

Minutes
Faculty Council Meeting
Wallace Hall

Date: November 27, 2007

Time: 3:06 PM

Members Present: Dr. Scout Blum (T)
Dr. Sam Shelton (T)

Dr. Sandra Harris (M)
Dr. David Hollingsworth (PC)
Ms. Alyssa Martin (Lib)
Dr. Steven Taylor (T)
Dr. Dick Williams (D)

Dr. Timothy Buckner (T)
Dr. Jim Davis (T)
Dr. Al Glover (T)
Dr. Nirmol Podder (T)

Dr. James DeLoach (M)
Dr. Larry Fogelberg (T)
Dr. Jim Ryan (PC)

Dr. Catherine Allard (T)
Dr. Mark Walker (T)

Dr. Andrew Creamer (T)
Dr. Frank Hammonds (T)

Members Absent: Dr. Bud Borders (D)
Dr. Allen Dennis (T)
Dr. Dianne Eppler (UC) w/Notice
Dr. Larry Fogelberg (T)
Dr. Susan Hayden (T)
Dr. Tish Matuszek (M)
Dr. Cindy McCoy (T) w/Notice
Dr. Chan Roark (T)
Dr. Jeanne Wright (T) w/Notice

1. Roll was called by Sam Shelton.

2. Dr. Blum advised the Council that former Council member, Dr. Lorraine McGrath, was admitted to the hospital the Sunday before in serious condition. No additional information was available at this time.

3. The minutes from the October meeting were reviewed. Dr. Bud Borders was mistakenly listed as absent, and “form” in Item 4(b)(i) should be “from.” Dr. Mark Walker moved approval as amended; Dr. Jim Davis seconded; approved.

4. Old Business

a. Dr. Eppler was absent but provided Dr. Blum with an update for the Faculty Welfare Committee. Dr. Eppler contacted Dr. Lee Vardaman, Human Resources Director, concerning the Council’s concern with the wording of the Americans with Disabilities Act standardized language for the syllabus and the contact information on the ADA Policy website. Dr. Vardaman advised Dr. Eppler that the link had been changed.

b. Dr. Allard presented the report of the Academic Affairs Committee.

i. Faculty Needs by College. Dr. Allard is still seeking a response from the College of Health and Human Services and she has emailed Dr. Roach on the best way to handle the College of Arts and Sciences considering its recent change in deans.

c. Dr. McCoy was absent but provided Dr. Blum with an update for the Committee on Committees. She also distributed an email to the Council members. Dr. McCoy reminded Council members who are also members of other University standing committees to please keep her informed of what those committees are doing so that the Council can know the many various issues confronting the University. Dr. Allard asked for guidance on the level of detail requested for these committee reports to Dr. McCoy.

5. New Business

a. Higher Education Partnership Information. Dr. Blum introduced Gordon Stone of the Higher Education Partnership who requested an opportunity to address the Council. Mr. Stone provided a summary of the 10-year history of the Partnership and its goal to provide a voice for higher education in Alabama. The status of higher education in Alabama has greatly improved during that time, but all members of higher education – administration, faculty, students, parents – need to remain vigilant so that the advances are not lost with a changing economy or changing state politics. Troy University has been a proactive member of the Partnership, and Mr. Stone is sure that Troy will maintain its leadership in the Partnership’s efforts. Mr. Stone reminded the Council that Higher Education Day is scheduled for March 6, 2008. He encouraged faculty to be active in the effort to inform state leaders of the important role of higher education in Alabama by

attending the Higher Education Day activities in Montgomery as well as encouraging students to participate.

b. Student Evaluations. Dr. Barron asked Dr. Blum for volunteers from the Faculty Council to serve on a permanent committee to provide continuous oversight of the new electronic student evaluation process and to suggest improvements. Dr. Blum asked that members interested to contact her.

c. Town Hall Meetings. Dr. Blum continued her presentation of issues presented to her during the early-fall semester town hall meetings she conducted at the Alabama campuses and the new blog. One issue of concern involved the prevalence of a Protestant Christian prayer at university events – most notably the football games and commencement – is not indicative of the growing diversity of the student body and faculty, especially international students at the Troy Campus. Dr. Blum was recently advised that a student had filed a complaint with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and that the ACLU had contacted the University. Dr. Blum understood that the University's response is that the University will comply with the 1971 Supreme Court decision in *Lemon v. Kurtzman* and its 3-prong test for compliance with the First Amendment by government institutions. This will be monitored to see what happens.

d. Scheduling Issues. Dr. Blum has been contacted by faculty from some campuses concerning the new 2007-2008 system-wide academic schedule.

i. The Montgomery and Phenix City campuses went from an 8-week schedule to a 9-week schedule, two per the semester at the Troy Campus. The result was an increase in teaching time without additional pay or recognition of the time demands of research for teaching competency and tenure and promotion.

ii. Undergraduate faculty in eCampus now have a teaching load of eleven courses – two courses in terms 1, 2, 3, and 4, and three courses in term 5. Since Term 5 falls during the summer, a time with generally a lighter student demand, the additional course availability might actually mean some courses to not acquire enough students to “make” and the faculty might lose compensation.

Dr. Blum referred these items to the Faculty Welfare Committee to learn more about the problems and what the Council might be able to do.

iii. Dr. Buckner raised concerns from faculty about the summer schedule at the Troy Campus. The Campus has moved from two 5-week sessions (with one overlapping 10-week session) to one 5-week session with one overlapping 8-week session. Originally the 8-week session had 18 more contact hours than the 5-week session, although it was understood that both sessions are to be comparable. Comparability would necessitate the same material be covered regardless of the length of term. Apparently someone caught the problem, as the schedule was adjusted so that there is now only 8.6 more hours in the 8-week session versus the

5-week session. There does not appear to be any incentive for either students or faculty to utilize the 8-week session over the 5-week session. Dr. Allard mentioned that she had heard the 8-week session was intended more for graduate-level courses, while the 5-week session would work for the undergraduates.

Dr. Podder noted that in physics there are sequence courses where students are required to take two “semester” courses to cover and complete the topic. He did not believe that this is unique to physics. In the past, students could take the two-part sequence by taking the first course in the first 5-week session and the second course in the second 5-week session. Now that there is only one summer session, there is no incentive for students to begin the sequence in the summer when they probably will not get the second course until the next spring semester as the second course is not a normal fall semester offering.

Dr. Roach noted that his office had to work with the schedules of four campuses, eCampus and University College to revise the setting in which students could take courses in a way that would best meet their needs. He expressed a willingness to meet with the Faculty Welfare Committee to discuss these scheduling issues.

e. Blackboard TOPS Exam. Dr. Blum noted that some Troy Campus faculty had expressed concern over the new TOPS exam requirement and schedule. There are 150 pages of documentation for the exam, a faculty member must complete the exam by December 16 (or potentially not be able to teach in Term 3), and score an 85. This impacted not only eCampus instructors but also faculty who use Blackboard in their traditional courses. The timing was potentially problematic for Troy Campus faculty because of the timing of end-of-semester course work and final exams. Some faculty who took the exam also noted that some questions did not relate to Blackboard competency but to educational theory. Some faculty have found the Blackboard system to be too cumbersome for use in their traditional courses and the new requirements do not encourage experimentation.

Dr. Roach requested that all Blackboard concerns be emailed to him.

f. Promotion and Tenure Portfolios. Dr. Harris asked Dr. Roach the status of the requirement that portfolios for tenure and promotion be compiled and submitted electronically, especially as this might impact faculty seeking tenure and promotion in 2008. Dr. Roach noted that any requirements will be communicated to the faculty in plenty of time to meet the normal deadlines for the portfolio.

6. The meeting adjourned at 3:56 PM.