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College of Arts & Sciences Council Meeting : 2008 : 11 : 14

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USFSP FACULTY COUNCIL MEETING
COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES
November 14, 2008
Minutes

Present: J. Arthur, S. Bundrick, J. Cabness, T. Hallock, J. Gore, R. Johns, J. Schneider, J. Spadaro

Jim Gore convened the meeting in DAV 219 at 2:00 pm, with more than 70 students and faculty in attendance. RCVAA Norine Noonan was also present.

1. Suspension of Graphic Arts Program. The large number of attendees was predicated on information that the Graphic Arts program would be cut in the wake of faculty departures. Students, in particular, rallied to the defense of departing Professor Joani Spadaro, who worked assiduously to increase the courses and SCHs in Graphic Arts. Norine addressed the assembly by stating that the “program will continue, courses will be available in OASIS in a matter of a few hours, and faculty will be recruited to fill the vacant positions,” points she repeated before the students retreated.

Minutes. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as read.

2. Academic Program Committee (APC)

Jim Gore was selected as Chair of the Academic Program Committee as the most senior member of the Faculty Council. Following this, Eric Odgaard provided an APC report that included a recommendation to suspend two classes in the Journalism department.

3. CBA Policy on Layoffs

Jim turned the councilors attention to “Non-Reappointment / Layoff / Resignation,” Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) Articles 12 and 13 (attached to agenda).

4. Faculty Retention Incentives

Discussion ensued about the merits of “faculty retention incentives” vs. merit pay raises. Rebecca clarified past processes for achieving faculty retention incentives. The sentiment was expressed that “if a merit pay raises are based on annual evaluations, they would be issued across the board.” Without transparency and in the current climate, it is not possible to know the criteria used for the latest round of faculty retention incentives.

The councilors concurred that the absence of transparency at the CAS and BAY administrative levels will breed distrust and contempt in way that was described as rather “Cheney-esque.” Instability at the Provost level (as evidenced by three administrators in as many years) has contributed to this lack of transparency and to inconsistency at the top, leaving faculty feeling excluded when it comes to making key decisions related to governance.

Several troubling *trends* were identified:

- 1) Faculty have been made to feel unappreciated, particularly by the lack of meaningful faculty input in the university’s governance.

- 2) Faculty are appalled by the reactive nature of today's administration. Proactive leadership that invites faculty, student, and staff collaboration is desirable and has proven successful (e.g., in recently shaping the new Five-Year Strategic Plan at USFSP).
- 3) Top-down communication is the way that large bureaucracies have traditionally performed. However, this type of communication is very "old school" and inconsistent with the small size of USFSP and our collegial climate. There is a decided lack of "fit" between this newly imposed vertical approach and faculty expectations for a more horizontal (egalitarian) communication approach.

The following *recommendations* emerged from the discussion of these issues:

- 1) Consider surveying faculty about what they find affirming and disaffirming for their work at USFSP. Ask about their five-year plans.
- 2) Invite the college Dean and RVCAA to the next council meeting.
- 3) Submit more suggestions for faculty appreciation (e.g., reduced course load for teaching an overload).

A motion was made and seconded to invite Dean Biafora and Vice Chancellor Noonan to the January 2009 meeting of the council to discuss faculty governance and transparency at USFSP and suggestions for resolution of these issues.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00pm.

The minutes are respectfully submitted by *Jessica Cabness*.