

Minutes of the Faculty Senate meeting

December 13, 2006

The regular meeting of the 2006-2007 Faculty Senate was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by President Rick Morrow. The following senators were present for all or part of the meeting. Alexander, Bartschat, Cairns, Courard-Hauri, DeLaet, Dore, Lyons, Morrow, Nelson, Reed, Richardson, Saylor, Simpson, Spaulding-Kruse, Torry, Vitha, Younger
Absent: Conley, Larson, Lindbeck, Wisniewski

The October 2006 minutes were accepted.

Report from President Maxwell

Vice President Payseur has announced the good news that Drake's endowment is now over 140 million dollars.

President Morrow noted that a target of 5% existed to be drawn down from the endowment and less than that amount had been taken.

Report from Provost Troyer

- The Higher Learning Commission visit is 13 months and three weeks away. There are critical decisions and happenings in the Spring 2007 semester. As a consequence of Lon Larson's departure as the Drake Curriculum Director and the desire to not lose important momentum, some staffing adjustments have been made. Kathleen Richardson will chair the Drake Curriculum Analysis & Planning Committee (DCAP), Art Sanders will take over the First Year Seminar coordination for 07-08 and Sue Wright and Ron Troyer will administer the dollars for the SIPs. Also, John Burney will take on the duty of communicating and coordinating activities of linking the curriculum to the mission and distinguishing one from another. Some of his Dean's duties will be reassigned. Provost Troyer is confident that all this work can be done towards making Drake stronger.

Report from President Morrow

--Senate committees are staffed and he thanked the Executive Committee for their work.
--Kathleen Richardson, DCAP chair presented a one page, two sided handout titled: Engaged Citizen Experience 2008 Voices of Democracy: Dissent and Dialogue. She indicated this can be a powerful combination of curricular and co-curricular experiences for the students and faculty. The aim is to have special new classes' created and special units in existing courses with student life & residence hall events also coordinated under this theme. So far the students love the idea noting even the Student Senate suggested ensuring this concept is used by the Admissions Office in their recruiting efforts.

She continued that there is enthusiasm for the Engaged Citizen concept. It was not an issue of getting ideas but which ideas to use for 2008. This will give Drake an opportunity to be a national leader in bringing our mission to life.

There was a discussion of a couple of implementation concerns such as if a course ‘did not make’ or if a common textbook will be used. There was not an immediate resolution to courses which end up with low enrollment. A common textbook is not expected to be used.

Unfinished Business – none presented

New Business

Senators Simpson moved and Cairns seconded motion **07-02**

The Fall Semester will commence on the Monday two weeks before Labor Day

Senator Simpson introduced the motion referencing the creation of the Academic Calendar Task Force last year and the motions brought forward which had not passed. She indicated that today’s motion would put into place a consistent start date of both semesters. And from the discussion items the Task Force will know of what interest there is in Senate for calendar changes. She urged favorable consideration of this first motion.

Senator Dore asked how this motion would address the original Task Force charge concerning Dead Day. Senator Simpson replied that with the erosion of how Dead Day is used, it was not being held up to its purposes. And she noted that there was not a lot of support for altering the course week last year. This motion does not specify a Dead Day but one of the Discussion Items promotes four day exam session.

Senator Courard-Hauri asked how the new schedule would interact with Des Moines Public school schedule. The reply noted that it does not. Currently, the semester start and end dates are not in line with any of the surrounding public schools. This motion does not address Spring Break, either.

Senator DeLaet expressed two reservations about the motion. She noted that individuals with school age children may have challenges finding child care with such an early start date. She also noted that faculty like herself, who conduct major research during the summer period will lose one week. Senator Younger indicated she agreed with DeLaet and would be more interested in a 16 week semester. Senator Simpson indicated the Task Force had considered the shorter semester but did not support such a change.

Senator Spaulding-Kruse would also be in support of a shorter semester and wondered if this had in the past been considered. She hoped that the committee would take into consideration faculty and their families and would not take lightly how changes affect them. Senator Morrow indicated he was aware of shorter semester discussions in the past which had not been favorably received.

Senator Alexander believed that generally the Des Moines school starts later than others in the area and for him it does not matter when the Drake semester ends in May, it is more important when the start falls in August. Senator Dore spoke in favor of exploring the shortening of the semester. He also wondered if the Fall and Spring semesters needed to be the same length.

Senator Reed asked about the ramification of this motion on the summer school schedule, especially on graduate school classes. Senator Simpson noted that since the overall length did not change, there would be not noticeable change to summer's structure. The major shift is the setting of a four week Fall to Spring interval vs a sometimes three week interval.

Senator Saylor noted that as a tenure track research parent he would simply work around the change. One week one way or the other would not make a difference in August, but having a known four week stretch in between semesters would be favorable to him.

There was some more interest in a shorter semester. There was also some interest in having more data concerning the existing use of the Final Exam week.

With a show of hands vote, the motion failed (3 Yes to 11 No with 3 Abstains)

Secretary's note: Motion B was not presented

The Discussion Items presented were not discussed in any particular order. The item concerning grade submission deadline received minimal mention. There were neither concerns raised nor support offered by Senators. The Academic Showcase Day did not receive much support. Neither the day selected nor the concept.

Several Senators were not in favor of changing Spring Break from its present construction guideline which directs Spring Break, to the extent possible, to correspond to the Des Moines Public Schools. Senators Dore and Spauling-Kruse both stated this is an element of Drake which makes us family friendly to both faculty and students.

Several Senators did not see an issue with the current finals schedule and desired to keep large blocks of time for consolidated exams and lengthy writing opportunities.

There were statements of understanding and sympathy that the calendar issue is of a complex nature and that the original Task Force charge may not be an easy fix. A non-binding poll was taken and eleven senators were in favor of a 16 week semester which is one week shorter than Drake's current semester length.

The Senate adjourned the regular session at 4:30 p.m.
Secretary, Nancy Geiger