

ACADEMIC SENATE RETREAT MINUTES

DATE: August 27, 2007

PRESENT: Agnes Samples
Sandie Rietz
Audrey ConnerRosberg
Johanna Mitchell
Gershon Bulgatz
Craig McKenzie
Rakesh Sah
Bruce Brumley
Lorrie Steerey
Keith Edgerton
Mark Hardt

ABSENT: Suneetha de Silva
Jeff Sanders – *excused*

GUEST: Matt Redinger

PRESIDING: Audrey ConnerRosberg, Chair

Audrey ConnerRosberg called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m. in the Beartooth room.

I. Welcome – Audrey ConnerRosberg, Chair

II. Discussion/Action Items

A. “Rules for Engagement” A Discussion from the Provost Council Retreat

Dr. ConnerRosberg noted that there were four areas of discussion at the PC Retreat, held July 5-6, 2007: The COT/Community College, Schedule, Revenue Streams, and Programs. Bruce Whittenberg was the leader of this brainstorming session. The “Rules for Engagement” are for interacting with others and include listening, not shooting down others’ ideas, no leaders and no bossing others around, and not attacking others under the guise of a joke.

Matt Redinger, participant in the PC Retreat, noted that this session was purely brainstorming with no reality checks or plans for implementation.

It was noted, however, that the brainstorming exercise seemed to work toward a pre-determined goal. At the end of the session, the Deans stood up and detailed their implementation plans.

The “Rules of Engagement” could be most useful (in fact, they would make it a joy to work here), but both sides of the conversation must use the rules. That does not happen on this campus. It was cited that the budget committee is a good example. We still don’t have the budget. It was stated that the administration has said the budget committee will get the full budget once the committee is fully constituted and has started meeting.

It was observed that most likely the lists of stuff generated at the PC Retreat will be circulated on campus even though they were only brainstorming. It was further cited that any decisions by the administration based on this material will assume that faculty participated and therefore agree.

B. Part-Time Faculty Discussion

It was noted that part-time faculty are not required to serve on any committees, they are not protected in any way if they experience some kind of problem, they have no commitment to or from the University, and they are a cheap way to do business. It was cited that their qualifications are also of concern. There should be some kind of minimum, a degree in the appropriate field, for part-time faculty to teach.

It was noted that the Senate should work with the union to bargain into the CBA a percentage for part-time faculty similar to the University Lecturer percentage. It was stated that the meetings between the Academic Senate and the union should be reinstated.

It was noted that the union has also set up a committee to discuss the faculty position description, but the timeline is too long. We are already losing people because of implied threats in their position descriptions. Also, the URTC is becoming powerless because of this problem. Perhaps the URTC should be the ones to work on the position descriptions, rather than a whole new committee.

C. Outcomes Assessment, eCompanion, and the Demise of the Academic Foundations Committee

Mark Hardt, Chairperson of the AFC, noted that faculty have said all along that if assessment is labor intensive, they will not do it. The new eCompanion is very labor intensive.

It was noted that the original goal of eCompanion was for faculty to use it instead of their old paper or electronic grade book. That way, eCollege can mine the outcomes data from the individual assignment scores. It was noted that it’s very easy to mine students names and information in the same way.

It was noted that the AFC needs to remain because they are to ensure ongoing quality of the courses in Academic Foundations. It was cited that the AFC did not choose eCompanion.

It was noted that this eCompanion forces all faculty into one educational paradigm. We are not a University if we only subscribe to one paradigm. We will have an evaluation system that tells us how to teach.

It was agreed that the AFC will put together a report explaining how they understood assessment would work, not where the administration has taken it with eCompanion.

D. Faculty Morale Survey

It was noted that the FSSE survey of faculty morale has been completed with a little over 50% participation, which is pathetic. It was further noted that the presentation on the results at the Back-to-School conference proved to be using the statistics incorrectly, so they have to be recalculated. It was noted that perhaps the very low participation rate reflects how disheartened the faculty really are.

It was stated that the Senate should request the raw data and we can compile it ourselves. It is a survey *of faculty*, after all.

⇒ Motion by Sandie Rietz, seconded by Lorrie Steerey that the Senate **send a letter to Provost White and copied to Chancellor Sexton, all the faculty, and President Gamble requesting the raw data from the faculty morale survey so that the Senate can compile the results.**

⇒ Motion carried.

E. Summer Survey of Students, Fall Survey of Faculty, and Summer 2008 Schedule

Dr. ConnerRosberg noted that the overwhelming response from students was that they want to keep the week between Spring Semester and Summer Session. She conveyed this at a summer Provost Council meeting. The Council elected to go with a schedule that starts one week after Commencement and runs one three-week session followed by two five-week sessions. Online still overlaps. They took a vote and Dr. ConnerRosberg voted for the lesser of a handful of evils. Provost White also wants the Senate to talk to faculty about classes that can be included in one- or two-week Summer Sessions, most likely not for credit. It was noted that Professional Studies does that year-round anyway. The Provost also wants faculty to be engaged in planning the Summer Session. It was noted that Department Chairs already do this.

It was noted that the administration wants to change the summer schedule because it has helped other institutions increase their summer FTE. They will re-survey the students after the first year and see how the new schedule worked.

It was noted that this option (the 3-5-5 weeks) was not offered to the faculty. The Senate does not support changing the summer schedule in this way. We have insisted they leave it alone and we have been ignored.

⇒ Motion by Johanna Mitchell, seconded by Sandie Rietz that the Senate **send a letter to Provost White and copied to Chancellor Sexton, all the faculty, Dean Heikel, and President Gamble that the Senate opposed the proposed summer 2008 schedule in the spring 2007 semester and we continue to oppose the summer schedule as it now stands.**

⇒ Motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Conner Rosberg thanked the faculty for getting their students to participate in the survey, Mark Hardt and Sandie Rietz for writing the survey, and Rita Rabe Meduna for putting together the results.

F. Program Reviews: Plan of Action for Senate Reviews

It was noted that we should be getting the binders in September. It was agreed that the Senate will see what the reviews look like and then decide how to handle them.

G. Communication Between Senate and the Campus Community

- *Are we being overlooked or pushed aside?*

It was noted that just because we recommend something doesn't mean we get it. It was noted that our only real "wins" are from involving the media—the Crippen Cabin, for example. It was stated that perhaps we should invite David Crisp and Mary Pickett in once a semester to have a report to the public. They can choose to print it or not.

It was observed that if we don't get a response on the summer schedule or the faculty morale survey, we could take the issues public.

H. What issues should the Senate work on this year?

Summer Schedule

Faculty Morale Survey

Position Description issue

Outward growth of the University, while the core dies

It was noted that the Outward growth issue is one that just keeps coming up, but we have to keep fighting it.

I. Election of Chair Elect

⇒ Sandie Rietz nominated Lorrie Steerey as Chair Elect. Bruce Brumley seconded.

There were no other nominations. Dr. Steerey agreed to serve.

⇒ Dr. Steerey was elected unanimously.

Dr. Steerey noted that she will not be able to attend the November Board of Regents meeting in Bozeman. Perhaps one of the other vice chairs should go in her place.

The meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

rjrm