

Faculty Senate Minutes

Friday, September 18, 2009

The meeting was called to order by Faculty Senate President Beverly Gilbert.

Bridges moved the minutes from the May meeting be approved as presented. The motion was seconded by Humphrey. Minutes were approved.

Gilbert recommended the appointment of Michael Hall as Senate Vice Chairmen and Amy Claxton as Senate Secretary. Humphrey made a motion to approve the recommendations. The motion was seconded by Mooneyham. Motion was approved.

B. Henry Torres BlackBoard Issues

Torres discussed changes that were made to the Blackboard auto enroll features. Auto enroll was not working the way faculty wanted. Previously auto enroll was a manual enroll feature. Later students that dropped the course remained in Blackboard. The request was made to clean up the auto enroll feature. The changes made went into effect a few weeks before the semester. The features worked while others associated with auto enroll did not work. The additional features had to be worked on and in some cases restored. Torres reported that his department worked more on academic and course development. IT has made changes in the leadership related to who is working on the faculty environment. There are new people support testing, faculty, and change management. The increase in online enrollment is a good thing but requiring more work. The faculty have learned to depend on Blackboard. IT is putting in place features and functions that should improve the sites. Torres's group and IT are meeting together every 2 weeks. They are currently focusing on midterms testing feature attempting to be proactive rather than reactive. They have been testing quality assurance for the testing features, as well as, looking at the drop down menus for testing and grading. They believe they are ready for midterm online testing and are shifting focus to be ready for finals at the end of the semester. IT is working with software vendors such as Respondus. The two departments are currently looking at the Blackboard 8 Learning Environment. The plan is to run BlackBoard 8 Learning environment up with early adopters to work with and test features of the new platform. Mooneyham asked when new platform environment will be mandated for all? Torres responded that we need to stable with what we have now before we move to the new Learning Environment. The plan is to get a good, clean BlackBoard 8 Learning Environment that will be open to everyone next summer. Moore expressed concern there was little faculty involvement prior to school starting for things that were changed. Acknowledgements were made that they did not get people the appropriate shared governance committees involved when it was appropriate. While some changes made were legal requirement academic shared governance should have been more involved. Torres reported that would occur. McDaniel reported that the SGOC sent letters to both Hoeting and Torres requesting they go through the appropriate shared governance committees in the future. Legal changes have to be made regardless of committees. It was pointed out there are institution and academic shared governance that should have been involved in the changes that occurred. Letters were sent by SCOC (McDaniel) to Torres and Hoeting requesting they go through the appropriate committees in the future.

C. Dr. Potts ASU Strategic Plan

Dr. Potts reported the Executive Council had a retreat in August 2009 where they decided to take a new and fresh look at the ASU Strategic Plan. Dr. Cox led the strategic plan process from 2003-2005. The group decided they needed to get briefing from him about the pros and cons of the process used at that time. Cox also made suggestions to the group concerning what might be done differently this time. Cox suggested using a strategic planning method called Open Space Technology developed by Harrison Owen. Dr. Potts & Cox distributed a handout related to the Open Space Strategic planning process. Cox stated he believed the traditional model of 38 steering committees working over two years was very inefficient, took up a great deal of time, and was difficult to manage. Open Space Technology model has been in existence for around for 25 years. Open space technology model requires constituents to get involved and work intensively for three days. It is a streamlined process that after 3 days would produce a report that would be the basis for the strategic plan. The recommendation would be for interested people come to the university for 3 days prior to Spring Semester to participate in this process. The first day would start in large group then go into breakout sessions based on the topic generated. Each session is roughly 1 ½ hours. The more people diversity and passion in the room the better the issues and ideas are generated. There may be some boundaries concerning what cannot be discussed as a part of the planning process

Rowe remarked that all faculty need to be strongly encouraged to attend. In the past a lot of young untenured faculty attended these types of meetings. They need to be encouraged to attend to contribute fresh ideas. He also suggested the need to include outside stakeholders in the process.

Some senators felt that a longer build up with the faculty might be better and schedule the process during a time that everyone can be involved according to Dr. Potts. Five or six senators who had been involved in this type of planning process in other state and national organization emphasized two important points. The first was the ability of the leaders to let the process be open rather than highly directive. The other point made was making sure there was a follow up plan in place that will be reviewed and evaluated at regular intervals for this process to be useful and successful.

Dr. Potts requested the Senate discuss the proposal and make recommendations if this process would be useful and would faculty participate. Should the Senate recommend moving forward with the Open Space Technology planning model he asked the Senate to make a recommendation concerning when the 3 planning days should be held. Presidents Office will pay for the cost of holding meeting and any follow up needed. Dr. Potts stated he want to be guided by the Senate.

A motion was made by Moore and seconded by Humphrey that the Senators take the information back to their constituents gather information for the next Faculty Senate meeting on Oct. 3. Motion was approved.

D. Randy Kesselring-Chair of Employees Benefits Committee

Kesselring provided the Senate with documentation of the ASU health insurance fund balance. Blue Cross and the systems office began getting concerned about the drop in the balance beginning August

2009. Kesselring reported that ASU is self insured, which is cheaper than other types of coverage. Money goes in and out of the fund balance. Blue Cross recommends the fund keep a balance of \$1,300,000. The fund balance fell in during the summer months. Predictions were made that the fund could fall to a balance of \$300,000 by December 2009 if nothing was done. Proposals for insurance premium increases have been made by the systems office. Today's proposal has been recommended by the Employees Benefits Committee after being received by the SGOC on Monday, Aug. 14. The original systems proposal recommended a number of benefits cuts that have since been removed (Ex: Elimination of employee and family tuition discounts).

Humphrey asked if the fund decrease was due to some unusually large claims. The response was no but claims do tend to come in waves over the year. Health costs have gone up. Kesselring report said we have tried to encourage some wellness activities. Zublick introduced a colleague who reported the ASU health insurance plan doesn't have cost containment mechanisms in place. Our plan is a gatekeeper that doesn't have any incentive to reduce the cost. That is why we can get pretty dramatic swings in the plan. Rowe asked if everyone that benefits from the plan pays into the plan. Kesselring did not know the answer. A question from another senator asked if the money was sitting in investment account and, if so, was the drop in the fund due to the economy. Kesselring stated the money was not in an investment account and the interest earned on the account is not credited back to the fund.

Wang expressed concern with the process. Not having time to take proposal back to constituents before a vote is taken. Claxton asked what would happen if senate did not vote for 2 weeks to give us time to talk to constituents. McDaniel responded other constituent groups had already addressed this issue and taken votes. If we didn't vote on the health plan proposal today the Faculty Senate would probably lose its voice on this issue.

Coverage will change in January. Mental health will be required by federal law to be paid at the same rate as other medical services. Currently our health plan pays 50% of mental health services but in January will be required to pay at a rate equal to medical coverage.

Mooneyham suggested the Benefits Committee look at developing incentive programs to maintain good health. ASU does have a few programs but they are not systematic and organized. Mooneyham requested this issue be on the agenda for the next Faculty Senate meeting.

McDaniel suggested looking into the burden of insurance for the lower income employees.

Freer supported McDaniel's idea of looking into lowering burden of payment to insurance based on salary ranges.

The question was asked what is percentage of employees opt for the single plan versus the family plan Kesselring reported it is approximately evenly split 50-50% for single and family plans. When you start changing the percentage people are paying then people will change their plan. If we increase the cost of the family plan then people will move to the single plan. The national trend is to insure the employee .

Wang moved we qualify our support for the SGOC proposal concerning health insurance increases by expressing our concern that the burden of the increase should be distributed with a formula that takes into account the ability to pay.

E. SGOC Proposal 09FA-36 Proposal to Deal with Projected Shortfalls in Health Care Reserve Fund

McDaniel made a motion to accept the proposal as presented. The motion was seconded by Humphrey. Vote: Yes 23; No 4; Abstained 1

F. SGOC Proposal – 09SP-27R ASU-J Proposal to remove the Shared Governance Document from the Faculty Handbook

Burns moved to accept the proposal as presented. The motion was seconded by Rowe

Vote: Yes 0; No 27; Abstained 0

Rowe moves to second.

G. Debbie Persell - ASU Plan for H1N1

Persell passed out guidelines from CDC for higher education institutions.

Three main points were wash your hands, use cough etiquette, and stay home if sick with no fever. Do not return to work until you have not fever 24 hours with no medications. Up to 40% of the university population could be affected with H1N1 this year. We could have a degree of absenteeism that is unprecedented. The CDC and the university are asking faculty to be somewhat flexible about making up work and assignments. It has been specific how that should be done. Look at alternative ways of education. Maybe develop assignments in case faculty become sick or assignments for students that miss. A system of report has been developed that attempts to track what is happening on campus. Persell distributed H1N1 posters for offices and buildings. Call her if you need more. Faculty are asked to report if we have students with H1N1. The report will go to one of four people on campus. They want to know if the person with H1N1 is on or off campus. If the student is on campus the decision will be made to either isolate on campus or send them home. Vice chancellors of academic affairs may contact faculty to let them know person has been reported to have H1N1. Student Health will be contacted to help with medications and services.

Move to adjourn by Richard Burns

Meeting adjourned.