers, as the most effective way to get their point across.

Weigold pointed out that survey results are not normally a way to communicate with administrators and wondered why the faculty would employ this option now. Would faculty members be clear about what they were voting for? He said it would be difficult to craft a survey that might be representative in two or three weeks. But the results would be on the record. He suggested proceeding cautiously.

Spiker said the faculty is most frustrated by the possibility of new hires coming in as other faculty members are fired. He noted that he wasn't sure the survey was the best answer, but thought there needed to be a way to collectively convey the faculty's position.

Goodman said the legislature is forcing the issue, not UF, and suggested that a message to the legislature might be a good option.

Dodd said the Senate might be more informed next week after department meetings and after the next UF Senate meeting. The College's Senate might be in a better position to decide next week.

Spiker withdrew the motion to put together a faculty survey about alternatives to layoffs. He said he would attend next week's Senate meeting to further discuss the idea.

Weigold made a motion for Senate representatives to meet with their department faculties and report the sense of faculty members to the Senate. Weigold's motion was seconded by Walsh-Childers and approved.

Ferguson reviewed the agenda for the upcoming faculty meeting and passed out the minutes from the last faculty meeting. The faculty meeting agenda was approved and the meeting was adjourned at 1:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Bridget Grogan