

Request to the Senate from the Seminar Review Committee (Charlie Hamaker, Ellen Rigsby, Zach Flanagan) – 8/26/11

The Background – In spring 2011, the campus voted on a series of models for Collegiate Seminar. Both full-time faculty and lecturers in Seminar were asked to rate their preferences; 138 full-time faculty voted, as did 41 lecturers who teach Seminar. The results were inconclusive, resulting in a runoff vote between Seminar models 1b and 3 to be held the third week of the fall semester. An element contributing to the inconclusive result was that the survey and its published results distinguished between the votes of full-time faculty and lecturers, with significantly different voting patterns evident in the two groups.

The Question – Should the runoff vote in fall 2011 include lecturers or be restricted to full-time faculty?

Arguments for including the lecturers in the vote: Lecturers staff a large number of sections of Seminar, to which they make a very important contribution. Many lecturers have been involved in the Seminar for years. Some lecturers teach in Seminar more than full-time faculty. Lecturers were included in the spring vote.

Arguments for restricting the vote to full-time faculty: Full-time faculty are more likely to see the “big picture” of the SMC education, i.e., the role of particular programs in the entire curriculum. Full-time faculty are, generally speaking, the ones who have invested their lives and careers in Saint Mary’s. Major college votes / authority (e.g., for Senate, for the new core, for the Collegiate Seminar Governing Board) are, as standard practice rooted in the Faculty Handbook, restricted to full-time faculty for the above reasons and more.

Obviously, this is a major question that could very well determine the result of the Seminar vote. The Seminar Review Committee asks the Senate to weigh the options and make a decision at its September 8 meeting. We offer no recommendation for the proper course of action.