

College of Journalism and Communications
Faculty Senate Meeting
Minutes for February 25, 2009

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

Members present were: Johanna Cleary, Julie Dodd, Mary Ann Ferguson, Bridget Grogan, Mike Mitrook, Henri Pensis, and Kim Walsh-Childers.

Others in attendance: John Wright, Linda Hon, Sandra Dickson, Spiro Kiouisis, Cindy Hill, Cara Pilson, Michael Leslie, Jon Morris, Cynthia Morton, John Sutherland,

Minutes of Feb. 18, 2009 meeting—Motion by Walsh-Childers, seconded by Dodd. Approved.

Update on Constitution Committee

Ferguson reported that the Constitution Committee was reviewing the Constitution for presentation for full faculty vote. They should have the final version of the Constitution and the ballots ready and to us by Wednesday, March 4 with the voting deadline being March 20. The vote will be by the double envelope method with faculty members having the option to sign their ballot if they so desire.

Review of Departmental Meetings on the Sense of the Faculty Concerning Alternatives to Layoffs:

Julie Dodd and Kim Walsh-Childers presented a review of the Journalism Department's discussion of the issue and presented the Senate with their list of questions and concerns:

- 1). The college should hold a town hall meeting to include our undergraduate and graduate students in the discussion of budget cuts. Dodd noted that the College of Engineering just held one of these and 150 students attended.
- 2). The student enrollment cap in Journalism is 400 and yet we have more than 500 enrolled in the program. We are over-enrolled in the undergraduate program. Should we use this budget crisis as a time to review this and put us in line with the University's goals?
- 3). Should we raise the GPA to reduce undergraduate enrollment? The issue of grade inflation may minimize this as a restricting factor.
- 4). How can we make informed budget suggestions without a copy of the current year's budget? Also, why can we hire in one area when we must cut elsewhere?

Spiro Kiouisis mentioned that Public Relations had not met but the question of hiring while in the midst of layoff was one of the informal discussions he had with some in Public Relations.

Jon Morris spoke for Advertising. They have lost four faculty members and are about to lose another. The Department was concerned about the increased workload and the loss of expertise.

Johanna Cleary detailed the extensive meeting that the Telecommunication Department held that produced extensive conversation. They expressed strong opposition to layoffs and the layoff order and wanted more information on the details of other cut options. John Wright attended their meeting and was able to give the department new information. The Department also believed that the Faculty Senate should take up an advocacy role and should reach out to other UF College Senates to look at the ways they are dealing with the layoff and funding issues.

Cleary then presented this motion from the Telecommunication Department:

We request that the University of Florida's college of Journalism and Communications cease hiring new faculty until the fate of our colleagues in danger of being laid off has been resolved.

Grogan seconded the motion and considerable discussion ensued. Morris mentioned that while he was sympathetic with the intent of this resolution that their department has lost colleagues and they need to be able to replace them. A motion like this would seriously damage the Advertising Department.

Wright mentioned that if we don't use the money earmarked for new hires by the legislature from the tuition differential funding source we might not have other funding from this source offered to us. He pointed out that if we use it for the purposes laid out in the legislation then we get the additional dollars. If we can't use it for new hires, we don't get it for use elsewhere in the budget. He also mentioned that any new money that may come to the University of Florida from the increase in tuition that has just passed through a Florida Senate Committee does not carry the same restrictions and will be money that can be spent anywhere in our budget.

Wright then apologized for not getting the budget proposal information finished by the original deadline but hopes to get it to us as soon as possible. He also mentioned that he is working to set up a town hall forum for the School of Journalism and Communications but that it will probably occur after the spring break.

Kiousis cautioned against adoption of the motion because of the negative effect that it could have if the College of Journalism and Communications gave back positions during this budget crisis.

Walsh-Childers mentioned that she wished this had come up prior to today's meeting so that each of the departments could have had the chance to discuss this issue and hoped the motion could be tabled. Others in the audience agreed and Walsh-Childers made a motion to postpone to time certain the Telecommunication Department's motion. It was seconded by Dodd and the Motion to Postpone to time certain was approved.

Pensis reported that the unassociated faculty hasn't met yet. There were some informal discussion and most felt that the Faculty Senate would perform an advisory role in these circumstances and members weren't sure how much could be done by the Faculty Senate in this budget crisis.

Budget Cuts

John Wright quickly reviewed the complexities he has faced in developing the budget proposal and said he will try to get it to us as soon as possible. He is trying to produce a complete and open document but because of the budget fluidity he has had difficulty matching figures from last year to this year. Endowment losses, prior budget cuts, an increase in graduate stipend have all altered the figures. He hopes to finish the document sometime next week.

He mentioned that there are some good signs—those being the stimulus package, more legislative support for tuition increases and President Machen's mention that he wouldn't rule out the use of bridge money if the situation improves. He updated the current timeline for us. The budget plans must be in President Machen's hands by April 1. The legislature should have a plan in place by the end of May but it might not take into consideration the stimulus package. There could be a special session that meets in July to factor in those funds.

Activity Summary

Ferguson did a quick review of items for Faculty Senate consideration. Those items include the proposed town hall meeting and its dates; the budget spread sheet, and the need to communicate with our legislators.

The meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Henri Pensis