Minutes of the Academic Senate

February 11, 2010

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Tom Poundstone at 3:00 p.m. on February 11, 2010. 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, Keith Ogawa, Phil Perry, Marty Rokeach, Ed Tywoniak, and Parliamentarian David Bird.

Also present were: Michael Barram, Glenna Breslin, Vice President Michael Beseda, Jerry Brunetti, Jamila Buckner, Joel Burley, Dean Tom Carter, Martin Cohen, Dick Courtney, Cathy Davalos, Provost Beth Dobkin, Sue Fallis, Monica Fitzgerald, Zach Flanagan, Cynthia Ganote, Interim Dean Larisa Genin, Rosemary Graham, Charles Hamaker, Sue Hooks, Chris Jones, Christa Kell, Annalee Lamoreaux, Jack Lester, Claude R. Mallory, Catherine Marachi, Hugh McAllister, Mary McCall, Tom McElligott, Barbara McGraw, Vice President Pete Michell, Norrie Palmer, Kathy Porter, Claudine Roselle Puente, Mari-Anne Rosario, Deepak Sawhney, Associate Dean Chris Sindt, Elizabeth Smith, Grete Stenersen, James Temple, Dean Russ Tiberii, Ted Tsukahara, Cynthia Van Gilder, Hoang Vu, Marshall Welch, Interim Dean Roy Wensley, and Dean Steve Woolpert.

2. Approval of the minutes of the January 13, 2010 meeting were postponed; Senator Ogawa wishes to amend the minutes prior to approval.

REPORTS

3. Chairperson’s Report – Chair Poundstone thanked Vice Chair Cortright for acting as chair while he was off campus for January Term. In addition, he further thanked Hoang Vu, Cindy Van Gilder and Past Chair Brother Charles for their efforts in getting the Core Curriculum Implementation Committee (CCIC) operational. He announced that Zach Flanagan has been elected as CCIC chair and Paul Zarnoth as CCIC vice chair. Paul Zarnoth will be replaced by Jim Sauerberg when he goes on sabbatical in the fall. Kara Boatman will replace Ted Tsukahara when he goes on sabbatical in the fall.

The UEPC conducted its first open meeting regarding the discontinuance of SIMS. Two additional meetings are scheduled for February 15 and February 22, 3-5 p.m. in the Soda Center. The UEPC’s decision along with its rationale and many of the documents it has collected will be forwarded to the Senate.

4. Vice Chairperson’s Report – Vice Chair Cortright reported that an amended Jan Term Committee proposal is to be discussed under New Business. The faculty elections will begin once the Rank & Tenure Committee’s elections are completed in March.

5. Undergraduate Educational Policies Committee (UEPC) – Senator Lind reported that the UEPC considered the following:
   - Reconfigure the minor for Performing Arts (postponed to the March 4th meeting.)
   - Anthropology curriculum revisions (approved on the Consent Agenda).
   - Integral 074 to be offered in the fall as Integral 073.
   - English .25 credit experimental course, “Book Club.”

The UEPC held the first of three open meetings regarding the discontinuance of SIMS on February 8. Additional meetings are scheduled for February 15th and February 22nd.
6. Graduate & Professional Educational Policies Committee (GPSEPC) – Senator Heid reported that the GPSEPC is conducting a full review of the Master of Arts in Teaching Leadership (MATL). The MATL was originally approved according to Fast Track guidelines. Additional items for discussion: 1) Exploring the creation of the position of Vice Provost for Graduate Programs, 2) Considering a graduate faculty designation, 3) BOS 2.4.

7. Admissions and Academic Regulations Committee (AARC) – The AARC met with Kathy Porter and Michael Beseda on January 13th regarding catalog changes. The following issues are also being considered for this spring: implementing the assessment surveys for the first year advising cohort, advising equity: (concerns about equity within departments, school and the college as a whole), and summer school assessment.

8. Board of Trustees Report – Senator Tywoniak reported that he attended the Board of Trustees meeting as the Senate representative in lieu of Past Chair Brother Charles. The report to the Trustees included:
   1) Announcement of CCIC,
   2) Proposed closing of SIMS; brief report,
   3) Elected representation to Collegiate Seminar Board,
   4) Elected representation to January Term Board,
   5) Brief statement to Trustees regarding Senate’s role in discussing budget matters.

Various issues, including meeting the needs of faculty and students and the Catholic identity of the College, were discussed. Reports were made on the status of the recreation center and the library, both are high priorities for the College. The renderings will be available soon for the library.

The full board met on the second day.
   - Investment Committee Report discussed how debt covenants relate to lowering the endowment. No move toward debt restructuring in the near future, $70 million bond debt, revenue above planned expenditures – approved $6 million line of credit. Approved the 10-11 budget assumptions:
     4.5% tuition increase, 3% room increase, and 4% board increase for next year. The Board expressed appreciation for the faculty working with the budget restructuring both last year and this year.
   - Buildings and Grounds Committee: reported library design to be complete end of February. Student recreation center is a high priority. It is a $30 million project, just received a $3 million gift toward the project. McKeon expansion is on hold.
   - Advancement Committee: Gifts are up 21% for the past year; however, alumni gifts are down 20%.
   - Enrollment and Student Life Committee: Housing 96% full, discount rate at 42%.

9. Technology Advisory Committee (TAC) – Senator Tywoniak reported on the following:
   - the College has a signed contract with a vendor to work on the portal (Gateway to the virtual world.)
   - A strong password policy is now implemented; required to change every six months.
   - Gael Cal – online cloud calendar is fully implemented
   - Google docs – security issues being addressed.
   - Academic blueprint committee placing materials on line.
   - IdeaJam is an online discussion module.
10. Provost’s Updates – Provost Dobkin encouraged faculty to participate in the IdeaJam discussion. She introduced new employee Jamila Buckner, Director of Recruiting and HR Projects.

11. Core Curriculum Implementation Committee (CCIC) – Zach Flanagan reported that the CCIC is just beginning its work. He briefly outlined the process: researching best practices, addressing approved learning goals, learning outcomes, and benchmarks, and finally rubrics for assessment. To be efficient, he asked the Senate to approve the Collegiate Seminar Task Force (CSTF) soon so that its discussions could be undertaken simultaneously with the CCIC process.

Chair Poundstone said the Senate did not approve that section of the proposal to create the CCIC at its first meeting of the year. (A motion to call the question in reference to that section of the proposal failed, and ultimately we had to leave the motion on the table for future discussion since it was time to introduce new faculty.) At that September meeting Chair Poundstone asked Senator Rocheach to work on the proposal to make it more acceptable to the Senate. Senator Rocheach made a significant suggestion with reference to the limited duration of the task force. At this meeting Chair Poundstone asked Senator Tywoniak to spearhead the attempt to revise the motion and have it ready for consideration at the next Senate Meeting.

12. The Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC) – Joel Burley reported on an update from the Health Insurance Review Committee. Results from open enrollment showed fewer people signed up with Anthem and the HSA account than were anticipated with more than expected converting to Kaiser. The target is to improve enrollment in HSA for next year. If the numbers continue to decline, it will be more difficult for the College to continue to offer multiple plans.

The FWC shared three ideas: 1) Facing difficult financial times, but important to prevent further erosion of faculty compensation. Faculty is top heavy and aging. The economy makes it harder for faculty to retire.

2) The budgeting process must change. Faculty are largely disengaged from the decision-making process. Must share information openly. Notification after the fact is not shared governance.

3) Long-term welfare of the faculty depends on increasing engagement with administration on the strategic issues. Must get endowments on track, be involved in fundraising and issues with admissions and recruitment. It is reasonable for faculty to get involved.

NEW BUSINESS

13. Amendment to resolution on January Term Committee – Vice Chair Cortright explained that the Senate approved Handbook language at the January meeting to change the January Term Committee membership to an elected committee. The following proposed amendment (additional language in bold) is recommended to provide clarity regarding eligibility:

1.7.4.11 January term Committee

Eligibility:

Nominees for elective membership will have taught a minimum of two (2) January Term courses in the previous ten (10) years.

January Term Director, Sue Fallis, suggested the clarification. She said it is important that faculty serving on the January Term Committee have a fairly immediate experience. A MOTION was made by
Vice Chair Cortright and SECONDED by Senator Tywoniak to accept the amendment. The motion was approved by a hand vote of 10-0-0.

14. Proposal from Staff Council on Improving Faculty/Staff Relations – Chair Poundstone introduced the following proposal:

   Staff Council is inviting the Academic Senate to co-sponsor a forum this spring to discuss faculty-staff relationships. With the goal of improving these relationships, Staff Council would like to present to faculty specific issues that both help staff feel appreciated and included as part of the campus community, and examples of situations where staff feel excluded or not appreciated for the work they do. Similarly, staff are interested in hearing from faculty the same. The goal is to begin a conversation about how to move forward in building an inclusive community where all feel appreciated.

Carolyn Morris and Claudine Roselle Puente appeared on behalf of the Staff Council. Carolyn Morris noted that many of the comments made at the Campus of Difference workshop were related to communication issues between faculty and staff. The Staff Council then created a survey which is planned to be distributed to staff regarding the climate on campus. They suggested that the faculty also look into issues between faculty/staff, perhaps by distribution of a survey of their own. The Staff Council would like to bring faculty and staff together in the spring to review the information received from the staff survey. Once the results are in from the staff survey the Staff Council will hold a forum in the spring in order to share the results and raise awareness. It was suggested that two or three Senators attend the forum in order to represent faculty. A MOTION was made by Senator Tywoniak and SECONDED by Senator Gomez-Arias to approve the proposal.

Several Senators expressed support that, as representatives of the faculty, it is appropriate to work with staff to work through any issues. The motion was approved by a hand vote of 10-0-0.

15. Meeting Budgetary Challenges - Chair Poundstone said there are short term and long term issues related to the finances of the College. The pressing question is how in the next few weeks we can cut $1.6 in the Academic Affairs budget for next year.

Provost Dobkin thanked the many deans and administrators that have been working closely with her regarding the budget issues. The $1.6 in reductions must be balanced by the end of May. Separately, there are longer term issues that must be addressed to help improve the budget process. She requested faculty feedback for ideas and priorities. The Provost stated that a quality education cannot be provided without having adjunct and temporary faculty.

Following are questions raised and comments offered:

Energy costs? Can it be improved?

Reassigned time? What is the cost? Would faculty prefer to diminish the number of released times in order to save positions? The Provost said there are approximately 170 course releases in 2008. She suggested looking at these for a 20% reduction. In some ways stipends and reassigned times have become a form of merit pay. She is making the attempt to ensure accountability for course reassignments.

Concerned that eliminating course releases will punish those willing to serve, thus reducing the pool of faculty willing to serve.

Joel Burley said this will most likely be dealt with by each department.
Senator Rokeach said he does not see departments willingly offering up their course releases, without being mandated to do so.

Provost Dobkin is looking to faculty for input on budget priorities; is the reduction of course releases one of the strategies faculty want pursued in order to help with the budget cuts? She is willing to mandate this if faculty encourage it. It is part of the larger conversation to look at a compensation philosophy with faculty that suggests what faculty think compensation should do for them.

Rosemary Graham said these conversations are already happening with her dean. She was more concerned to pick up the point in the Faculty Welfare Committee’s letter to the faculty and discuss how the faculty are going to assert themselves and become the activists that the FWC is asking them to be. She would like to see our conversation be more about faculty involvement in many of the long-term issues.

Senator Gomez-Arias agreed that significant change is needed in the long-term budget structure. He expressed a lack of confidence in the methods of senior management for the past several years. The financial data needed to evaluate long-term strategies is not available. He said faculty should expect more professionalism among the leaders of the College.

Senator Lind said a significant number of faculty are doing a great deal of extra projects without reassignments. He agreed that the larger question needs to be addressed for the long-term strategy. Faculty have some responsibility to provide input to administration, to get involved.

Joel Burley suggested that the first step is for faculty to ask for access to pertinent information. Identify the information required. Once the data is analyzed, it will provide the information needed to make decisions regarding programs. The Budget Committee does not have a conversation connected to long-term priorities.

Provost Dobkin said IdeaJam is a platform to discuss the longer term issues. How can faculty be involved in increasing retention or developing an experience that will attract students? That will help in the long-term.

Chair Poundstone addressed a question to Michael Beseda: Why is SMC not receiving the increased applications as reported by like schools? Michael Beseda said the numbers as reported by some schools are not completely accurate. In researching the reported numbers, he found that SMC is experiencing about the same application numbers as like colleges. The real financial problem is the net tuition revenue per student, it is about the same at the undergraduate level as it was five years ago. SMC has seen a significant increase in transfer students. The applicant pool for the fall is also showing growth but that with less financial aid available, we might see a lower yield on that higher level of applications.

Dean Woolpert agreed with Joel Burley’s suggestion to strengthen the engagement and efficacy in how the budget process works. It is important to move the conversation to the revenue side rather than just cutting and saving. Undergraduate enrollments are the greatest source of revenue. Faculty have an important roll in discussing and advising the Provost and Michael Beseda on enrollment strategies, goals, financial aid. The enrollment process should allow faculty to effectuate the academic goals. Faculty must have an ongoing conversation with administrators in admissions about enrollment activities and the academic goals of the College.

Interim Dean Wensley said the quality of work coming from faculty committees is not always the best. What is going on in the classroom is excellent. Faculty, both in and outside of class with students, are doing an incredible job. We are distinctive in this role. Faculty could look to ways to help Development.
Senator Gomez-Arias asked Michael Beseda what the enrollment strategy is and how it is different than what we have been doing over the past 5-10 years? Michael Beseda said there are various strategies, admissions is not focused on one area.

Senator Perry said he thought the Senate was going to address specific ways to address the $1.6 in budget cuts; he suggested that faculty develop alternative options to be considered. He is concerned that there is no mechanism in place to move forward. Chair Poundstone said last year the faculty were not asked for their input; and he is very thankful that administration has asked for faculty input this year. There are fundamental choices that faculty need to discuss; is it preferred to cut all salaries in order to keep all personnel? Cut positions? Alter the average class sizes? Some of the decisions will need to be made within two weeks. Chair Poundstone said somehow we must look out for the least well off.

Many were concerned that there is no process in place to go forward. Chair Poundstone assured faculty that Provost Dobkin encourages and accepts input on an on-going basis.

Vice Chair Cortright explained that the College has declined in size, without a proportional decline in the number of employees. For example, the College has gone from 20-1 FTE ratio to 15-1 FTE ratio, ranked faculty to students, while simultaneously revenue per student had declined. These trends are obviously unsustainable. The College will need to decrease faculty at the top of rank, or find ways to increase revenues over a reasonable length of time.

Provost Dobkin added that she is looking into offering a one time incentive for long-term faculty to retire, which may have been delayed due to the economy. She also encouraged faculty to participate in recruiting activities such as the Honors Overnight Program and the Presidential Scholars Interviews.

The Senate Chair was asked to write a note to faculty asking for their input regarding the budget and to request that department chairs bring the conversation up in their department meetings.

16. The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathe Michalosky
Faculty Governance Coordinator