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Faculty Senate Minutes

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January 28, 2011 Minutes

SWOSU Faculty Senate

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Southwestern Oklahoma State University
Faculty Senate Meeting
January 28, 2011
***APPROVED* Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes**

- I. Call to Order:** The January 28, 2011 meeting of the Faculty Senate was called to order at 2:02 p.m. in Education 201 with FS President Muatasem Ubeidat presiding.
- II. Establish Quorum:** The following members were present: Warren Akers, Amy Barnett, John Bradshaw, Kathy Brooks (Sayre), Erin Callen, Dayna Coker (Sayre), Kevin Collins, David Esjornson, Fred Gates, Terry Goforth, Rita Hays, Todd Helton, E.K. Jeong, Dick Kurtz, Sophia Lee, Jim Long, Scott Long, Ralph May, Evette Meliza, Warren Moseley, Edna Patatanian, Eric Paul, Les Ramos, Ann Russell, Lisa Schroeder, Muatasem Ubeidat, Tamra Weimer, Dennis Widen, and Jonathan Woltz.
- III. Certification of Substitutes:** None
- IV. Presentation of Visitors:** SWOSU President Randy Beutler and Lynne Thurman, Executive Director for Institutional Advancement, Foundation, and Alumni.

President Randy Beutler presented an update and legislative time-line for budgetary issues:

In December the State Equalization Board reported their preliminary revenue estimate for the coming fiscal year. The board projected a slow gradual recovery with a \$50 million dollar increase in regular revenue. However, the current year's budget includes about \$270 million in rainy day and federal stimulus money, which will not be available next year. Estimates of the projected state short-fall range from \$240 million - \$600 million. The upper end estimates amount to 10% of the current state budget. A 10 % cut in the state contribution to SWOSU would amount to approximately \$2.5 million. There are some factors that may reduce the size of budget gap. Approximately \$100 million has been withdrawn from the rainy-day account and set aside for the fiscal coming year. The projected \$50 million increase in revenue would also reduce the cuts. Finally, the legislature can only budget 95% of the projected revenue from the State Equalization Board. The new board meets in February to finalize the projections. If the new board is reasonably accurate, the 5% set aside, if real, could amount to \$150 million - \$200 million. SWOSU will not know the size of the state appropriation until the end of May. The appropriation will likely contain a 5% to 10% cut.

Several other legislative issues affecting Higher Education:

There are at least 4 bills presented by legislators concerning campus concealed carry. There are also bills for moving the tuition authority out of the hands of the regents. One bill would link tuition to the Consumer Price Index. Another bill would put tuition authority in the hands of the legislature.

Randy Beutler and Lynne Thurman presented a proposal for a task force to study the granting of Honorary degrees from SWOSU.

President Beutler has asked that a task force be formed to determine if awarding Honorary Doctorate degrees would be recommended for SWOSU. If this is decided favorably by the

Task Force, they would then be appointed to set guidelines governing what honorary degrees should be awarded, how nominees for honorary degrees should be identified, screened, and selected, a timeline for the selection and notification of nominees consistent with the Board of Regents policy, and activities for the recognition of honorary degree nominees during the May Commencement.

Task Force Activities

President Beutler will appoint a Task Force of members of the SWOSU administration and faculty with three members from Faculty Senate recommendations, the Assistant to the President for Institutional Advancement, an alumnus of SWOSU and a member of the SGA. The Task Force would meet to develop procedures for awarding honorary degrees.

- Task Force will decide number, composition, and terms of individuals appointed to the Committee on Honorary Degrees
- Task Force will decide how many different honorary degrees will be awarded and which degrees are appropriate for SWOSU
- Task Force will outline the Screening and Selection of Nominees
- The Task Force will prepare a draft call for nominations, a draft citation for the honorary degree to be awarded, the nomination statement(s), and all supporting materials.
- Task Force will plan Commencement recognition, related activities, and protocol for Honorary Doctorate Nominees
- Task Force will plan a timeline for scheduling all Honorary Doctorate procedures

V. Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the December 3rd, 2010 meeting were approved by voice vote.

VI. Announcements:

A. FS President Muatasem Ubeidat:

1. From Dr. Foust: The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) is planning a full-scale training exercise tailored for public health emergency response. Scott Long provided clarification of the nature of these exercises. As described on the OSDH web site “These exercises are designed to enhance the capacity of the health and medical systems to respond and recover safely from catastrophic health emergencies which could include incidents of terrorism, pandemic outbreaks, a large scale evacuation and even hospitals experiencing surge capacity. This program not only benefits our local public health infrastructure but also provides opportunities for our partners to participate and exercise their response components. All OSDH exercises are documented on the federal National Exercise Schedule System (NEXS) website in-line with Homeland Security Evaluation and Exercise Program (HSEEP) requirements. The Department of Homeland Security created an exercise and evaluation program for all training and exercises conducted by agencies receiving federal support.” Under this system SWOSU is expected to be a Point of Delivery (POD) site for students, faculty, staff, and their family members. POD sites dispense medication (usually vaccines or antibiotics) in the event of a public health emergency. Volunteers from the College of Nursing, the College of Pharmacy, and others will be involved with the training exercise.

2. From the Registrar Daniel Archer: Because of compliance issues associated with international students and veterans of our armed forces, Daniel Archer has made the following proposal: “I propose that faculty members should no longer be able to have the option to grade students with a “W” at the end of the semester.” Discussion of this proposal was dealt with under “New Business”.

3. From the Executive and Administrative Council meetings:

- a. Print control software for students. The university is considering the purchase and instillation of print control software for computers in the computer labs and the library. The goal is to minimize waste and reduce costs.
- b. PCAT test is no longer being administered on our Campus because the test will now be computer based. The nearest test site will be in Oklahoma City.

4. From Provost Dr. Sonobe:

- a. Radar Guns: According to Tom Fagan, a decision was made a number of years ago that the SWOSU Campus Security would not monitor traffic using radar guns. That policy is subject to change and with a new President; he may have a different perspective.
- b. The University is searching for Director of distance education to replace the retiring Dr. Les Price.

B. Secretary/Treasurer David Esjornson:

1. Roll Sheet – please sign.

2. Treasurer’s Report: No activity in either account.

a. BancFirst Checking Account

December Meeting Balance: \$2126.55

CURRENT BALANCE: \$2126.55

b. University account:

December Meeting balance: \$106.00

CURRENT BALANCE: \$106.00

C. FS President-elect Kevin Collins: Nothing to report.

D. FS Past President Scott Long: Nothing to report

E. Student Government Representative: not present

VII. No Reports from standing or ad hoc committees.

VIII. No unfinished business.

IX. New business:

A. The following motion was moved and seconded:

FS Motion 2011-01-01:

It is proposed that the Faculty Senate University Policies Committee examine the policy that final grades must be turned in less than twenty-four (24) hours after faculty give the last final exam.

The motion passed by voice vote.

Rationale: Final exams are scheduled until 10:20 pm on Wednesdays, with final grades due the following day at noon. Rapid turn-around times discourage essay exams. The faculty would prefer to focus on the quality of the examination, rather than worry about the time required to grade. At the end of the spring semester, SWOSU prints transcripts and diplomas for graduating seniors to pick up on Saturday, and the short grading deadline aids that process. Since Diplomas can be mailed to students, the grades are now computerized, and there is no graduation ceremony after the summer and fall terms, a re-examination of the current policy is warranted.

B. Final Exams Schedule for this spring semester.

The University Policy Committee is directed to look at the Final Exam schedule and make corrections.

C. The following motion was moved and seconded:

FS Motion 2011-01-02:

It is proposed that the Faculty Senate reject the following recommendation of the registrar: "I propose that faculty members should no longer be able to have the option to grade students with a "W" at the end of the semester because this practice can sometimes cause problems with federal policies involving both international students and veteran students."

The motion passed by voice vote.

Rationale: Grades are an important tool for both evaluating and encouraging students. The terms of grading for every course can be found in the policies for that course. Grading is an academic issue. The arguments made by the registrar were non-academic in nature. Non-academic issues that are affected by grades should be dealt with by other means.

The letter from the registrar reads as follows:

January 10, 2011

Dr. Foust:

I propose that faculty members should no longer be able to have the option to grade students with a "W" at the end of the semester because this practice can sometimes cause problems with federal policies involving both international students and veteran students.

While I can certainly appreciate that the faculty members that carry out this practice are trying to help out the student, this can actually cause more harm than good in some circumstances.

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the United States Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) do not consider "W" grades as complete grades. Therefore, several issues came up following the Fall 2010 Semester when students were graded with a "W" at the end of the term. The following issues can be problematic when a student receives a "W":

- * International students are required to complete at least 12 hours to stay in good standing with USCIS. If a student is enrolled in 12 hours and receives a "W" in three of the 12 hours, the student is out of status and is in danger of being deported because they did not complete 12 hours. Therefore, an "F" is better than a "W" in this particular instance because an "F" is a complete grade.
- * Veteran students are required to pay money back to the VA when they receive a "W". They do not have to pay it back when they receive an "F" because an "F" is considered a complete grade.

I again want to reiterate that I appreciate it when faculty work with students when they have difficulties; however, I am concerned that the current grading policy that allows faculty to grade students with a "W" causes problems because the registrar's office is not there to counsel the student on how it will affect non-academic issues.

Respectfully,



Daniel Archer

Registrar

X. Adjournment: 3:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Muatasem Ubeidat, FS President

David Esjornson, FS Secretary

**Next Faculty Senate Meeting:
February 25, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. in EDU 201**