

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Friday, October 17, 2014

Mahood Conference Room, Mahood Hall

Attendees: Steve Bourne, Jan Czarnecki, Tammy Ferguson, Sheila Gates, Geoff Hunter, Mike Lilly, Darrel Malamisura, Shelia Sargent-Martin, Norm Mirsky, Adem Ozyacas, Luciano Picanco, John Snead, Tony Woart

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Minutes from the September meeting.

Norm: moved to approve minutes; Luciano seconded, vote unanimous, motion approved.

III. Old Business

Responses to issues submitted to Provost.

Webpage created by Darrel to document concerns. Faculty can anonymously post concerns, questions, or issues. These are forwarded to Dr. Hossain with a notation as to the date and the response, and the inquiries and outcomes are posted in a two-column table.

Darrel: Not happy with some of these answers. Some are beating around the bush.

A. Syllabus

Mike: Concerns about the format of the syllabi – adjunct syllabi requirements different. What he sent back (to Mike and Darrel) was exactly the same five things listed in the faculty handbook. \Said these came from the faculty handbook, but they did not include half of the items that the template indicates we were supposed to be including in every syllabus.

Darrel: The current template came from (former Provost) Dr. Jones's office as to what we were supposed to include such as the Mission Statement.

Mike: In Arts and Sciences, we've been told we must have those items and details in our syllabi.

Darrel: If what he sent us is what he has to have in writing, then that should settle it. As academics, we should sit down and decide what we need to have in a syllabus. Should we have a committee to have a discussion on what should be included in each syllabus?

Steve: We should look at the catalog to see what should be in the syllabus. That takes away a lot of the additional pages and work. More important to have standardization among the adjuncts than the full-time professors.

General Discussion: We don't need a uniform format. Follow the requirements as posted in the college catalog.

B. Enrollment

Darrel: According to Terry Thompson, for the Fall Semester, BSC had 1533 students paid. But her numbers were unofficial and would be different from what was reported to HEPC since her office will be dropping students after the numbers are reported. Not sure what the FTE is.

Norm: We will get an update from the Board of Governors next week.

Steve: This is a significant drop in enrollment. In 2009-10, it was close to 2000.

Norm: Last fall it was 1700. We weren't given any numbers at the last BOG meeting but hope to get them at the next meeting (next Thursday). A major concern is how we are meeting the shortfall in our budget with the number of students down. This year's budget was based on no loss of enrollment. How do we make up the lost funds?

Darrel: What numbers were given at the Noel-Levitz meeting?

Jan: Dr. Jo Ann Robinson has created two new committees - recruitment and retention – with subcommittees based on the Noel-Levitz recommendations. (Jan, Tammy, and Tony will be on the subcommittees.)

Tony: We need accurate numbers to be able to plan.

Luciano: What is the role of the committees? Decision-making or just brainstorming?

Tammy: We do have suggestions from Noel-Levitz that are focused.

Luciano: Role of the committees? Decision-making or just brainstorming?

Darrel: That won't do any good if they cherry pick what they want to do

Tammy: They know we and the students have complained about the financial aid problem.

John: People who aren't teaching are making the decisions. Faculty are aware that students have issues such as driving considerable distances to get to class, family emergencies.

Geoff: The new Concord University president found the money for four new admissions counselors by deleting nonessential jobs. She put them on the road to recruit students. We're hemorrhaging – we have to do something now.

Tony: The Concord president is making sure students are given scholarships, not just loans. (Reference to NPR interview.) WVU strengthened faculty in terms of salary and other support.

Darrel: They are active with advertising, retention, and technology – they're doing the opposite of what we're doing.

Geoff: We need to see what they're doing. Committees aren't enough. We do compete with Concord – they're hustling for students, and we're not.

Darrel: Too often the administration says, "We're working on it." That's not an answer.

Geoff: Have a lot less money to work with to attract students for the baseball program – it's more difficult for our students to qualify for academic money.

Tony: We have to take a holistic approach – fix what is wrong with the institution as a whole. If not, we can't compete with these other institutions.

Steve: We're seeing a lot of talk and no action. Chaired the subcommittee on Impact 14 months ago. Strategic planning needs a shorter time frame. Don't just say we're looking at it.

Darrel: New River Community College numbers are up as well as Concord.

Luciano: We need documentation. The Faculty Senate could determine if staff is competent. It's a question of procedure – ask for answers. If they cannot provide answers, then we have reasons to ask if they are competent.

Steve: The Board of Governors has to move on this. The Faculty Senate has little authority – the administration does what it wants to do. Dr. Mirsky should be very aggressive in that regard.

General Discussion: Enrollment is a major issue.

John: The institution is at a crossroads. We are rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. We need to come up with ideas for saving this since we can't rely solely upon the administration. One possibility: force a strategic alliance with another institution. We need to be very proactive. We need to be bold in terms of what we are doing. We need to focus on the big picture.

Steve: In the past, we had proposed merging with other institutions, but that didn't go anywhere.

Geoff: We're going to become less and less attractive as a takeover target. Our accredited programs are meat and potatoes. It's going to be tougher for us to maintain standards for reaccreditation.

John: Still seeing a lot of staff positions being filled. We need to be assertive now.

Darrel: We are losing tenured faculty. One reason online form was created was for faculty to post issues and questions anonymously. People are afraid of backlash from administration.

John: Look at local demographics. It's going to be difficult to survive. We're putting out fewer high school graduates.

General agreement: Don't need three colleges in Mercer County.

Luciano: Concentrate on retention and the enrollment process. The administration dismisses the Faculty Senate as a body. We have to follow the process

Darrel: Give them a date for action.

Lilly: Act soon and tell them we will go into a public forum.

Norm: If you make it clear there are serious problems and you know Charleston will act, do you trust the legislature? You take a real risk in going public.

Luciano: We need one sentence to forward to the administration.

Tony: Do we need to take this to the General Faculty?

Steve: Our Constitution was changed that we are the voice of the faculty. That's why we are elected.

General discussion and agreement: A statement of concerns should be forwarded to administration immediately.

Shelia: Recently we had 100 high school students visiting the campus – many were unaware of the variety of programs we offer here. Perhaps we should suggest additional activities that we would like to see for potential students.

Darrel: Draft a letter, put a deadline on it. If they tell us it is under advisement, we tell them that this is not acceptable.

Steve: We can include recommendations based on what John mentioned. At this time, we put it all on the table.

Darrel: At this point, we're going to have to do it ourselves rather than waiting for them to do it.

John: Asked how many would like to see the college be aligned with another institution. (Response – about half present.)

Jan: Used to work at Potomac State College of West Virginia University in Keyser, WV.

Norm: HBCU money would disappear.

Steve: Many HBCUs have disappeared. Our attractiveness would be our location and our accredited programs. We're the third highest in the state in terms of nationally accredited programs.

Luciano: Arts and Sciences relies on grants to HBCUs.

Tony: Those grants are drying up.

Statement drafted by the Faculty Senate:

Based upon the Faculty Senate's concern over declining enrollment at Bluefield State College, the Faculty Senate requests that the BSC administration provide information as to the specific actions that will be taken prior to the beginning of the Spring semester to reverse this decline. We ask that a response be provided by November 1.

John Snead moved that the statement be forwarded to Dr. Krotseng with copies to all the vice presidents. Seconded by Luciano. Vote: unanimous. The motion passed.

IV. Committee Reports

A. Academic Appeals – several pending.

B. Assessment (Luciano) – Reduced the questions on the faculty evaluations from 40 to 19.

C. Budget (Mike Lilly) – Haven't met yet.

D. ACT (Mike) –

1. Issue of transfer of credits and matriculation proposal that will affect us. Will forward to Senate when have it. This will probably be approved by the HEPC. It refers to the transfer of degrees on the associate level. All four-year colleges will have to accept it. Reverse transfer process – once a student gets to 60 hours can apply and get a degree from a community college without having to take classes there. Key gateway classes – certain classes that all colleges have to accept. (For many years, Marshall refused to accept any transfer credits.)

2. Senate Bill 409 – passed by the legislature but not enacted into law. This contradicts the 15 to Finish initiative. Students have to pay for courses above 12 credits.

E. Curriculum (Mike) – Meets Nov. 29th – will have a number of proposals coming up

F. Professional Development (Luciano) – no meetings.

G. Promotion and Tenure (Steve) – nothing yet.

H. BOG (Norm) – meets next Thursday. Will address the Strategic Plan. All VPs will be giving reports. Possibility of executive session for the review of the presidential evaluation.

I. College Council (Norm) – met twice to go over Strategic Plans.

J. Student Academic Appeals – no report

K. Student Disciplinary Appeals – no report.

L. Faculty Salary Pay Plan (Tony) – Questions as to structure and if there is a budget. If so, are there funds set aside? We need to send a letter to get answers to questions.

Norm: Need to come up with a way for faculty salaries to be determined. We know faculty is underpaid; we need documentation so we have something to fight with. There's not going to be money for raises – we know that. Have to look at the merit pay plan – completely scrap it or revise it. It will be implemented because that's all we have. The Board suspended it again last year.

Steve: Need to look at peer institutions.

V. New Business.

A. New websites.

<https://sites.google.com/site/bscfacultywebsite/>

Darrel: Live active link. If someone has an issue, it will automatically show up. The Outcomes part refers to issues people have been forwarding. It shows dates questions were forwarded to Dr. Hossain, his responses, and how long it took to get an answer. Website will also have the archived minutes and the agendas. People can post suggestions for items to be on agendas.

General Discussion and Agreement: It should be available to all faculty.

B. 15 to Finish.

Jan: Attended conference in Charleston with Dr. Robinson, Dr. Jones, and Jim Nelson. West Virginia is the 16th state to adopt this initiative. It originally started with administrators at the University of Hawaii. Although the demographics are different (e.g., Hawaii has a large rich and educated retired population but young people leave because they can't afford to live there), the problems are the same – the graduation rate is very low, and the state needs more college graduates for the workforce. Substantial evidence to support students are more successful in graduating (on time or at all) if they take 15 credits. (Hawaii targeted the parents in a PR blitz to show students would save \$12000 at the flagship college if they took 15 rather than 12 credits per semester.) Substantial evidence that it saves students, colleges, and taxpayers money. WV HEPC will start publicizing this after the first of the year. Advisors are expected to tell students of the advantage of taking 15 credits. Since our tuition is banded, students who receive financial aid essentially get the courses above 12 credits for “free.”

Handout: Document on *15 to Finish* WV initiative. PDF version previously forwarded to Senators.

Related handout from Cravor Jones's office: Excel sheet on number of students per major and the average number of credits per student in those majors. (Very few majors average 15.)

General Discussion: This may eventually be attached to financial aid. If this is forced on students, it would severely negatively affect the institution.

C. SGA issues.

Darrel: SGA will be sending a letter to the administration regarding accountability of fees and how the monies are spent.

Norm: Students from SGA attend the BOG meetings. But most BOG meetings are dominated by administrators. No time is given for others to speak.

D. Next meeting.

The third Friday in November is the day prior to the beginning of the Thanksgiving break. Will determine later if senators can agree to an earlier date.

VI. Adjournment

At 12:40 p.m., Steve moved that the meeting be adjourned. Luciano seconded. Vote: unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Czarnecki, Secretary