

Minutes
Faculty Council Meeting
Wallace Hall

Date: April 29, 2008

Time: 3:02 pm

Members Present: Dr. Scout Blum (T)
Dr. Cindy McCoy (T)
Dr. Sam Shelton (T)
Dr. Steven Taylor (T)
Dr. David Hollingsworth (PC)
Dr. Dianne Eppler (UC)
Ms. Alyssa Martin (M)
Dr. Dick Williams (D)
Mr. Jim Davis (T)
Dr. Al Glover (T)
Dr. Nimol Podder (T)
Dr. Bud Borders (D)
Dr. Jim Ryan (PC)
Dr. Catherine Allard (T)
Dr. Mark Walker (T)
Dr. Chan Roark (T)
Dr. Frank Hammonds (T)
Dr. Sue Hayden (T)
Dr. Jeanne Wright (T)

Members Absent: Dr. Sandra Harris (M)
Dr. Timothy Buckner (T)
Dr. Allen Dennis (T) – with notice
Dr. James DeLoach (M)
Dr. Larry Fogelberg (T)
Dr. Tish Matuszek (M)
Dr. Andrew Creamer (T)

1. Roll was called by Dr. Shelton

2. The minutes of the March meeting were reviewed. Dr. Frank Hammonds should have been identified as absent with notice. Item 3(e) was amended to note that “a good faith effort be made for parity” rather than “parody.” Item 3(g) was amended to add “University” before “citizens.” Dr. Allard moved approval as amended; seconded by Dr. Hayden; approved.

3. Old Business

- a. Dr. Eppler had nothing to report from the Faculty Welfare Committee.
- b. Dr. Allard had nothing to report from the Academic Affairs Committee. Items for discussion needed to be deferred until the June meeting.
- c. Dr. Shelton presented the Elections Committee report. The Faculty Council elections were held on April 23, 2008 (8AM EST) until April 24, 2008 (8AM EST). The results had been certified as:

- Dr. Kris Kimbler, Montgomery At-Large, 3-year term
- Dr. Catherine Allard, Troy At-Large, 3-year term
- Dr. Scout Blum, College of Arts and Sciences, 3-year term
- Dr. Sam Shelton, College of Arts and Sciences, 3-year term
- Dr. Allen Jones, College of Arts and Sciences 2-year unexpired term
- Dr. John Jinright, College of Communication and Fine Arts, 3-year term
- Dr. Eddie Clark, College of Education, 3-year term
- Dr. Frank Browning, College of Education, 3-year term
- Dr. Cindy McCoy, College of Health and Human Services, 3-year term

Dr. Shelton did receive some comments about the online voting. Some people thought the length of voting should be more than 24 hours as some faculty do not routinely check their Troy email account, so some faculty did not know about the election and correct mistakes in their election information prior to the day of the election. Those faculty eligible to vote who had incorrect election information and were unable to use the online voting system were provided a paper ballot; four faculty members used the process of a paper ballot. A couple of University College faculty commented that they felt more a part of the election process than in previous College-run paper balloting. The level of participation system wide was about 20%, which Dr. Shelton understands is fairly consistent with previous elections. As a political scientist, he would like to see a higher rate of participation and perhaps the new online system will increase participation in the future. Dr. Shelton again thanked the Provost and Deans and Barbara Patterson for their help in developing the database for the online election process. Dr. Taylor noted that although the percentage of participation may be similar to past elections, he felt that the database developed for this election was probably more accurate than ones used in the past, thus the numbers of participants were probably better.

- d. Dr. McCoy had nothing to report from the Committee on Committees.
- e. Dr. Blum began the discussion on the draft copy of the Ad Hoc Committee Report on the Vision 2010 Recommendations on Faculty Salaries by asking if the Council had any questions about the report or would the Council prefer to proceed

to a vote on the report. Dr. Allard moved adoption of the Report and forwarding of the Report to the University administration; Dr. Taylor seconded the motion. Dr. McCoy asked when the report would be made available to the faculty at-large and whether that should occur prior to adoption and transmission to the administration. Dr. Allard withdrew her original motion and moved that the Report be distributed to the faculty for comment prior to Faculty Council adoption; Dr. Taylor withdrew his second of the first motion and seconded the new motion. Dr. Shelton asked whether it was anticipated that the Report would be amended based upon faculty comments and that this could delay transmission of the report to the administration, something that might delay consideration during the development of the 2008-2009 budget. Dr. Taylor suggested a new process: accept or reject the Report then decide disposition/distribution of the Report. Dr. Allard withdrew her motion, and Dr. Taylor withdrew his second. Dr. Taylor moved approval of the Report; Dr. Allard seconded the motion; approved. Dr. Williams moved distribution of the Report to the faculty for comment prior to transmission to the administration; Dr. Allard seconded the motion; approved. Dr. Blum will post the Report and send an email to the faculty; any comments will be discussed at the June meeting.

f. Dr. Blum received a letter from the Provost concerning the Academic Steering Committee's review of the Council's proposal that Troy University adopt a +/- grading system (attached). The memo stated that "it was agreed that there is inadequate evidence provided in the proposal to justify adopting the plus/minus system at this time" and that "notable areas needing more study include the costs and time for implementation, other university procedures and practices affected by the adoption, a plan of 'phase in' for the grading system, and the grading system's positive and negative impact on students and members of the faculty." Dr. Blum asked if there was a willingness by the Council to attempt to obtain the information requested. Dr. Allard asked whether this was "student driven" and should the students, such as the Student Government Association, do the work. She believed this was more a student issue than a faculty issue. Dr. Shelton, as the only current member of the Council that was a member of the Council subcommittee that produced the original report, explained that this was an issue that appeared at the time to have both faculty and student interest and support. A member of the Faculty Council raised the issue, and Dr. Taylor appointed the study committee. Dr. Shelton wondered whether the information requested was even possible given the fact that the Council has no money. Since the grading system could be perceived not as a student issue, a faculty issue, or an administration issue but a University issue, would the administration be willing to appoint a study committee that included all University components affected by the grading system to develop the information the Academic Steering Committee sought. He proposed that Dr. Blum approach the Provost with such a question. Since Dr. Roach was present at the meeting, Dr. Blum asked him if he felt such a study committee might be established. Dr. Roach noted that the Academic Steering Committee unanimously adopted its subcommittee's recommendation, so he did not see there was a lot of support for additional study. Dr. Smith, Interim

Dean for the College of Health and Human Services and a member of the Academic Steering Committee subcommittee, noted that the discussion revolved around the difficulty of instituting such a drastic change and the potential spillover effect as identified by Vickie Miles, University Registrar. The subcommittee did not believe that it was prudent to invest the money or effort on the implementation of a +/- system. Dr. Jeffrey, Vice Chancellor for Troy University-Dothan Campus, did not believe the report as presented included a defensible sample size from the University faculty and the Academic Steering Committee did not want to move something forward that did not appear to have adequate faculty input. He was also concerned that the added responsibilities for faculty might overwhelm them. In response to an earlier question from Dr. Roach as to the number of Alabama institutions that had adopted a +/- grading system, Dr. Shelton identified the University of Alabama, Samford University, and Southern Christian University. Dr. Blum suggested that the Council set the issue aside as there does not appear to be an interest or the resources within the Faculty Council to undertake the study required to respond to the Academic Steering Committee.

g. Dr. Blum thanked Drs. Buckner, Roarke, and Podder for their work on identifying the first recipient of the Faculty Council Excellence Award. The Committee selected Mr. Joseph McCall, an instructor in History, for this year's award. Dr. Podder noted that there were several good nominees and that Mr. McCall demonstrated strong teaching skills.

h. Drs. Taylor and Walker presented their proposals for amending the Faculty Council Constitution (attached). Dr. Blum noted that under the amendment process in the Constitution, the Council would only discuss the proposals at this meeting; any vote cannot occur until the June meeting.

The first proposed amendment would change the name of the Faculty Council to Faculty Senate.

The second amendment clarifies what a "vacancy" on the Council means and provides a procedure to remove and replace a Council member who fails to meet their responsibilities through excessive absences at Council meetings.

The third amendment clarifies the process for Council elections.

Dr. Blum opened discussion of the proposals.

Amendment One: Dr. Walker noted that with the exception of Auburn University which uses the name of University Senate, the other 10 or 11 institutions he checked use Faculty Senate. Dr. Blum explained that a proposal to make the name of the current Faculty Council the Faculty Senate was discussed. At the same time, the University Senate at another Alabama institution had generated some statewide controversy. It was perceived that a "Senate" might send the wrong

message to the Troy Administration, so the idea was dropped, although the “Council” name is often confusing because of the Graduate Academic Council and Undergraduate Academic Council. Dr. Taylor concurred and noted that faculty at Troy and other institutions often are not sure what is meant by a Faculty Council. The change in name to Faculty Senate would not mean a change in the current responsibilities or expectations.

Amendment Two: The proposed Amendment states that “after a member misses two meetings during the academic year” the process of notification and potential removal begins. Dr. Shelton asked whether the committee considered “two consecutive meetings” versus the current proposed “two meetings.” Dr. Taylor explained that since the Amendment does not make any removal from a position automatic but requires a vote of the Council after three missed meetings, it did not seem to matter whether the trigger of two missed meetings was consecutive or not. The greater concern was the missing of one-fifth or more of the Council’s meetings during the academic year. This past year the Council had a problem concerning what constituted a vacancy in a position, and this Amendment attempts to provide guidance. Dr. Podder asked whether the Amendment made a distinction between an absence with notice or just absent. Dr. Taylor explained that the thought of the committee was that there is no real distinction since the member is not available to provide information to the Council and to represent the member’s constituency. If Council members find that they are unable to fulfill their Council obligations, then the members should allow someone else to formally assume the responsibilities. Dr. Blum mentioned that since the first opportunity of the Council to formally remove a member does not occur until the member has missed three meetings, that member has already missed almost one-third of the Council meetings for the year. Dr. Shelton stated that he would believe that if a member is absent for something like a sabbatical, the Council would probably not consider that in the same way as a member who just does not attend the meetings.

Amendment Three: The Constitution states that the Council is notified about the need for an election by March 15 and then is suppose to complete an election by April 1. Obviously that cannot be realistically accomplished. The Amendment is designed to make the timetable more in line with reality, especially now that the Council has assumed more control over its elections. Newly elected members would be invited to attend the June meeting as part of the annual transition of membership. The newly elected members, however, do not vote as their terms do not officially begin until August 1. Dr. Allard agreed that this was a necessary change to allow the Council to conduct elections and still meet the Faculty Handbook requirement to notify the Executive Vice Chancellor/Provost. Dr. Taylor explained that the April 1 date was a holdover from the Troy Campus calendar when an election could probably be held in less time than a University-wide election can now

Dr. Blum will schedule a vote on these amendments for the June meeting. The vote will be whether to send the amendments to the faculty for ratification. Since the faculty election cannot occur quicker than 30 days after the Council vote, a University-wide election would undoubtedly not occur until after August 1.

4. New Business

a. Dr. Eleanor Lee, Dean of the Office of First-Year Studies, explained the new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The plan is part of the SACS reaffirmation for accreditation and attempts to enhance student learning by providing a carefully designed and focused course of action. The implementation of the Plan will take approximately five years. Chancellor Hawkins placed the QEP within the Office of First-Year Studies because he sees the need to begin the learning enhancement from the first day a student enters Troy University. The First-Year Advisory Board reviewed many proposals for the QEP. It is currently focused on the topic of "Creating a Culture of Reading." Since the majority of the more "traditional" students are enrolled at the Troy Campus, the program will begin there. A common-book experience was instituted for the fall of 2007 as a pilot project; the feedback from faculty and students was positive, so the pilot project will continue. An enhancement for fall 2008 will be the institution of a *New York Times* reading project for first year students. Students will receive a free copy of the *New York Times*, Monday through Friday. Faculty will be encouraged to utilize the *Times* in their classrooms. The QEP also plans to bring authors to campus. Other measures will also be encouraged and supported through QEP funding. Measurement of increased learning is a critical part of the process. The concept has been endorsed by the Academic Steering Committee and Chancellor Hawkins. A new QEP Implementation Committee will be established to work out the details of how the QEP concept will work University-wide. Dr. Roach affirmed Chancellor Hawkins' endorsement, and Chancellor Hawkins has scheduled this for discussion by the Cabinet. Dr. Lee noted that the proposals will be expensive, but the anticipated results are an increase in fulltime student enrollments, student retention, international perspective by students, civil involvement, and an understanding of the value of reading. Dr. Allard raised the environmental question of that volume of newspapers and their disposal and would online reading provide the same benefits. Dr. Lee explained that one aspect was to encourage students to read more sections of the newspapers which is less likely with an online version, plus the physical paper makes it easier to use the articles in classroom discussions. Since measurement and evaluation are essential components of the program, it is more difficult to monitor use of the online paper. However, any expansion to the eCampus students will by necessity be the online paper.

b. Dr. Blum recognized Dr. Roach, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost. Dr. Roach wanted to notify the Council of proposed changes to the Faculty Handbook (attached). All of the proposed changes had been reviewed by the University Review Committee and had been previously vetted through the appropriate

University committees. He did want to identify one significant change as it related to tenure. Tenure for University College faculty had been to the University College region. Dr. Roach had strongly recommended to Chancellor Hawkins, the Academic Steering Committee, and the Cabinet to remove the language limiting University College tenure to the region. Since the merger of Troy University, there has already been faculty mobility to meet the needs of the University. There should be no impact upon a faculty member's tenure status because of such transfers.

c. Dr. Blum noted that Dr. Fulmer had experienced a conflict with work for the SACS reaffirmation, so the agenda item concerning amendments to the Textbook Policy will be postponed until the June meeting.

5. Other Business

a. Dr. Blum noted that the last meeting of this academic year will be Wednesday, June 25, at 3:00 pm (CST). Newly elected members of the Council will be invited to attend.

b. Officers for the 2008-2009 academic year will be elected at the June meeting. Any nominations (self or otherwise) should be sent to Dr. Taylor.

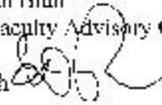
c. Dr. Blum hopes to host a Faculty Council gathering during the summer, and details will be sent when a schedule is finalized.

5. The meeting adjourned at 4:12 pm.

April 16, 2008

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Elizabeth Blum
President, Faculty Advisory Council

From: Ed D. Resch 

Subject: Plus / Minus Grading System Proposal



A subcommittee of the Academic Steering Committee selected to review the Faculty Council's proposal to adopt the plus/minus grading system at Troy University met on Tuesday, April 2, 2008. After a lengthy discussion of the proposal, it was agreed that there is inadequate evidence provided in the proposal to justify adopting the plus/minus system at this time. Notable areas needing more study include the costs and time for implementation, other university procedures and practices affected by the adoption, a plan of "phase in" for the grading system, and the grading system's positive and negative impact on students and members of the faculty. Empirical evidence for the proposal's primary tenets and a defensible sample size were also not present in the proposal.

The subcommittee's recommendation not to support the adoption of the plus/minus system at this time was unanimously approved by the Academic Steering Committee on April 15, 2008.

Proposed Amendment One

So as to bring the name of the assembly of Troy University Faculty into conformity with typical usage within academia, both regionally and nationwide, be it resolved that the Troy University Faculty Council will be called the Troy University Faculty Senate.

Throughout the document, and in subsequent amendments, the appropriate name change shall be substituted appropriately.

Proposed Amendment Two

To create a new Section 5 to Article IV of the Constitution which shall read:

So as to maintain adequate representation of the faculty, the Council shall have the power to remove a member of the Council who has repeatedly been absent from Council participation. After a member misses two meetings during the academic year, the President will provide notice of excessive absences to the member. On the subsequent absence of the member, the President shall have the power to make a motion of removal for the ejection of the member from the Council. If the motion has the support of 2/3rds of the Council, the member will be removed and the President will call a special election to fill the remaining time of the member's term.

Proposed Amendment Three

To change Article III, Section 2, Subsections C, E, and F of the Constitution to read as follows:

- C. Elections shall be completed prior to May 1 of each year.
- E. Elections of the Council will function as follows: By March 15, the Chair of the Election Committee will send out notices of vacancies in Council seats to the eligible general faculty. By May 1, the Chair of the Election Committee (in cooperation with the Deans) will distribute ballots, count and certify the elections, and present the results to the President. The President will then forward the results to the Executive Vice Chancellor/Provost and the Chancellor.
- F. ... Newly elected members meet in June prior to their term beginning.