

Minutes
ULM Faculty Senate
February 28, 2008

Present: Brett Bennett, Monica Bontty Sally Davidson, Joseph Feldhaus, Stephen Fox, David Hare, Anna Hill, Cecil Hutto, Kitty Kervin, Megan Lowe, Lance Nickelson, Mona Oliver, Shirlee Owens, Jack Palmer, Linda Reid, Donna Rhorer, Jeff Rush, Pamela Saulsberry, Dorothy Schween, C. Turner Steckline, John Sutherlin, Bruce Walker, and Holly Wilson

Observer: Vice-Provost Eric Pani

President Steckline called the meeting to order. Secretary Rhorer called the roll.

Minutes of January 17 and February 14 were accepted with corrections.

Committee Reports: Executive Board met with President Cofer on January 31, 2008. Bruce Walker suggested we report the averages of ratings on the FCPS Survey when reporting results.

Senator Rhorer reported on a meeting she had with Provost Richters in which he conveyed his wish that Faculty Senate propose a plan for campus-wide Academic Program Review. In the meeting, the Provost suggested outside consultation, that the Faculty Senate do the review, or that some type of Council review programs. Senator Rhorer restated the Senate's position that we would not undertake program review. The Provost understands and accepts our position; however, he would like us to recommend a model by March 31, 2008. A draft of a possible plan was presented. Discussion followed, and the topic was referred to the Faculty Welfare Committee. Senators were asked to email comments to Senator Wilson.

Academic Standards: No report

Constitution and Bylaws: Questions arose about whether or not to include the concepts of intellectual property and academic freedom in the Constitution and Bylaws. And should we separate them? A new charge to formulate a document with regard to Executive Sessions was given to the committee.

Elections: Ballots to fill vacancies will be mailed out Monday.

Faculty Welfare Committee: Met last week to work on more items suggested by last year's survey about the Faculty Senate; will report on that at next meeting. The committee will meet next Tuesday.

Senator Hutto spoke for Senator Schween who had to leave. Senator Schween reported there were not enough action verbs in the Welfare Committee's Action Plan for the Faculty Senate. Senators Hare and Wilson spoke briefly about grade inflation. The topic was referred to FWC and Academic Standards.

Handbook: Senators received a handout and were asked to look at this and respond to Senator Reid. Reid noted there is a form to make changes to the handbook by March 1, 2008; but we will

probably be given an extension. The changes go to a committee, and FS should then approve any changes.

Fiscal Affairs: No report.

Faculty Career and Personal Satisfaction Action Plan

Senator Walker noted that some questions listed could be driven by law. President Steckline added that this ties back to faculty education; therefore, we should educate the faculty and figure out the best way to do that.

President Steckline asked for suggestions for revisions.

Some comments included the following:

Senator Sutherlin noted that additional statistical information must be added; there is a possible margin of error. Steckline suggested we could frame that with general faculty in our meeting with them.

Senator Owens asked why the second request to have faculty reminded to take the Faculty Career and Personal Satisfaction Survey had not gone out over email to faculty. Steckline did send it to faculty@ulm.edu, but the announcement never made it to the faculty.

Senator Sutherlin said the information from the survey should be given out in a public manner without specific comments.

Senator Rush asked if we were going to communicate the results to the media. Steckline noted that we are trying to keep the results in-house.

Senator Owens voiced her concerns for faculty privacy, and noted that we had voted to reveal no comments and to do a rating average.

Senator Bennett asked if our purpose was not to guide our actions as a Faculty Senate. He suggested we focus on the plan. Senator Hill noted that there was no reason to exclude from our presentation data collected since it serves as informational back-up of what we have done.

President Steckline asked the body if we could share the Action Plan with faculty in open meetings. Could we distribute the Action Plan through a PowerPoint presentation?

Senator Wilson noted that since the basis for each proposal comes from the statistics such data should not be excluded.

Senator Bontty noted that the news media might twist things and we should be concerned that they do not take things out of context.

Senator Rhorer noted that the Faculty Career and Personal Satisfaction Survey speaks to a wider audience than senators and is not one about the Faculty Senate. The one about what Faculty Senate could do was completed in Spring 2007.

Senator Palmer noted that infrastructure under goal 3 was important.

He added that loss of secretaries is a problem even though we are definitely beyond re-organization.

Senator Sutherlin said we should include the margin of error. Senator Rhorer suggested we might get the mathematicians in the group to compile the results. Sutherlin noted that he was comfortable doing it.

Senator Wilson moved that we accept the Action Plan. Senator Reid provided the second. Discussion followed. The Action Plan was accepted. President Steckline will determine the dates of presentation to general faculty. Mona Oliver suggested we move on to the presentation by Dr. Paxton Oliver regarding the plan for shared governance at ULM.

Shared Governance Presentation

Dr. Oliver offered the following:

1. Starting next Monday, March 3, 2008, all documents committee members have developed so far will be available
2. The Principles and Procedures of Shared Governance are being edited now
3. Now is the time for the campus to speak about shared governance
4. College-wide meetings will begin this month
5. In Fall 2008, the committee will put a plan before the campus and let the campus vote on it.

Discussion began with the following questions from senators:

What if there is low participation in the process? Dr. Oliver said they would send out a second request. If few people responded to that, then the committee would have gotten the message. He said 30 to 40 percent would be a good response.

He noted that there are 245 unclassified staff members on campus, and they want them to have a voice; there are about 375 full-time faculty.

Senator Owens noted that for faculty there is already a Faculty Senate with a constitution and an elected independent representative body.

Two senates could result, noted Dr. Oliver, one for Faculty Senate and the other made up of professional staff.

Who comprised an "elective body" was the next question posed. Dr.

Oliver noted that the entire campus voting would qualify as an elective body. The comment was made that we have a Faculty Senate, and it should not be watered down. It should stand as it is.

He said there might be many models for consideration including Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, maybe a University Assembly, perhaps a University Senate. Senators asked why. Some clarification was made as to the differences between classified and non-classified employees.

Next, Senator Rhorer asked for a definition of a "campus vote." Dr.

Oliver said he couldn't define that. The staff might vote for something; the faculty, against it.

He was asked who ultimately decides on the model ULM will have. He said this will come from what the focus groups have said. Next, he was asked if a campus-wide vote could undo, if they

wanted to, a constitutionally defined body such as the ULM Faculty Senate. He said he "can not answer this, but it's a possibility." Senator Rhorer asked why a constitutionally defined body with elected representatives, a history on this campus, and an active life, has to justify its existence. Dr. Oliver responded that we would have a general election to determine this. In response, a member noted that we are an independent body whether on or off the campus.

Dr. Oliver cited Louisiana Tech's move some time ago to a University Senate. President Steckline asked if faculty at Tech had voted on that move. Dr. Oliver did not provide an answer. Steckline offered to find out. The session with Dr. Oliver ended.

Senate Business:

How to get FCPS Survey results out in a secure manner?

We will have to meet with faculty. There was no response to our request that the administration help us get the results out to faculty over a secure online connection where results could not be printed.

Senator Wilson moved that we have a meeting to present statistics and Plan of Action to faculty and invite them to bring IDs for entrance.

Senator Hill provided the second.

Discussion: Senator Sutherlin noted that if facilities are used, then the meeting must be open. Senator Owens said it probably has to be an open meeting; if faculty bring CWID and there is nothing printed to be given out, this should work. Senator Reid suggested we use a "PowerPoint" presentation only.

A vote was taken. Six voted to have the presentations, and six voted against the motion. President Steckline broke the tie with a yes vote. The motion carried with 7 voting yes and 6 voting no. We will have the presentations to faculty before Spring Break. Senator Rhorer suggested the President Steckline schedule a meeting on MWF and one on TTh to accommodate everyone. Senator Sutherlin suggested she do it before the legislative session starts. President Steckline responded that he is presuming damage. Senator Hill noted that survey shows a very satisfied faculty, presents a very positive picture of the University, and helps identify areas where the ULM community can improve. Senator Reid suggested we present the plan first; then give the statistics.

Senator Rush moved to adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna A. Rhorer, Secretary
ULM Faculty Senate