

MSU Faculty Senate

September 2012 Minutes

The 2012-2013 MSU Faculty Senate met at 3:00 PM on September 20, 2012, in the Priddy Board Room in the Dillard College of Business Administration. Senators present included Azouz, Idir; Black, Alan; Bowles, Betty; Bultena, Charles (Treasurer); Debois, Barbara; Duff, Jeremy; Gibson, Martha; Fidelie, Laura; Jun, Nathan; LaBeff, Emily; Lindt, Suzanne; McClintock, Stuart (Secretary); McDonald, Dale; McDonald, Terry; Morrison, Gary (Parliamentarian); Morrow, Ruth; Owen, Jim (Chair); Paddack, Ted; Roberts, Kathy (Vice-Chair); Scales, Jon; Sernoe, Jim; Stiles, Beverly; Wood, Julie. Chris Stovall from the Staff Senate and Matthew Park, Associate Vice-President of Student Affairs, also attended the meeting.

The agenda was unanimously approved.

The minutes of the August meeting had been approved by e-mail vote.

Current Business:

1. Piper Award: The Faculty Senate chose Dr. Rebecca Dodge, Associate Professor of Geosciences, as the university's nominee for the Piper Award. Chair Owen will forward this nomination to Dr. Rogers, who will then recommend Dr. Dodge to the Minnie Piper Foundation.

2. Faculty Satisfaction Survey: Senator Stiles made a motion to consider having some sort of a faculty satisfaction survey. The motion passed, and Chair Owen opened the floor for discussion. Senator Stiles said that she had no agenda but thought that some sort of survey would be a beneficial tool for faculty and administration to gauge morale on campus using statistics rather than anecdotal evidence. Senator Jun mentioned that faculty members were often quite isolated from knowing much about one another, separated by department and college, and that a survey would allow faculty to get a campus-wide perspective of faculty opinion. Treasurer Bultena wondered what was to be done with the survey's results. Senator Wood thought that such an instrument could give the Faculty Senate insights into the issues that it should deal with in representing the entire faculty. Vice-Chair Roberts said that survey results would also help the Faculty Senate make relevant recommendations to the Provost.

The motion passed.

Senators Jeremy Duff, Laura Fidelie, Nathan Jun, Suzanne Lindt, Ruth Morrow, Kathy Roberts, Jon Scales, and Beverly Stiles volunteered to serve on an exploratory committee to deal with the survey.

Committee and Other Reports:

1. Administrative Council (Owen): Chair Owen reported that changes were made to the policy manual that codify some new responsibilities to Keith Lamb's office.

2. Board of Regents (Owen): The BOR met this week to discuss better financing for some outstanding bonds. The BOR will meet next in November.

3. Academic Council (Roberts): Vice-Chair Roberts reported that some changes in course requirements were made in math and business.
4. Enrollment Management and Student Affairs (Lindt): (no report)
5. Intercollegiate Athletics Council (Paddack): (no report)
6. Financial report (Bultena): The Faculty Senate has \$2,544. The Faculty Senate has enough money to support at least two Senators' attending the Texas Council of Faculty Senates' conferences in October and February.

Old Business: none

New Business:

1. As a result of a letter from a Caribbean student in the *Wichitan* (September 19) that described repeated incidents of racism in social media messages against Caribbean students at MSU, Senator Stiles with a second by Senator Jun made a motion for the Faculty Senate to adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS Midwestern State University's core institutional values include "emotional and physical well-being"; "mutual respect, civility, and cooperation"; "social justice"; and "a safe, attractive, and well-designed campus" (<http://welcome.mwsu.edu/president/MissionStatement.asp>);

WHEREAS the Faculty Senate of Midwestern State University is resolutely committed to maintaining and promoting the mission of our institution;

WHEREAS the Caribbean student population of Midwestern State University has recently been subjected to bigoted attacks by other students (<http://thewichitan.com/2012/09/18/letter-to-the-editor-09192012/>);

WHEREAS bigotry, discrimination, prejudice, or intolerance of any sort is fundamentally antithetical to the aforementioned core institutional values;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Faculty Senate of Midwestern State University,

- (a) while affirming the value of the responsible exercise of free speech, affirms also the values of multiculturalism, diversity and tolerance;
- (b) unequivocally condemns racism, sexism, homophobia, and all other forms of bigotry;
- (c) stands in solidarity with our Caribbean student population in unequivocally condemning the bigoted attacks to which they have been subjected;

- (d) urges relevant parties in university administration to investigate and, if necessary and appropriate, pursue disciplinary action for the attacks in question;
- (e) recommends that the university community consider possible course of actions to prevent these kinds of attacks from recurring.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathan J. Jun, Ph.D.

Beverly Stiles, Ph.D.

Chair Owen opened the floor for discussion. Because the Faculty Senate had only received notice of this letter the day before the meeting, the Chair said that he was reluctant to rush to judge without being able to investigate the situation. After hearing some of the messages, he felt comfortable that an informed judgment about the resolution could be made. Senator Wood wondered if the Faculty Senate was within its charge to pass such a resolution, in light of first amendment rights. Senator Jun emphasized that this resolution was a response to racist comments and was meant to show the Faculty Senate's condemnation of the comments as well as its support of the Caribbean community at the university. Senator Sernoe stated that the Faculty Senate's resolution was a reply to the comments, which is another expression of first amendment rights. Senator Black thought it would be appropriate for the SGA should take up this issue also.

Senator Fidelie called the question. The resolution passed with one negative vote. The Chair thanked the authors of the resolution for their quick and thoughtful work on this issue. The resolution will be sent to the administration as well as to the editor of the *Wichitan*.

Announcements:

1. Chair Owen reminded Senators to send him nominees to serve on the Tenure and Promotion Review Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Stuart McClintock
Secretary of the Faculty Senate

Jim Owen
Chairman of the Faculty Senate

The next Executive Committee meeting will be at 3 PM on Thursday, October 4, 2012, in the Apache Board Room of CSC.

The next Faculty Senate meeting will be at 3 PM on Thursday, October 11, 2012, in Kiowa Ex-Students room in CSC.