

**Faculty Senate Minutes
November 15, 2005**

The meeting was called to order at 4:12 p.m. All departments were in attendance except Biology, Library, Music and Social Work.

I. Minutes of the November 1, 2005 meeting

The minutes of the November 1, 2005 meeting of the Faculty Senate were approved.

II. Report of the Faculty Senate Chairperson

Vice Chair Rosenthal presided in place of Dr. Börger-Greco. Dr. Rosenthal relayed that additional faculty representation is being sought for the December commencement ceremony. She also reminded Senators of the upcoming special meeting of Faculty Senate scheduled for November 29 to deal exclusively with General Education issues.

III. Report of the Student Senate President

Student Senate President Fayth Balsam reported that Student Senate had a lively meeting attended by students, alumni and parents concerned about issues relating to the Athletic Department. She indicated that Student Senate intends to initiate an investigation through an Audit Committee. She also shared that Student Senate would like to get involved in advocacy regarding the potential impact of pending budget issues on students.

IV. Report of the Graduate Student Organization

Graduate Student Organization Representative Meaghan Shirk reported that they are implementing plans to increase graduate student involvement in the GSO. They are setting up an information table with snacks this evening in Stayer and intend to target graduate students in other major buildings in the near future.

V. Report of the Administrative Officers

Vice-President for Student Affairs Thomas

Vice-President for Student Affairs Thomas noted that Dr. McNairy recently announced the formation of the Athletic Blue Ribbon Task Force. This group will address whether current structure, staffing and distribution of resources in the Athletic Departments should be updated to better meet University goals and Title IX mandates. This may also help to answer questions raised by alumni regarding a gap between the reported program spending and distributed activity funds.

Dr. Thomas also noted that the annual Scholar-Athlete Banquet for 2004-2005 will be hosted this Sunday evening. This year there are 110 athletes being recognized for their academic success.

Executive Assistant to the President Phillips

Executive Assistant to the President Phillips commented that registration is in progress and has been proceeding smoothly. She noted that they will be monitoring the effectiveness of reserving seats, 4 seats per section in General Education courses, for sophomore registration at the end of this week.

VI. Faculty Emeritus

None

VII. Reports of the Faculty Senate Standing Committees

UCPRC
First Reading

(1) CHANGE IN COURSE/CURRICULUM

B.A. in PHYS: Requirement for PHYS 266 Electronics, 3 credits. Proposal to include Electronics in all Physics B.A. degrees.

GCPRC

Dr. Mowrey requested feedback on when Senators would like to receive material about a new graduate-level program proposal. This information will be distributed in December but not discussed in Senate until January.

VIII. Reports of the Faculty Senate Special Committees

None

IX. Proposed Courses and Programs

Seacond Readings

(1) NEW UNDERGRADUATE COURSE

ESCI 322: Environmental Hydrology, 3 credits. Proposal approved without dissent.

(2) CHANGE IN COURSES/CURRICULA

CHEM 375: Environmental Chemistry, 3 or 4 credits to 4 credits. Proposal to make the laboratory component of this course required rather than optional Proposal approved without dissent.

X. Discussion of ACE Task Force Report

Dr. Ron Umble and additional members of the ACE Task Force returned to Senate to discuss the report presented at the last meeting. Dr. Ron Umble first shared a number of quotes from faculty members who had participated in focus groups last year regarding the ACE program. These comments expressed that the goal for providing a degree via only evening and online courses had not been met and that availability of campus services during nights and weekends is extremely limited.

Initially, the conversation was directed at aspects of the report where faculty agreed with the conclusions of the Task Force. The need to expand campus services to nights and weekends was fully supported by faculty. It was noted that this fall there were fewer than 200 admissions into the ACE program and that a lack of connection to the campus community is detrimental for students and our public image. Faculty also agreed that the ACE program is not meeting the goals initially promised to students. It was suggested that the need to integrate ACE students and provide a connection to Millersville might be better met by holding ACE courses on campus. One comment indicated that off-campus facilities are sub-par and do not meet student needs as well as campus facilities. Another recommendation for improving the experience for ACE students was to look critically at whether current advisement mechanisms fail to provide these students with an adequately supportive connection to campus faculty.

A number of questions and concerns regarding the Recommendations proposed by the Task Force were then discussed. The cohort-based strategy was further defined as a way of providing courses targeted for collective groups of students. These are typically graduate students looking for non-traditional programming. However, Albright College has also successfully implemented cohort groups at the undergraduate level by bringing students from a range of majors into common courses or seminars.

Another issue raised was the intention of the term “market-driven” and whether this is in opposition to department-driven programming. The Task Force indicated that student demographics are shifting, and we should prepare to meet new needs presented by these students. They also expressed that the intention was for departments to evaluate program needs in their area and find ways to provide responsive programs using university resources. This same strategy is in the works for identifying and establishing graduate-level programming, but a similar model could work at the undergraduate level as suggested in the ACE Program Recommendations. A key issue is that we need to take a more organized approach to identifying and providing these services so that comprehensive programming is actually available. Ideally, we should develop overarching program and support services that allow us to better meet student needs. Faculty expressed concern that most departments do not have the expertise for this and are unable to dedicate the time and energy needed to initiate development of these programs. The Task Force indicated that the PTE office should provide support in this process. Several senators communicated that incentives like additional salary, release time and child-care provisions would make this strategy more feasible for faculty.

Faculty were also greatly concerned by the implication in recommendation 6 of the Task Force Report that non-traditional course instruction be required as part of a regular teaching assignment. The current CBA specifies that continuing education offerings are not a part of the typical faculty load. The Task Force responded that the goal is to encourage faculty to consider new possibilities in these areas rather than to set defined expectations for all faculty and that the recommendations are not intended to oppose the CBA.

The History Department distributed a compilation of their questions and concerns regarding the Recommendations. They expressed that while HACC has been successful in providing degrees targeting student demand, Millersville's educational mission has been to provide programs that reflect excellence in each specific academic area. They further noted that population in our immediate geographical region is growing and that predicted drops in enrollment seem less likely at Millersville than other state system schools. The Task Force responded that, although the target population may remain high, the competition for recruiting those students is increasing. Specifically, it was noted that schools experiencing severe losses in enrollment are offering incentives that may begin to attract our traditional undergraduates. The question was then raised about the advisability of trying to compete in markets that lie outside our traditional expertise in quality undergraduate liberal arts education.

The Task Force indicated that fiscal management is an underlying issue contributing to these discussions. The only way to continue to fund our current program offerings in the future will be to increase revenue from some component of our campus. Since traditional undergraduate resources are already maximally in use, graduate programming and non-traditional offerings provide our best mechanism for supporting the university as a whole. In response, faculty also emphasized that it is still critical that efforts at new programming do not detract from our traditional offerings or create additional demands on faculty teaching loads.

A Wismer/Blazer motion to suspend the ACE discussion in order to allow time to deal with General Education issues on the agenda was unanimously passed. Dr. Ron Umble offered to return to Senate with some modifications based on comments.

XI. General Education Task Force

Dr. Ward shared that four working groups will be bringing curriculum proposals to the upcoming special Senate meeting. After a summary of the General Education Report and presentations of the four proposals, there will be time for some immediate response. Senators will be asked to rate the proposals on how well they meet the overall characteristics of General Education. Dr. Ward expressed a desire to include a broader base of input at this stage by inviting persons across campus to attend this meeting even though only Senators will participate in the ranking. The request to encourage campus-wide participation in the upcoming special Senate meeting to address revision of General Education was approved without dissent.

XII. Other/New Business

First Year Experience

Results of a survey aimed at students involved in FYE seminars this fall was distributed. Dr. Foster-Clark requested that Senate consider extending this pilot program for the 2006-2007 school year. One faculty member shared that teaching the FYE seminar in a 3-credit format has allowed for better student-faculty interaction than the 1-credit option. He noted that this incorporated an increased academic component while still allowing time to address general seminar input relating to areas like time management. Dr. Linda McDowell also encouraged Senate to approve the extension because of the bridge being provided for students to effectively transition to college and meet the academic expectations of university programs. She noted that there are positive outcomes in retention and student performance related to the FYE seminars.

Concerns were expressed regarding a lack of integration of these seminar courses into individual departments. The small size of these classes adversely affects student-faculty ratios used as an assessment of departments and makes it difficult to substitute an FYE seminar course in place of a traditional course offering. It was suggested that it would be beneficial to establish a similar system within the current General Education courses.

A Wismer/Blazer motion to extend the FYE pilot program for the 2006-2007 school year was passed without dissent.

XIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Aimee L. Miller
Faculty Senate Secretary

Action Summary:

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