

Minutes of the Academic Senate

October 4, 2007

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Carla Bossard at 3:00 p.m. October 4, 2007. Roll was called and the following Senators were present: Chair Carla Bossard, Vice Chair Brother Charles Hilken, Past Chair Ted Tsukahara, David Alvarez, David Bowen, Zach Flanagan, Barbara Grant, Charles Hamaker, Deane Lamont, Lidia Luquet, Phil Perry, Martin Rokeach, Ed Tywoniak, and Parliamentarian Valerie Burke.

Also present were: CTO Ed Biglin, Jerry Brunetti, Richard Courtney, Elizabeth Cruz, Jim Hawley, Debra Holtz, Dean Brian Jersky, Barbara McGraw, Steve Miller, Dean Frank Murray, Registrar Julia Odom, Vice Provost Frances Sweeney, Mindy Thomas, Russ Tiberii, Robert Unzueta, and Dean Steve Woolpert.

2. Minutes of the September 13, 2007 meeting were approved as submitted.

REPORTS

3. Chairperson's Report – Chair Bossard reported on the following:

- the Communications Task Force has been formed but has not met,
- the AAEC met recently to organize the evaluation form for Vice Provost Frances Sweeney,
- the Provosts' Council of Deans discussed the alarming and concerning report that 23% of the 2006-2007 freshmen did not return to SMC this year,
- the Undergraduate Policies Committee and the Admissions and Academic Regulations Committee members will meet with Russ Tiberii and Vice Provost Sweeney to discuss the advising structure. A report on the advising meeting will be scheduled for the next Senate meeting,
- four Provost candidates selected by the search committee will be on campus over the next two weeks. She encouraged faculty to meet with the candidates and complete the evaluation forms,

4. Vice Chair's Report – Brother Charles reported that an open faculty forum took place on September 27, 2007 regarding the issue of tenure to the college. He said there was a good discussion, which will carry over to the second forum to be held on October 24th. A draft of Handbook language for program closure will also be discussed in relation to the tenure issue. A third open forum may be used to address the faculty's involvement in the advising discussion.

5. Students Reaching Consciousness - Brother Charles introduced students Robert Unzueta and Elizabeth Cruz. Robert and Elizabeth said some of their peers were struggling and they recognized a need for a new club on campus. A group of students took an interest in this and tried to use their experience and take ownership of their own education. First year students are targeted to set up one on one meeting times with mentors to break the gap between school and students, to show students the resources they have to be successful on campus. Upper classmen become mentors to freshmen. The goal for the semester is to keep all mentoring students off of academic probation. Elizabeth added that many of the freshmen they are helping are first generation college students. The

Students Reaching Consciousness group is looking for input from faculty to make this program successful. Upper classmen become allies to freshmen, and they would also like faculty to become allies. It is important for students to have faculty interested in their success to reach out to students and let them know help is available. Elizabeth said they want the students coming in to SMC as freshmen to stay and graduate. Elizabeth said they are looking to bridge the gap between students and the school, and the best way to do this is with the help of your peers. Currently they are working with a small group of high potential students; more time is needed to develop the program before opening up the services to the entire campus.

6. Educational Policies Board (EPB) – Steve Miller reported that the EPB met on September 17, 2007, which involved initial reports from the subcommittees. A lengthy report was received by Russ Tiberii and Vice Provost Sweeney regarding the cohort advising program. Russ Tiberii reported on two action items from the Strategic Plan. Within the report, it was more than just advising, but a first year experience. A meeting is scheduled for October 8th with Russ Tiberii, Vice Provost Sweeney, the Undergraduate Policies Committee and the Admissions and Academic Regulations Committee. Steve Miller said he anticipates that alternative models for a first year experience will be discussed.

The final membership of the EPB has been filled by the appointment of Ben Davis to the open SOS representative position. Chair Bossard appointed Ben Davis after consulting with the Dean of the School of Science.

7. Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC) – Jim Sauerberg reported on the faculty salary policy. He distributed the policy, including the update on where SMC is within the established goals.

- Goal number one is the minimum goal – meet minimally the average salaries by rank of Pac IIA institutions. Currently meeting the minimal goal.
- Goal number two is the aspirational goal – median of WCC +1 schools. Currently 10.8% below this goal. SMC will continue to fall further behind the goal in future years.
- Goal number three is the equity goal – keep full professors salaries in line with other levels. There is a 4% increase between assistant and associate, and a 5% increase between associate and full.

A task force was formed, as stipulated in the Faculty Handbook to meet every three years, to review the implementation of the salary policy. Faculty representatives assigned to the task force are: Carla Bossard, Joel Burley, Steve Cortright and Claude Malary. The task force will meet in the near future.

8. Celebrating Diversity Report – Chair Bossard said the Celebrating Diversity Committee submits a yearly report to the President with a copy to the Academic Senate. The report recaps the accomplishments over the past year and a number of ongoing tasks. The accomplishments include having designated an administrator to take part in diversity initiatives on campus, getting administrative budget support for initiatives, and completion of a report on diversity for WASC. The report is on file in the office of the Academic Senate.

Vice Provost Sweeney announced a special visit by WASC, and one of the target areas is diversity. An afternoon session will be held for all faculty on Tuesday October 30th. Please check the campus bulletin for details.

9. Provost's Yearly Report on Senate Actions – Vice Provost Sweeney reported on the status of Senate actions on behalf of Provost Stamp. The following actions continue to be under review:

S-06/07-3 – Resolution re: the move of Graduate business to the Rheem facility. Provost Stampf disagreed with the resolution regarding its interpretation of WASC as well as the best practices to meet the needs of the school.

S-06/07-4 – Timelines for Senate actions. Will hold open for incoming provost.

S-06/07-16 0 Faculty Handbook re: Timelines, responsibilities of the Senate and relationship to the Campus Community – Will hold open for incoming provost.

S-06/07-38 – Conflict of Interest Statement – Under review by the President.

S-06/07-39 – Stopping the Tenure Track Clock – Provost accepted, asked Senate to confer with American Association of University Professors for review of best practices nationally.

S-05/06-29 – Votes of No Confidence taken Against an Academic Administrator – Accepted by the Provost.

Jim Sauerberg asked about the status of S-04/05-8 – Administrators with Faculty Retreat Rights; what constitutes an appointment, what “at will” means, what “reappointment” means. The President last reported on 3-9-06 that he would bring this to the Board in May 2006. Vice Provost Sweeney said she is not aware of any new action and she will take it up with the President.

OLD BUSINESS

10. Tenure to Program or Department – Chair Bossard recapped a few of the points made at the open faculty forum held on September 27, 2007:

- the Provost said there is an issue of financial concern when faculty are tenured to the college and a program must close
- it should not be a concern since the only department large and in danger of closing, has already done so, (SEED). To close a small department would not make an impact.
- tenured faculty are forced on departments or programs that may not want them.
- if new faculty are hired tenured to a department/program it would cause a two-tiered faculty, which was not desired.
- there are other ways to deal with the issues. Be careful when opening programs.
- a severance package would offer an option to faculty being displaced.

Additional comments on issued discussed at the open forum:

- a motivation for the change in tenure would allow the flexibility to open programs in an entrepreneurial spirit. The newly created programs could help address the financial and enrollment issues of the undergraduate college. If the undergraduate college should operate more robustly, the motivation for the change in tenure is less immediate.
- faculty tenured to a department would not be able to participate across the college in the same way, tenure to the college creates a community.
- the term “tenure lite” was mentioned for tenure to a department or program. “Tenure lite” would be differentially distributed among programs, e.g., English Department faculty would have tenure, faculty in the entrepreneurial programs would have tenure that would depend

- on their direct program. Differential tenure would exist between those departments at the core of the institution and those that are more marginal
- faculty do teach in the college because of Collegiate Seminar and Jan Term where faculty are not directly focused on teaching within the department.
- Provost Stampf did acknowledge that tenure to a department or program is a diminution of tenure. Faculty want tenure to the college, but also want to guard the departments very tightly. Tenure to the college means that departments must be ready to accept displaced faculty.
- the conversation began with some tension and a feel that the administration was trying to change something against faculty wishes, but as the conversation advanced, it was realized that this is an important conversation to ask the question of how faculty will recommit to tenure to the college.
- questioned what will happen to interdisciplinary programs? The mission of the college as stated in the catalog says that the college strives for integration of the college.
- the main concern is the issue of community. The faculty community is not separate from the student community. The faculty need to be supported by the community in terms of relationships to the students. The change of tenure could change the community for faculty and students.
- what the norm is in similar colleges and what are the trends in the rest of the country. No systematic data was provided to the community for the issue.
- the issue of tenure to the college is linked to other elements of the BOSS report. It would be difficult to compare ourselves to like institutions; we have unique teaching profiles in Collegiate Seminar and Jan Term.
- who is responsible at the point of insertion of new faculty into a department? If a department has right of first refusal, what does that mean? Who takes the responsibility of rejecting or accepting a faculty member into another department? This must be clearly defined.
- the impact of a change in tenure would not be evenly distributed, in fact would be a change for the entrepreneurial programs. To affirm tenure to the college must recognize also confirming some loss of autonomy to the departments. We would also be reaffirming a practice of relying on non-tenured faculty for entrepreneurial programs.

Vice Provost Frances Sweeney said the identity of the college is important; that faculty symbolically understand and represent the three traditions of the college. At a research first institution the first allegiance is to one's discipline. At SMC the first allegiance is to the mission of the brothers and the three-fold mission of the college. Having tenure to the college helps us animate the mission and statement about community. However, we must respectfully understand the Provost's concerns about budgets and enrollments. How can we be coherent and collaborate and continue to talk about our identity as a comprehensive college? Where is the tension between the issues of community, compromise and coherence and the autonomy for the deans and directors of various schools and programs? She encouraged the Senate to pay particular attention to the various options for recommitment. There is a desire to have 80% of undergraduate classes taught by tenure-track faculty, but on the other hand expenses continue to rise. Another question is whether 2500 undergraduates is an appropriate size for SMC? What does it mean in terms of the quality of the student body? What would it mean in terms of revenue if the student body was reduced to 1500 or 2000?

11. Program Closure document – Past Chair Tsukahara introduced Mindy Thomas as a member of the working group that developed the document over the summer. Professor Thomas said that the college would like the flexibility to close a program for financial reasons as well as academic

reasons. The new language would allow the closure of a program that is financially struggling. It seemed reasonable to the task force to allow the college to close a program for financial or academic reasons, or a combination thereof. If part of the reason to close programs is a failure to forecast costs or the ability to be financially successful, the drafted Handbook language will not address that. Programs need to be viable at the outset. The issue of tenure to the college did arise during their discussions. The drafted language does not address the issue of tenure to the college. It does not define tenure to the college. The group tried to address the balance between wanting to continue the community and security of tenure but recognizing the fact that there can be faculty members whose programs could be closed, and they would not fit in to another department. There needs to be a viable alternative for that faculty member. The group developed a severance package step, along with inclusion in the grievance process that already exists.

Past Chair Tsukahara said that further action is necessary in the future regarding a process for closing programs, and consistent with this is a need for program review to also look at programs that struggle financially.

Chair Bossard announced that the tenure to the college discussion as well as the Program Closure document will be discussed at an open forum scheduled for community time on October 24, 2007. It is anticipated that a resolution or set of resolutions can be considered at the next Senate meeting on October 25, 2007.

NEW BUSINESS

12. Motion Regarding SMC decision to Withdraw From Participation in the Peer Assessment Review Portion of U.S. News and World Report – Senator Luquet presented the following motion:

Proposed by Lidia Luquet, Senator, School of Science
October 3, 2007

Background.

Vice President's Michael Beseda's e-mail of August 16, and the Saint Mary's Campus Bulletin of August 20 informed the campus community of President Br. Ronald Gallagher's decision to join more than sixty college presidents in signing a letter that outlines a new approach to institutional participation in US News and World Report ranking of colleges and universities. These presidents made two commitments:

1. Refuse to fill out the USN&WR reputational survey.
2. Refuse to use the rankings in any promotional efforts on behalf of your college or university and, more generally, refuse to refer to the rankings as an indicator of the quality of your college or university.

The reputational survey rates a college's reputation among its peers and accounts for a quarter of the school's score.

At the Academic Senate meeting of September 13, V.P. for Communications Michael Beseda further informed that:

3. SMC will continue otherwise to comply with US&WNR request for data and will continue to appear ranked in that publication.
4. The institutions signing the letter were planning to meet in September at Yale University to discuss alternative ranking systems.
5. The National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities has designed a consumer-information initiative (University and College Accountability Network, U-CAN) to give, in a common format, prospective students and their families concise, web-based consumer-friendly information on individual private colleges and universities. SMC may join U-CAN.

6. In making a decision such as signing the letter, the President usually talks things over with the Provost and the V.P. for Communications. (This was in answer to a question from a senator).

The Academic Senate and other members of the community in attendance then held a discussion on values and marketing; on consultation and decision making; on the impact of this decision in our rankings. In view of this discussion, the Academic Senate resolves that the following letter be sent to Br. Ronald Gallagher, F.S.C., President of SMC.

October 4, 2007

Br. Ronald Gallagher, F.S.C.
President
Saint Mary's College of California

Dear Brother Ronald:

The Academic Senate is informed that there is a movement among institutions of higher learning to reconsider the attention paid to USN&WR rankings. The call of more than sixty presidents of colleges and universities to stop participation in some aspect of those rankings; the Amherst initiative; and the NAICU accountability network are some examples of initiatives to search for more meaningful measures of quality.

At the Academic Senate meeting of September 13 the faculty, informed by the V.P. for Communications, held a conversation on values and marketing. Hopefully, by better presenting our values we may attract more students suited to our institution.

We understand that in making a decision such as signing the letter of more than sixty presidents regarding the USN&WR, the President usually talks the matter over with the Provost and the V.P. for Communications. We respectfully request that before making further decisions on this issue, the President also talk the matter over with the Academic Senate. Faculty has expressed a natural interest on this subject. A conversation such as the one we request would illuminate the community on the wisdom and impact of such decisions.

We write this in the spirit of cooperative communication.

A MOTION was made by Senator Luquet and **SECONDED** by Senator Hamaker to accept the motion. Several faculty felt the motion was general in its message, tactfully written, and that it encourages open communication. Senator Rokeach spoke against the motion; he does not find it to be an urgent issue. The motion was approved by voice vote with two "no" votes.

13. The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathe Michalosky
Faculty Governance Coordinator