

FACULTY SENATE MEETING

September 2, 2009

1. Call to Order

CHAIR PATRICK NOLAN (Sociology) called the meeting to order, and welcomed the Senators to the first meeting of the new academic year. He introduced himself and provided background information on his history with the University and with faculty governance at USC. Chair Nolan asked for the input and assistance of all Senators and faculty and promised to do his best to represent the faculty voice to the University administration and the Board of Trustees. He thanked immediate Past Chair Bob Best for his assistance and advice, and recognized and welcomed President Pastides, Vice President Amiridis, and Vice President Moore.

2. Corrections and Approval of Minutes

CHAIR NOLAN asked for corrections to the minutes of the meeting of June 17, 2009. There were no corrections and the minutes were approved as written.

3. Reports of Committees

a. Senate Steering Committee, Professor Rebekah Maxwell, Secretary

PROFESSOR REBEKAH MAXWELL (Law Library) reported on a vacancy on the Faculty Grievance Committee, which was created when Professor Nolan left the committee to chair the Faculty Senate. On behalf of the Steering Committee, Professor Maxwell nominated Professor Martin Donougho (Philosophy) to fill the vacancy. She asked for further nominations from the floor. There were none, and Professor Maxwell left the floor open for further nominations.

Professor Maxwell then described a new initiative relating to the University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The QEP is part of our SACS reaffirmation process wherein the University must submit a proposal for a five-year project aimed at improving student learning. Choosing the topic for the QEP needs input and involvement from all of the various University constituencies, so the Provost is issuing call to all faculty, students, and staff for proposals. Cash prizes of \$2,500 will be awarded to the top five proposals. The committee that will review these proposals will be composed of two administrators, two students, and three faculty members to be elected by the Faculty Senate. One of these faculty members will come from a regional campus.

On behalf of the Steering Committee, Professor Maxwell nominated Professor Robert Best (Medicine) and Professor Jeremy Lane (Music). There were no further nominations and the floor remained open for the duration of the meeting.

b. Committee on Curricula and Courses, Professor Jennifer Vendemia, Chair

PROFESSOR VENDEMIA (Psychology) reported changes in courses and curricula from the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Engineering and Computing, the Moore School of Business, the Arnold School of Public Health, and the Regional Campuses (please see attachment, pages 8-12).

The Committee recommended that the Faculty Senate accept the changes. The changes were approved as written.

4. Reports of Officers

PRESIDENT HARRIS PASTIDES thanked Chair Nolan for agreeing to serve the Faculty Senate and welcomed the Senators and faculty back to a new academic year.

President Pastides reported on the introduction of new faculty that had taken place in the General Faculty meeting immediately preceding the Faculty Senate. He noted that a smaller but impressive group of new colleagues had been introduced, and observed that most American universities, both public and private, are finding it difficult to find the funds to increase the ranks of their faculties in the current economy. The President restated the commitment of the University to finding the resources that will allow the replenishment and the increase of our faculty ranks, but notes that we are not quite there yet.

President Pastides reported that the University is facing a second year of declining state funding, and that we will likely be assessed with a 4.04% cut to our state appropriations. This cut will be about \$7 million lost in addition to the \$55 million that the USC system lost last year, and will likely not be the only cut expected in the new fiscal year. The President observed that other states are beginning to see the steep decline in state support experienced last year by South Carolina's institutions of higher education. Last year, South Carolina and Florida were particularly hurt relative to state support, and this year Georgia and North Carolina particularly are losing state support.

On a positive note, the President reported that the University has welcomed the largest and best prepared group of undergraduate students ever, both at the Columbia campus and throughout the system. Applications were at an all-time high this year, and average SAT scores were a few points higher. Incoming freshmen number about 3,940. We are recruiting better than ever from the other 49 states, and yet we understand our mission to pay a dividend on our state support by being open, accessible and affordable to South Carolinians. President Pastides believes that there must be a balance between educating state citizens but also opening our doors in a way that will increase diversity of thought, diversity of gender and of race, and diversity of geography.

There is an indication that the state legislature in its upcoming session will look at tuition caps as well as at the number of out-of-state students that public universities will be able to attract. The University will always advocate for flexibility and for a non-regulatory approach. This fall, the Columbia campus had a tuition increase of 3.6%, one of the lowest increases of any public university in the state, and one of the lowest that our University has had for many years. The 3.6% increase is the national rate of inflation attributed to higher education. Our University is trying to remain affordable and accessible; President Pastides notes that this is the right thing to do in a state that ranks 47th in the nation regarding the proportion of adults over 25 who have a bachelor's degree. To offer affordable higher education to the citizens of the state requires replenishing our faculty and retaining the great faculty that we have, and the administration recognizes this goal as a priority.

The President then reported on the status of the University's stimulus funding. These funds, he observed, make the difference between a continued economic freefall and the ability to progress and advance Carolina. We expect to receive approximately \$20 million in Columbia in each of two years. We have not seen the money yet, but expect it to arrive relatively soon. The administration received a large number of applications requesting seven or eight times the amount of available funding, and President Pastides recognized the ambition and resourcefulness of the faculty, department heads and deans in generating the proposals. Unfortunately, not all proposals can be funded, especially those requiring long-term or permanent funding. It is simply not possible to award stimulus funding for an initiative that will need to be sustained beyond a duration of two years.

The President outlined the other criteria that will be used in considering disbursement of the stimulus funding. One such criteria is how relevant an initiative is to the University's core mission. Another is the potential economic impact on the local community beyond the University. President Pastides observed that the number and the quality of the proposals were impressive and a bit overwhelming, so University administration and a proposal review committee will need several weeks in which to thoroughly review the applications and make decisions on the proposals that will receive funding. The President hopes that in two or three weeks there will be more to report.

A separate initiative seeks improved coordination between the main campus in Columbia and the sister campuses that comprise the University of South Carolina. We are approaching 20,000 undergraduates in Columbia, but we have over 41,000 students studying in our eight universities. Approximately 1 of every 3 South Carolinians working toward a bachelor's degree is a USC student. That is a big responsibility, especially during a time in which our state support has been reduced to approximately 15% of our annual operating budget. Many state institutions of higher education are reacting by educating fewer students, but the President feels that the General Assembly and our State Government has the obligation to increase support of the universities that are not becoming smaller relative to opportunity and to access.

The President closed his report by noting the importance of the Faculty Senate forum to him and to the University's administration. The opportunity to engage with the faculty is essential to an administration's ability to lead a university. The President thanked Senators for their service to faculty governance and encouraged them to engage with their colleagues in their colleges and departments, and to bring their concerns to the President and the administration through the Faculty Senate. President Pastides thanked all the University's faculty for their efforts and support through the past difficult year. He praised the University's tightly woven fabric, noting "we are open, we are tolerant, we listen to each other, we debate, we disagree and we agree, and we stick together" as he welcomed back his faculty colleagues.

VICE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST MICHAEL AMIRIDIS introduced himself to the faculty, noting that he is honored and excited to be serving as Provost and is looking forward to working with the Senators and with the entire faculty. He noted his long history at USC and that his faculty perspective will guide him in his service to and representation of the University's faculty. The Provost's highest priority for the fall semester is to get to know the faculty and to begin building relationships with faculty colleagues. He will be visiting different academic units and meeting with faculty members in small groups for an exchange of ideas and opinions.

Provost Amiridis remarked that when this initiative was first begun, he didn't realize how many units the University has, both in Columbia and at the Regional Campuses. He had first thought that the visitation project would take a month or two, allotting two days a week to visiting the units. He now plans to cancel almost all of his fall out-of-campus trips to be able to concentrate on the visits, and expects the initiative to extend well into the spring semester. As he makes his rounds, he will collect lists of items and issues from the different units. While the Provost will not be able to solve all issues in all units, he hopes to resolve a few at a time and to stay aware of concerns that need his attention.

Provost Amiridis echoed the President's sentiment regarding the challenge of selecting proposals for stimulus funding, but underscored the criteria of excellence, innovation, sustainability, viability beyond the two-year period of the funding disbursement, and impact on broader access to higher education at the University. He promised transparency in the selection process and accountability both to the University community and to the taxpayers.

The Provost discussed an initiative to support faculty development in the arts and humanities that will be rolled out in the next two to three weeks. Provost Amiridis is meeting with some of the deans of the relevant colleges to discuss details and organization of the program before sending out a call for proposals from faculty members in these areas.

The Provost then discussed his office's initiative to support faculty involvement in doctoral education, noting that one of the things of which he is most proud is the number of doctoral

students whom he has mentored and assisted in their achievements. The initiative will send funding (approximately \$1,500) per doctoral student graduated to the graduating unit to support doctoral education initiatives within that unit. Unit chairs will work with faculty who advise a unit's doctoral graduates to determine the most effective use of the funding.

A third initiative aims at strengthening the integration and effectiveness of the University's academic programs throughout the system. Coordination and cooperation between the main and regional campuses will increase the academic effectiveness of the entire system. The Provost will initiate dialog with his counterparts at the other senior campuses to see how this integration can best be achieved.

VICE PRESIDENT TED MOORE greeted the Senators and faculty and began his report with an overview of the budget for fiscal year 2010. He first sought to put into perspective the upcoming 4.04% cut. Vice President Moore explained that the entire system wide budget is a little over \$1 billion for the year and, of that, \$580 million is designated as the University's operating budget. This figure includes tuition revenue and state appropriations. A 4.04% cut represents \$6.9 million that will come out of the operating budget. In historical perspective, \$6.9 million compares favorably with the \$55 million that we lost last year. However, the last fiscal year saw five consecutive budget cuts, so the University's administration is planning for a cumulative cut of at least 10%. The Vice President's Office is working on a plan on how the University can absorb a 10% cut and will give recommendations to the President very soon.

Focus Carolina, the University's system wide strategic planning effort, has generated approximately 40 initiatives through the Goal Teams, and is moving into the next phase, which the President has characterized as the Advance Carolina. The Advance phase will focus on the development of action plans and specific steps to implement the initiatives. The USC administration will be coming back to the Goal Teams and to the faculty, staff, and students for additional help in moving forward.

Vice President Moore outlined four examples of initiatives identified by the Focus Carolina Goal Teams.

1. A new faculty hiring initiative
2. A better, more systematic, and healthier deferred maintenance program
3. Improvements to the University's Web presence
4. Review of the budget model

The next steps will be to develop action plans for such initiatives, budget for the plans, and establish a timeline when particular action steps will fall. The Vice President pledged to share all relevant information with the faculty on an ongoing basis.

Many of the initiatives identified through Focus Carolina will have to be postponed a few years until economic conditions improve, but the University's administration will attempt to accommodate every initiative that came from the Goal Teams, and will update the faculty on progress made.

Vice President Moore closed with a report on the activities of the search committee for Vice President for Facilities and Campus Management. The search committee has conducted a nationwide search and has received about 56 applications.

5. Report of the Chair

CHAIR NOLAN expressed appreciation to the Senators and committee members for their dedication to University service. He noted the importance of the work of the Faculty Senate, and shared two reasons why people are drawn to this service: 1) they take faculty governance seriously, and 2) they have the confidence and trust of their colleagues.

Chair Nolan described some of the important initiatives that will come before the Faculty Senate in the coming year: The Advance Carolina phase of the University's strategic plan, the General Education Requirements, and proposed changes to the Faculty Manual, particularly regarding tenure and promotion. He asked for the assistance and input of the Senators and faculty as he embarks on his first year as Chair of the Faculty Senate, and underscored his desire to accurately represent the faculty voice during the course of his duties.

6. Report of the Secretary

There was no report of the Secretary.

7. Unfinished Business

SECRETARY MAXWELL returned to ask for additional nominations for the vacancy on the Faculty Grievance Committee. There were none and the Senate elected Dr. Martin Donougho (Philosophy) to the committee.

The Secretary then asked for additional nominations to the Quality Enhancement Plan Proposal Review Committee. There were none and the Senate elected Dr. Robert Best (Medicine) and Dr. Jeremy Lane (Music) to the committee. A third faculty member representing the regional campuses is yet to be elected.

8. New Business

There was no new business.

9. Announcements

There were no announcements.

10. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was seconded and passed. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Wednesday, October 7, at 3:00pm in the Law School auditorium.