

MSU Faculty Senate

September Minutes

The MSU Faculty Senate met at 3:00 p.m. on September 14, 2006, in the Cheyenne Meeting Room of CSC. Senators present included Bultena, Charles (Treasurer); Coe, Mary Ann; Comello, Robert; Davis, Fred; Donovan, Tim; Garrison, Steve; Goldberg, Gary; Guthrie, Paul; Johnson, Tina; Lunce, Stephen; May, Marsha; McClintock, Stuart (Secretary); McNeely, Tom (Parliamentarian); Owen, James; Paddack, Ted; Polvado, Karen; Redmon, Bob (Chair); Rincon-Zachary, Magaly; Stiles, Beverly (Vice-Chair); Watts, Lynette. Chris Vogel from *The Wichitan* attended as an observer.

The agenda was unanimously approved. August minutes had previously been approved by e-mail.

Current Business:

1. Pam Morgan, Director of Distance Education, gave a brief overview of the status of distance education at Midwestern State University. She gave the following statistics to indicate the growth of the distance ed program at the university.

Total DE students make up approx 22.86% of student population (spring 06, IR&P).

This population includes students enrolled in full Internet courses, telecourses, off campus instruction (non-concurrent), and/or ITV.

For fall 2006, the unofficial number of students taking at least one Internet course is 1,344

For fall 2006, the unofficial number of students using WebCT in some form (either full Internet course or supplement to traditional course) is 3,578. That number has increased by 448 students over fall 2005. This number represents approximately 60% of the student body (Unofficial numbers).

Ms. Morgan stated that all of the colleges are involved, and courses follow the university calendar. Most full-time Internet students take a bigger course load than FT students on campus. The success rate of students in DE courses roughly mirrors that of students at the university. To address the question of the quality of these courses, she stated that 90% of courses are taught by full-time faculty. Those courses not taught by full-time faculty undergo a rigorous check. Because of the rigor of these courses, she said that they are not offered for concurrent enrollment students.

In closing, Ms. Morgan offered to train any professor interested in using distance learning such as WebCT.

2. Membership to the Faculty Senate. The Senate has taken up the issue this year of requirements for membership in the Faculty Senate. According to Section A, Article II, Part IV of the Faculty Senate Constitution, a professor is eligible for membership with one year of experience at the university. Many across campus are concerned that one year of experience is not enough for a professor to know the workings of the university well enough to adequately represent the interests of his or her college's faculty. Senators have polled their constituents since the August meeting about their ideas for membership and reported back on the results of their polling. Across the colleges, comments about criteria could be grouped into questions about tenure and

years of service to the university. Many professors feel that tenure should be a requirement for membership on the Senate, but more felt that it should not be a requirement, primarily because all levels of faculty at the university deserve to have a voice in university affairs. Some professors did not see the number of years of service to be the crucial issue. Senator McNeely suggested that the primary issue is for colleges to elect the most qualified senators, some of whom might be very new to the university. Others felt that more than one year of experience should be required. This led to discussion about the specific number of years that should be required. While numbers ranged up to five years, discussion centered on either two or three years on campus. Senator Bultena thought that some leeway in the on campus experience requirement might be given to professors with previous experience in higher education and/or senate experience at other universities.

Senator McNeely motioned to change Section A, Article II, Part IV of the Faculty Senate Constitution dealing with required years of experience from “one” to “three” and from “year” to “years”. Senator Donovan seconded the motion. The motion did not pass.

Senator Bultena motioned to change Section A, Article II, Part IV of the Faculty Senate Constitution dealing with required years of experience from “one” to “two” and from “year” to “years”. Senator Lunce seconded the motion. The motion did not pass.

The Faculty Senate would like to keep this subject open for discussion.

Senator Lunce suggested looking at faculty senates at like institutions to study their requirements. Senator Coe volunteered to research this topic.

3. Problems with some distance ed students. Senator Comello reported that quite a few out-of-state distance ed students have dropped courses because they are being charged tuition as if they were foreign students. Rather than being charged thirty dollars over in-state tuition, they are receiving enormous bills. Students report having difficulty communicating with the registrar’s office about their cases. Further, Senator Comello reported that these students say that there is not one central desk that deals with scholarship waivers, so they do not know to which desk to go. He suggested that there could be a help line and a central scholarship waiver desk. Chair Redmon suggested that Senator Comello accompany him to his bi-weekly meeting with Dr. Rogers to let the President know about this situation.

4. Two Graduations. Many professors have asked the Faculty Senate to take up the issue whether attendance at two graduation ceremonies in the spring should be required. At the September meeting, Chair Redmon asked senators to query their constituents about this issue, and they reported back at this meeting. Based on senators’ reports, it is clear that opinions are split. It is also clear that many professors all across campus feel very strongly about their side of the issue. Many of those who favor attending a single ceremony say that their time could be better spent by grading exams to meet the registrar’s deadline. Others say that they should have to attend the ceremony for the students in their college to show support of the students with whom they have had significant contact. Others believe that students do not care if their professors attend the ceremony, so they should not have to attend. There are as many comments about the value of attending. Among the professors who favor attending both ceremonies, many want to make a show of support of and appreciation for the students who have done a lot for these professors over their careers at the university and who have spent a lot of money on tuition and books. Most professors teach students across all colleges because of the core-curriculum requirements. Others see that it is way to demonstrate school support, and they see graduation as an important recruiting and fundraising event. Others would simply like to comply with President Rogers'

desire for professors to attend both ceremonies. Senator Lunce suggested that a single ceremony could be feasible if it was held in a large venue off campus such as MPEC.

Senator Rincon-Zachary made the motion for the Faculty Senate to advise the President that there be a single graduation ceremony in a venue that can accommodate the entire graduating class, faculty, administrators, and guests. Senator Comello seconded the motion. It did not pass.

5. Many professors across campus have asked the Faculty Senate to take up a range of issues regarding salaries. Before the Senate spends a lot of time researching this issue, Chair Redmon invited the Provost, Dr. Wiedemann, to address the Senate about steps that are being taken or will be taken about such issues as salary compression. She will talk to the Senate at its November meeting.

6. Fall Break. The Senate discussed the pros and cons of having some kind of fall break. It would give a break in the middle of the semester but would also push back the December finishing date. (The starting date cannot be moved earlier because schools cannot begin until August 28.) Senator Donovan made a motion that the Faculty Senate recommend to the President that a fall break in the form of a long weekend be established some time in the month of October. Senator Rincon-Zachary seconded the motion. It did not pass.

7. Slow processing of student evaluations. Some faculty report that the processing and return of student evaluations seems to take quite a long time, sometimes more than a full semester. From now on, each college is responsible for its own evaluations and for the timely distribution of the evaluations.

In a related issue, senators reported that the College of Education and the College of Health Sciences and Human Services are part of a pilot program in which students do their course evaluations on line. It is unknown at this point whether this system will allow faculty to be able to access results on line as well.

Committee and Other Reports:

1. Administrative Council (Redmon): (no report)
2. Board of Regents (Redmon): (no report)
3. Academic Council (Stiles): (no report)
4. Enrollment Management (May): (no report)
5. Intercollegiate Athletics Council (Comello): see end of minutes
6. Alumni Association Council (Watts): (no report)
7. Student Affairs (Lewandowski): (no report)
8. Other active committees: none
9. Financial report (Bultena): The Faculty Senate has \$ 435

Closing Items:

Old Business

1. The Senate is studying the four-day summer schedule. As part of this study, senators have asked their constituents how they feel about the four-day versus the five-day summer schedule. Before proceeding further, however, the Senate realizes that consideration of this subject must

first take into account the amount of money saved by having the present four-day summer schedule. Chair Redmon reported that the university saves \$150,000 to \$200,000 per summer with the present four-day schedule. With these figures in hand, the Senate will take up this issue at its October meeting.

2. Senator Bultena said that corrections have not yet been made to sick leave days for faculty who taught over the summer. (See August minutes on Faculty Senate webpage for full coverage of this issue.)

New Business:

1. Senator Watts reported on a problem some distance ed students are having. There is a mandatory alcohol awareness course for new freshmen and transfer students. Radiological Science distance education students are considered transfer students, and so they are getting this notice that they must take the course. These are older students in their 20s and 30s who are not on campus. The message states that they will be in violation of the Code of Ethics if they do not complete the course. The course information came from Dail Neely, Dean of Students. Senator Watts brought this topic up to see if any other colleges in the university have had to deal with this. The Senate will take this issue up at a future meeting.

After soliciting further comment, Chairman Redmon entertained a motion to close the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 5:15 pm.

Committee Reports:

Intercollegiate Athletic Council

September 1, 2006
Cheyenne Meeting Room
Clark Student Center

The Intercollegiate Athletic Council convened to hear a student appeal regarding a decision regarding his release from a sports team and his coach's reluctance to release him to another institute's team within the region.

Council opened the hearing at 3:45. All participants were informed the meeting was being taped. Meeting time was scheduled at 3:30 pm; however, the student was not on time and it was decided to conduct the meeting without the student present. It was noted that if the student did present himself, ample opportunity for him to present his case would be provided. The meeting began with a statement provided by the coach. At the end of commentary, it was noted that the student was unavailable to present his statement. Council began a question and answer session with the coach. Afterwards, to the satisfaction of the council, the coach left the meeting and council began deliberation.

After much deliberation, council determined a continued pattern of unfavorable behaviors was demonstrated by the student. Council chair polled the participants and a unanimous decision supporting the coach resulted. Council was adjourned at approximately 4:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Comello
Faculty Senate Representative.

Respectfully submitted,

Stuart McClintock
Secretary of the Faculty Senate

Bob Redmon
Chairman of the Faculty Senate

The next Executive Committee meeting will be at 3 PM on Thursday October 5 in the Caddo room in CSC.

The next Faculty Senate meeting will be at 3 PM on Thursday October 12 in Cheyenne Meeting Room in CSC.