

Minutes of the Academic Senate

November 12, 2009

1. The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. on November 12, 2009 by Chairperson Tom Poundstone. Roll was called and the following Senators were present: Chair Tom Poundstone, Vice Chair Steve Cortright, Past Chair Brother Charles Hilken, Tomas Gomez-Arias, Laura Heid, Sam Lind, Phil Perry, Marty Rokeach, and Parliamentarian David Bird. Absent were Keith Ogawa and Ed Tywoniak.

Also present were: Vice President Michael Beseda, Vice President Keith Brant, Jerry Brunetti, Dean Tom Carter, Provost Beth Dobkin, Monica Fitzgerald, Larisa Genin, Sue Marston, Phylis Martinelli, Mary McCall, Dean Frank Murray, Associate Dean Chris Sindt, Dean Russ Tiberii, Ted Tsukahara, Hoang Vu, Roy Wensley, and Dean Steve Woolpert.

2. Minutes of the October 1, 2009 and October 22, 2009 Senate meetings were approved as submitted.

REPORTS

3. Chairperson's Report – Chair Poundstone reported that President Brother Ronald responded to the Senate transcript on Michael Beseda's report on Admissions given at the October 1, 2009 Senate meeting. Chair Poundstone's note to faculty referred to the relationship between Pell grants and the goal II of the faculty salary policy. Brother Ronald wished to clarify that there were other factors considered. SMC does not have an enrollment size, academic program mix, or endowment size, as do the median institutions of the WCC plus Manhattan College. Also, the other institutions do not share the same mission related goal of enrolling an undergraduate student body that is 25% Pell grant eligible.

Chair Poundstone announced the following appointments:

- New chair of Graduate & Professional Studies Educational Policies Committee – Kris Chase, replacing Laurie Edwards.
- Rebecca Jabbour and Aaron Sachs have accepted placement on the Facilities Planning Committee.
- Monica Fitzgerald – One Card Task Force
- Joseph Zepeda – Event Parking Task Force

Chair Poundstone reported the following updates:

- The College Committee on Inclusive Excellence (CCIE) has resubmitted the Acts of Intolerance Protocols for consideration by the Senate. When the document was considered by the Senate last year, faculty raised many concerns. The document has not been amended. Chair Poundstone has asked Past Chair Brother Charles and Senator Gomez-Arias (as Senators and members of the CCIE) to consider possible revision of the document that will be accepted by faculty.
- The proposal regarding the Collegiate Seminar Task Force has been assigned to a Senate subcommittee headed by Senator Tywoniak.

- Nominations have been received for the membership of the Core Curriculum Implementation Committee. However, the list is still lacking representative from SEBA. The group will meet soon to appoint the committee.

Chair Poundstone said he has received several e-mails from faculty expressing concern with the civility regarding the online discourse relative to the proposed Reorganization of SIMS. In particular he thanked Felicidad Oberholzer for some thoughtful e-mails to the community questioning those who were so quick to accuse the administration of acting underhandedly and of generalizing that this is their general modus operandi. He thanked Cindy Van Gilder for asking us to recognize that the chair of the UEPC is, as she put it, “guided by a palpable desire to do the right thing.” He also praised Hoang Vu for such a thorough and well-reasoned review of both the process and time line for how the proposal for the discontinuance of SIMS would be evaluated. He noted that in his letter of November 6th, Hoang said the UEPC welcomed suggestions and feedback to the proposed model for reviewing this case, and Chair Poundstone encouraged interested faculty to join in that discussion now while there was still time to incorporate the suggestions.

Consent Agenda:

- a. Academic Calendar – The issue was removed from the consent agenda and moved to New Business.
- b. New Course approval, Liberal & Civic Studies 123, Modern Global Issues – APPROVED.
4. Vice Chairperson’s Report – Vice Chair Cortright reported on two matters of business for the Committee on Committees (CoC). 1) A proposal to revamp the membership and eligibility requirements for the January Term Board and, 2) A proposal to revamp the membership and eligibility requirements for the Collegiate Seminar Board. Both proposals have been forwarded to the respective bodies for comment.
5. Provost Updates – The Provost delivered a difficult and impassioned statement regarding the online faculty comments regarding the closure of SIMS, which follows:

I know Tom has already mentioned the email exchanges that took place last week. This is going to be very hard to say, but I think I need to say it as your Provost and in the context of shared governance. My report will be brief and unconventional, partly because of being across the Atlantic for the past week, where the sting of accusations distributed broadly and electronically can still be felt.

I understand the desire to protect, perhaps at all costs, those with whom we have personal affinity. But it also seems as though we risk abandoning trust based on passion rather than facts. When one accepts the role of administrator, one is expected to make carefully considered decisions within a defined scope of responsibility, which might not always be agreeable to all parties involved. The role is impossible to fulfill if all administrative actions are viewed through a lens of suspicion, with the expectation that an administrator’s intent is always to subvert process and exclude faculty input, or with the assumption that once one crosses that imaginary line, respect and good will no longer put the concern for students at the forefront.

We administrators are told to “have a thick skin.” That’s like telling people never to be nervous before speaking in public. Once that happens, we become numb, and I never

want to be that person. I want to continue to address this body and this campus with openness and honesty, and for those who report to me to be able to do the same.

I have already said it, these are not easy things to say, and yes, I'm nervous, but I hope they will get us back on the track of using language and means of communication that unite rather than divide us. I've seen great examples of shared governance at Saint Mary's in the past, and I'm hoping we can return to that.

Senators Lind and Rokeach expressed strong support and agreement with the words of the Provost.

6. Undergraduate Educational Policies Committee (UEPC) – Senator Lind reported the UEPC approved two items, both of which appear on the consent agenda. The three-year Academic Calendar was discussed at great length and unanimously accepted as submitted. The new course in Liberal & Civic Studies LCS 123, Modern Global Issues, was approved with a minor revision. The third item was a discussion of a proposal from the Environmental Science and Studies Program, which was returned for modifications.

7. Graduate & Professional Studies Educational Policies Committee (GPSEPC) – Senator Heid announced that Kris Chase will replace Laurie Edwards as Chair. The GPSEPC met yesterday. At the December or January meeting they will consider the approval of the Master of Arts in Teaching Leadership (MATL), which was previously approved on the fast track. Once approved by the GPSEPC, it will come before the Senate. Also to be examined are the Program Review Guidelines. She announced that all of the SMC graduate professional programs now have one online application.

8. Keith Brant, Vice President for Development - Vice President Keith Brant reported that he had distributed preliminary confidential copies of the Comprehensive Campaign Strategic Plan to the Senators. An essential component to the campaign is active faculty participation, and he requested input from faculty as to how to engage the faculty members as partners in the comprehensive campaign. It is planned to have faculty on the road with alumni and donors. Several faculty members have already participated in prior events. He described many of the possible avenues that are currently being reviewed for future fundraising through various faculty activities.

Vice President Brant said that Chris Carter (Alumni Relations) has been speaking with faculty about how to use networking tools to keep connected with their students. He is also facilitating dialogue with various schools about engaging graduate and nontraditional alumni.

The plan was conceptually developed last year, and has gone through various reviews of the Cabinet. The Library component will be toughest project, there is not a strongly identified group of supporters.

Chair Poundstone noted that prior attempts to raise money for the Library and recreational center have not been successful and asked what was being done differently this time. Vice President Brant answered that the focus is in trying to broaden the base. SMC must reach out and get to know more people, expanding the types of organizations, and looking to corporations in the Bay area. The development staff has rich goals for contacting and meeting people, conducting research on potential donors, and getting the President out to meet local businesses and leaders. He is hopeful that the economy will improve over the next five years.

NEW BUSINESS

9. Admissions and Academic Regulations Committee (AARC) Proposed Handbook Revision – Chair Poundstone introduced the proposal, which amends the Handbook Section 1.7.4.8 to include the following statement regarding advising, “f. standards and evaluation processes of faculty academic advising in connection with student matriculation.”

The proposal was submitted by Senator Tywoniak on behalf of the AARC. A MOTION was made by Vice Chair Cortright and SECONDED by Senator Lind to accept the proposal which will insert one additional task under Faculty Handbook Section 1.7.4.8, Admissions and Academic Regulations Committee.

Dean Russ Tiberii explained that the revision will clarify the faculty role in advising. A continuing process remains to develop a larger statement which will articulate the faculty role and the expectations in terms of student outcomes, as well as what advising means in terms of rank and tenure.

Hoang Vu asked how faculty involvement could be tracked and assessed. Dean Tiberii said the AARC is currently discussing the issue.

It was noted that the R&T Committee did request several department chairs to identify the role of faculty advising. Ted Tsukahara asked if this could have an impact on faculty workload. Vice Chair Cortright said he would expect the AARC to consider advising part of all faculty workload. Sue Marston added that advising is under R&T, under service. It could open up a conversation about equity.

Dean Murray said that three of the five members of the AARC are designated as undergraduate faculty. The two remaining members are at-large or the Senate Vice Chair, which could be undergraduate or graduate. Since advising is not just an undergraduate responsibility, perhaps the AARC membership should be reviewed to include designated graduate program representatives.

The motion was approved by a hand vote of 8-0-0.

10. Academic Calendar – Hoang Vu reported that the UEPC considered the three-year calendar (2011-2014) as submitted by Dean Murray. The UEPC unanimously agreed to maintain the current calendar which has the Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving as a holiday. They discussed extending the semester by one week, reinstating the midterm break, and having the option of the entire Thanksgiving week as holiday. They found this option unfair to those teaching Jan Term. The committee did not extensively discuss amending the start date.

Dean Murray said fall calendar includes Labor Day (any time the first week of September) and Thanksgiving (which can fall in the 3rd or 4th week of November). For those years when Thanksgiving falls during the 4th week, it pushes against the end of classes in December. An early Labor Day pushes the start of school earlier in August. The Senate recommendation will be forwarded to the Provost, however, the Provost and the President will make the decision regarding the academic calendar. He suggested that if faculty want a midterm break, or a few days for committees to meet or all school activities around WASC or the core curriculum, now is the opportunity to identify the things faculty want incorporated into the academic calendar.

Vice Chair Cortright said the college should consider equality between semesters. Some years, the Fall is a short semester. Whatever calendar is adopted, the first consideration must be maximal continuity of instruction time. He said he would like to see a calendar adopted that allows a full 13 week schedule.

Senator Lind agreed with Vice Chair Cortright, the utmost consideration must be given to the faculty/student relationship and performance in the classroom.

Dean Murray said that what would offer the most academic continuity for the fall semester, given the holidays, is to begin before Labor Day and end the second week of December. He added that there are several considerations should school begin too early: student's summer school and job conflicts as well as dorm/facility renovations during August, faculty meetings and new student orientation. There is also pressure to end early enough in December by those teaching Jan Term.

Monica Fitzgerald said that there has been a shift in recent years with the public schools in the area in that they now begin before Labor Day and have the entire week of Thanksgiving off.

Ted Tsukahara noted that Vice Chair Cortright's point regarding educational considerations is an important one. A recent change that has taken place in the SMC academic calendar is the Monday/Friday class created due to community time, in which case a Monday or Friday holiday is very disruptive. Faculty should keep education first and let other programs alter their schedules to accommodate the academic calendar.

The following MOTION was made by Vice Chair Cortright and SECONDED by Senator Rokeach:

The sense of the Senate is that, whereas the continuity of educational instruction time should be the predominant concern in the construction of an academic calendar, Saint Mary's College should begin its undergraduate fall semesters the week before Labor Day.

The Senate motion is to set a policy, the intricacies of the calendar to be at the discretion of the administration. The motion was approved by a hand vote of 6-0 with two abstentions.

11. The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathe Michalosky
Faculty Governance Coordinator