

FACULTY SENATE MEETING

November 2, 2011

1. Call to Order

PAST CHAIR PATRICK NOLAN (Sociology) called the meeting to order, and welcomed Senators, faculty and staff colleagues, and University Officers.

2. Corrections and Approval of Minutes

PAST CHAIR NOLAN called for corrections to the minutes of the meeting of October 5, 2011. There were none and the minutes were approved as written.

3. Invited Guest

OMBUDSMAN JIM AUGUSTINE presented highlights of his annual report for 2010-2011 (please see attachment, page 9).

The office of the University Ombudsman was established in 2006 by then-Provost Mark Becker. Professor Augustine conducts his ombuds activities under the umbrella of the International Ombudsman Association (IOA), which has its own Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.

The pillars of the ombuds practice are those of confidentiality, neutrality, informality, and independence. Professor Augustine invited Senators and faculty to learn more at the USC Ombudsman's website at www.sc.edu/ombuds. There are about 240 institutions of higher learning in the United States that have an Ombuds and many of them practice under the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the IOA.

In his capacity as University Ombudsman, Professor Augustine generally meets with new faculty when they arrive in August or in January, and makes various presentations when asked.

During the past year, he met with 45 faculty members who were first-time visitors to the Ombuds. During those meetings, he usually listens, offers information about policies and procedures, and offers suggestions about options that might be available to a faculty member. He tries to facilitate communication between parties who are in dispute or in conflict. Professor Augustine has gathered statistics from other Carnegie I institutions, and the average number of faculty visitors appears to be around 46 per year, so our activity is approximately at an average level.

Over the last 5 years, he has had the opportunity to assist about 256 individuals, for an average of about 51 visits per year. Because of the confidential nature of what he does, Professor Augustine does not keep notes or documents or records of any kind. He does, however, track the categories of the issues that motivate visits to the Ombuds Office, using a series of uniform reporting categories created by the International Ombudsman Association (see attachment, page 12 of given report). They include general categories such as compensation and benefits; evaluative relationships; peer and colleague relationships; career progression and development; legal, regulatory, financial and compliance; safety, health, and physical environment; services/administrative issues; organizational, strategic, and mission related; and then values, ethics and standards.

As Professor Augustine's report data substantiates, the most common reason for people visiting the people of the Ombudsman is evaluative relationships: questions, concerns, or issues between people in evaluative relationships – someone who has authority over someone else rather than peer relationships. The second greatest area of concern among our colleagues in all the years is career progression and development, and that includes promotion and tenure; first, second and third year reviews. The third is peer and colleague relationships between two colleagues who are, presumably, of equal rank or authority and responsibility.

Professor Augustine emphasized that his office serves all faculty members: tenure-track, non-tenure-track, Columbia campus, and at all campuses throughout the University system. He recalled that in 2009 the General Faculty voted to include the Carolinian Creed in the preface to the Faculty Manual. He would like to see it integrated into the body of the Faculty Manual in the future, especially as the most common problem he deals with as Ombudsman is incivility. Professor Augustine invited the Senators to take a card describing the activities and contact information of the Ombuds Office, and encouraged all faculty with concerns to contact him. He noted that he does not meet visitors in his office, but in whatever setting they wish to meet.

Professor Augustine observed that he could not carry out his responsibilities as Ombudsman without the help and support of the Provost's Office - the Provost himself and Dr. Curtis, the deans and some of their associate deans, the department chairs, those in HR and in the office of EOP, and in the legal office. He expressed his appreciation to all of the people whose assistance enables him to carry out the work of the University Ombudsman.

4. Reports of Committees

a. Committee on Curricula and Courses, Professor Peter Binev, Chair

PROFESSOR BINEV reported changes in courses and curricula from the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Education, the College of Engineering and Computing, the College of Hospitality, Retail, and Sport Management, the Arnold School of Public Health, the College of

Social Work, and System Affairs and Extended Campuses (please see attachment, pages 15-32 of given report).

The changes were adopted.

5. Reports of Officers

PRESIDENT HARRIS PASTIDES was unable to be present and the Report of Officers was delivered by Provost Michael Amiridis.

PROVOST MICHAEL AMIRIDIS greeted his faculty colleagues and began his report by noting that this meeting will most likely be the last one chaired by Past Chair Patrick Nolan. He thanked Past Chair Nolan for his service to the Faculty Senate and for his strong representation of the faculty to the Board of Trustees.

The Provost then provided an update to an initiative that he mentioned in September, that of creating a set of metrics for the institution, a set of parameters that will allow us to define our progress, set up goals for the next five years, and plan appropriately to achieve these goals. This academic dashboard contains 8 different parameters – 4 associated with students and 4 associated with faculty.

The student parameters are:

1. Total enrollment that we have
2. Incoming SAT scores
3. Freshman to sophomore retention rates
4. Six year graduation rates

The faculty parameters are:

1. Student to faculty ratio
2. National faculty awards
3. Research expenditures
4. Doctoral degrees granted (which is arguably a student parameter, but also arguably a faculty productivity parameter)

We consider these metrics when comparing ourselves to peer institutions and to peer-aspirant institutions, and they allow us to see what kind of progress we have made and whether we have fallen behind in certain areas. They are also useful in seeing where we need to be to make the leap to peer of a peer-aspirant institution.

Based on these metrics, one of the first decisions of the Provost's Office is to increase the ranks of the tenure-track faculty members. Our Faculty Replenishment Initiative was motivated by our student-to-tenure-track-faculty ratio, which has increased over the last few years in a direction that is not consistent with the high quality educational experience that we want to achieve. We are committed to hiring 200 new faculty members over the next four years. The FRI process that started last year with the first 41 positions is continuing this year. Provost Amiridis expressed the hope that many units will participate in the competitive phase and will submit proposals with the next month and a half. The Provost's Office will allocate another 40 positions to the competitive process and 20 positions through a noncompetitive process that will address shortages in units' mission-critical faculty. Dr. Dennis Pruitt and Dr. Helen Doerpinhaus will be visiting the various colleges to review the metrics associated with retention rates and graduation rates. They hope to learn from those colleges with high rates and to evaluate means to help those with weaker rates.

The Provost's Office will also be soliciting proposals, ideas, and models relating to the enhancement of doctoral education. Our rate of production of doctoral degrees has remained flat at a time when peer aspirant institutions are moving ahead, so the task force will be concentrating on ways to enhance the quality of our doctoral students and enhance the placement of the doctoral students that we are producing.

Provost Amiridis observed that the overall goal of the Office of the Provost is to increase and improve the quality of all of our academic programs. Solutions that may be advanced at the cost of quality are not going to be acceptable. While we are reviewing our metrics, we need to make sure that we retain our quality standards.

The Provost reported on significant changes to the University's Blackboard system, starting with the move to a managed hosting situation. The server that supports Blackboard will no longer reside at the University but will be hosted by Blackboard offsite. The University will also be upgrading to the new 9.1 version of Blackboard. Managed hosting will insure that we will have immediate backup offsite if our onsite Blackboard system fails, and will cost less in terms of time and capital outlay. Managed hosting will also protect against Blackboard outages.

Changes to the Blackboard system will happen in two phases. The first step will be moving to managed hosting on November 12, 2011. We will experience a planned outage on November the 12th while the migration takes place. Blackboard will resume accessibility on November 13. The second phase will happen over the winter break, and involve an update of the Blackboard interface. Users should see the original functions, along with additional features that are available only through the upgrade. Training sessions will be offered before Christmas, and several more sessions in January after the intersession.

Provost Amiridis delivered an update on the ABF (Accountability Based Funding) funding model that the Governor intends to use in allocating appropriations for higher education. The Governor has defined some of the parameters of ABF, which include retention rates, graduation rates, job placement, economic development, and diversity of the schools. We are not yet sure how a set of principles is going to become a formula that calculates dollars and cents. The presidents of the different institutions in South Carolina worked with the Commission on Higher Education and submitted a proposal to the Governor. The problem with the proposal is that it addresses new funding, which may not be realistic for the near future. A possible outcome is that we may see a new way to apportion the current level of resources. The University is monitoring the situation and is trying to represent the strengths of our institution. The Provost likened the initial phase of the funding model to ABF 101 that introduces the principles. We will move to advanced ABF as the legislative season goes on.

The University has commissioned the Huron Group to look at issues associated with access and cost of degrees that USC provides. We are asking the group to investigate how we can reorganize our system to make it more accessible to South Carolinians by retaining at least the same cost and, if possible, make it even more affordable. We are getting toward the end of the study and the Provost expects that we will see some very interesting recommendations. He expects that we as a faculty will begin having conversations about our potential “realignment” in the next two or three months.

The Provost opened the floor for questions.

MR. AUSTIN JACKSON (President Pro Tem of the Student Senate) asked if he was cleared to give the update on Blackboard in his report tonight to the Student Senate. He noted that students became very upset when Blackboard was down.

PROVOST AMIRIDIS responded that Mr. Jackson was encouraged to give the information to the Student Senate, noting that student distress is exactly what we are trying to avoid by migrating the hosting offsite. In the new environment, there will be three programmed outages (one day each) per year. We will be able to plan the outages, put them on the academic calendar, and avoid the access issues that have plagued Blackboard in the past.

An UNIDENTIFIED SENATOR asked if the log-on procedure would remain the same and the Provost assured him that it would, and that the system would remain secure.

6. Report of the Secretary

There was no report.

7. Report of the Chair

PAST CHAIR NOLAN reported that the parking issue that was raised at the last meeting (the closing of the N1 lot to make way for the Business School construction) is being addressed. An adjustment will be proposed by Parking Services and they will be making a specific announcement.

The Faculty Welfare and Faculty Budget Committees are pursuing the salary study, comparing the dimensions of salary issues at USC with those of peer and peer-aspirant institutions. The committees are working with the Provost's Office and will be addressing issues that are identified.

The Faculty Advisory Committee will be coming forward with a number of proposed changes to the Bylaws of the Faculty Senate to set up a more structured process for identifying candidates for Faculty Senate Chair.

8. Unfinished Business

PAST CHAIR NOLAN provided an update on the nomination process for the next Chair of the Faculty Senate. No new nominations were received after the nomination in October's meeting of Professor Sandra Kelly (Psychology). The Senate approved Professor Kelly's nomination by acclamation without objection, and elected Professor Kelly as the new Faculty Senate Chair. Past Chair Nolan transferred the gavel and Chair Kelly assumed the office. She thanked the Senate for electing her and invited all Senate members to contact her with issues and concerns that they would like to see addressed by the Senate in the coming years. Chair Kelly thanked Past Chair Nolan for his advice and support.

9. New Business

There was no new business.

10. Good of the Order

CHAIR KELLY turned over the floor to Past Chair Nolan to deliver a few word words on reflection of his Chairship of the Faculty Senate.

PAST CHAIR NOLAN thanked the Faculty Senate for giving him the opportunity to chair, noting that it has been an enjoyable and interesting experience. He thanked President Pastides, Provost Amiridis, and former Vice-President Ted Moore for their kindness and support. He thanked Jeanna Luker and Yvonne Dudley in the Faculty Senate Office, and Rebekah Maxwell. He thanked Tommy Stepp, Karen Tweedy, and the members of the Board of Trustees for their kindness and assistance.

Past Chair Nolan noted that, although his term is ending, he'll continue to be present as the Past Chair and as a Faculty Senator from Sociology.

He thanked Chair Kelly for being willing to serve as Chair, noting that the time commitment is huge and that the action is nonstop.

In conclusion, Past Chair Nolan thanked former Faculty Senate Chair Bob Best for his assistance and support.

CHAIR KELLY reported that it is the responsibility/privilege of the incoming Chair to appoint the Parliamentarian. Chair Kelly has requested that Professor Mark Tompkins (Political Science) continue his role as Parliamentarian and he has graciously accepted. Chair Kelly noted that Professor Tompkins has been in the role for 6 years and that his experience will be very much for the good of the order.

11. Announcements

The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be on Wednesday, December 7, at 3:00 p.m. in the Law School auditorium.

12. Adjournment

CHAIR KELLY adjourned the meeting.