

Faculty Senate Minutes
3:00 p.m., February 19, 2016
Delta Center 201

In Attendance: Greg Phillips, Sam Pae, Richard Segall, Philip Tew, John Beineke (also proxy for Mitch Holifield), Julie Grady (also proxy for Ryan Kelly), Loretta McGregor, Claire Abernathy, Bill Rowe, Nikesha Nesbitt, Win Bridges, Mary Donaghy, Cherisse Jones-Branch, Warren Johnson, Robert Robinette (proxy for April Sheppard), Pradeep Mishra, Larz Roberts, Rejoice Addae, Donna Caldwell, Brinda McKinney, Larry Morton, Bob Bennett, Jeff Jenness, Bruce Johnson, Fabricio Medina-Bolivar, Suzanne Melescue

Absent: Julie Isaacson, Shivan Haran, Claudia Benavides, Kyle Chandler, Hans Hacker, Michael Fellure, Debbie Shelton, Amber Wooten

Meeting called to order by President Philips at 3:01 p.m.

Approval of minutes of February 5, 2016.

Motion to approve: Warren Johnson; Seconded by: Cherisse Jones-Branch
26 in favor, none opposed, no abstentions.

Old Business:

SCOG Proposal 15 FA 01, Academic Integrity “FI” – Tabled

SCOG Proposal 15 FA 08, Changes in New Section IV, Faculty Handbook – Tabled

President Phillips shared that both SGOC Proposals have been tabled for the time being. He indicated that it is still possible one or both will come forward with new wording.

Fabricio Medina-Bolivar expressed that some faculty have suggested an “FX” rather than an “FI” for the academic integrity issue, because an X has more of a negative connotation, while an I seems more like an incomplete. Should we be considering other options?

President Phillips said they were working on a new wording and that he would pass these comments along.

Dr. Mike McDaniels requested time to speak with the Faculty Senate regarding the faculty handbook proposal. He shared some updates, and suggested that there was perhaps some information in the Faculty Handbook that doesn't belong there. He concluded that it doesn't matter whether you're part of a school or a college, the handbook should be “of the faculty, by the faculty, for the faculty.” He indicated it would become a smaller document that would include things like: how you get hired, how you move up through ranks, PRT, committee makeup, and post tenure review procedures, among other things. There will be a proposal of things that don't need to be in the handbook to create a streamlined version of the handbook. Dr. McDaniels asked the Faculty Senate to consider moving the bylaws of the Faculty Association out of the handbook. If they are part of the handbook they can be changed through SGOC. These could be put on the webpage or Faculty Association repository instead. He said he would help the Faculty Senate usher this

through SGOC if it is the route the Faculty Senate chose to take. He anticipates completion of the project by September.

President Phillips said he felt sure Dr. McDaniels would be happy to answer any questions that might come up in the future via email or phone (3506).

AOS Faculty Support, listening meeting 2-10 with Dr. Cooksey – Greg Phillips

President Phillips reminded the Faculty Senate that in October concerns were expressed regarding changes in the technology support available to faculty. On November 3rd the Provost wrote us a memo, which we replied to on November 11th, thanking her for her consideration and for recognizing that we have different levels of needs among the faculty. A few technical staff failed to return this year and some needs are not currently being met. The Provost hosted a listening meeting and there was much discussion back and forth. President Phillips shared his conclusion that there seems to be a philosophical conflict between what AOS wants to offer and what faculty members are requesting. This continues to be unresolved. President Phillips indicated he had drafted a memo to the Provost which he would share with the Faculty Senate and welcomed any feedback.

President Phillips continued by saying there are faculty he believes really need the support they are requesting. AOS is arguing the cost; course designers are very expensive; what is the best use of their time? They are saying it would be better spent if they were not grooming the classes. It is a matter of the best use of time and resources. President Phillips said that while he agreed in some sense, faculty are awfully expensive too to be sitting around grooming classes. Most faculty would rather be interfacing with students and hopefully that time has a greater influence on students than their class shell. His recommendation to the Faculty Senate was to please talk to our constituents and, in the spirit of AOS's request, get feedback from those who may be involved; do they feel the proposal is adequate? Does it meet the needs of the faculty? He asked that the Faculty Senate please provide a clear explanation for anything that was not satisfactory so that we could give AOS a detailed response and expressed his hope that we could finally resolve this matter and get the AOS technical support up where we believe it needs to be.

New Business:

SGOC Proposal 16 SP 01, Admission by Exceptional Talent revision – Dr. Karen McDaniel

Dr. McDaniel, from the College of Business and current NCAA representative for A-State, shared that many of these exceptional students are processed during the summer, unfortunately, and the challenge is that the committee to approve them (the Undergraduate Admissions and Appeals Committee) is not active during this time (though many members were willing to communicate via email). We have a lot of student athletes trying to be admitted or to transfer in over the summer and they may not meet normal admission standards but if they have exceptional athletic talent they can appeal to this committee for acceptance. President Phillips asked that we take this information back to our constituencies so we could vote on the proposal at our next meeting.

Dr. McDaniel is a member of the Undergraduate Enrollment and Academic Policy Committee. She explained that they are trying to come up with a process that would be more efficient and said they have very strong support for this proposal in her committee. They have some concerns about voting through email and about 90 percent of these students are processed in the summer. Most of faculty on the committee are on 9 month contracts and many are out of town or out of the country when this is taking place.

Starting in the fall of 2016 the NCAA has set standards higher for student athletes; they require a 2.3 GPA for core classes and an ACT sliding scale based on GPA. The State of Arkansas requires at least a 15 on ACT. Dr. McDaniel indicated they are suggesting or proposing the following: If there is a student who is an exceptional player but doesn't quite meet A-State standards, a coach could sponsor the student and would oversee that they maintain their grades/etc. The Registrar would not admit students who do not meet the minimum requirements unless a student is sponsored. They would still have to meet the NCAA minimum standards.

Bob Bennett suggested the coaches are looking for a back door to get athletes in to our school. Dr. McDaniel responded with an example about an exceptional tuba player who doesn't meet the standards, saying exceptions are not limited to athletes. Bob Bennett followed up with a few more questions: This is how we will get all the football players, basketball players, etc. and they will come in the fall. Is this going to be a rare occurrence or the normal way we get athletics into programs that don't meet the University standards?

Dr. McDaniel shared that this program was established in 2012; since then there have been 51 petitioners and 46 have been accepted. She indicated the student athletes' success rate of these students in the handout provided, and insisted that athletics has a pretty stringent academic recovery plan.

Bob Bennett asked if this would eliminate the committee? Dr. McDaniel replied that it doesn't eliminate the committee for tuba players, etc.; anyone who doesn't go through the NCAA. Bill Rowe asked why not eliminate it for everybody? Dr. McDaniel explained that the athletes would still have to meet the NCAA minimum requirements; others don't have a standard to meet. Loretta McGregor asked if we are making an exception for athletes who want to come in the summer why don't they make an exception for everyone? She went on to say the problem is the committee because they cannot meet during the summer; your tuba player still has the same problem. It is a sense of favoritism for the athletes more than others. She said the Undergraduate Admission Standards Committee was surprised to see the proposal coming though.

Dr. McDaniel clarified, the Admission and Appeals Committee? Loretta McGregor: Yes. Dr. McDaniel asserted that her committee, The Undergraduate Enrollment and Academic Policy Committee strongly supports this proposal. Julie Grady supported Loretta McGregor, saying the Undergraduate Admissions and Appeals Committee was largely unaware of the proposed change and felt they should have had a chance to look at it. Dr. McDaniel replied that the committee still did not have a chair and was having a lot of difficulty with communication.

Win Bridges shared that he has served on the Admission and Appeals Committee and he was concerned that it would come down to one person who

becomes responsible for that individual and would prevail on the registrar. He asked how low below the scale would we go? How far below the 900 can the person go and is one person going to make that decision? He indicated that most of the students the committee dealt with were transfer students and didn't have the GPA. He expressed concern and uncertainty about the new proposal.

Dr. McDaniel responded that they have had a high success rate on students succeeding as a result of this acceptance. Bill Rowe indicated that the numbers can be swayed. He shared his opinion that there should not be different rules for anyone. If there are exceptional art students I should be able to bring them in the same way. Dr. McDaniel asked what his suggestion for the standard would be, to which he replied he thought life standards. She pressed the issue, asking if there was something that would be similar to NCAA standards. Bill Rowe indicated that the NCAA didn't mean anything to him; there should be a life standard.

John Beineke asked with regard to wording on the proposal if the terms *leadership* and *similar contributions* were cause for concern. He expressed that these can be rather vague and suggestive. Dr. McDaniel said this could mean a leader for the band, volleyball team, etc. Dr. Beineke followed up by asking if leadership is tied to athletics, to which she responded that there were a lot of definitions for leadership, but in this particular instance, yes, it was tied to athletics.

Suzanne Melescue asked if there is a specific number of students/a limit that faculty can sponsor. Dr. McDaniel did not know, but said she would certainly find out.

John Beineke indicated that was his question as well, relating to the back door. He wanted to know if we are talking about one or two students, saying that is maybe one thing, but if you're talking about 20 students that's maybe a back door to get in to the University. Dr. McDaniel reiterated the only way she could answer that right now is that there have been 46 since 2012 but said she could find out more specifically.

Suzanne Melescue asked if the declared sponsor would continue to sponsor the student until they graduated, to which Dr. McDaniel replied, yes, he or she would.

Bill Rowe said we should not make policy to cover for an un-functioning committee. Dr. McDaniel indicated her understanding that deans have to hunt down faculty on this committee to vote this summer and that they don't even know who is on the committee.

Jeff Jenness asked if we have any graduates that were accepted specifically for exceptional talent and if so, how many? Dr. McDaniel did not know specifically, but said she could find out and let the Faculty Senate know.

President Phillips shared that he had the opportunity to get a tour of the athletics tutoring system and he wished the entire University had the kind of support network available to them that athletes do. He continued by saying they get a lot of personal attention and are held accountable; if they don't show up someone is on their back. He reiterated that the support structure for student athletes is a great system.

Dr. McDaniel elaborated on President Phillips' comments and shared the stringent expectations for student athletes, which included the following:

- weekly meetings with an academic coordinator

- weekly study hall hours
- weekly ACA progress sheet
- academic coordinator must assign mandatory tasks to be completed by a deadline
- approximately 8 hours of study hall a week (4-6 with tutor or study group and 2 with academic coordinator)
- academic coordinator must see and approve assignments prior to the due date to make sure they are submitted on time

She went on to say that a lot of these acceptances are last minute things because athletics doesn't actually get the information until late.

Loretta McGregor thanked Dr. McDaniel for her clarification and indicated that while she understands the process, that for most of us it's a matter of fairness to all students. She went on to say it is also a matter of the committee being cut out of the process; she believes it isn't because the committee doesn't want to be involved and active but simply because no one brought them together. Dr. McDaniel said it was her understanding this committee hasn't met face to face in 2 years. Loretta McGregor responded that we have lots of committees that haven't meet because no one has called them together; when committee members are surprised, that committee should have the opportunity to give their opinion.

Win Bridges said if he remembered correctly the last time he was on the committee and it met they were given a list of persons they were requesting admissions for, and they Skyped an interview but they didn't have much information regarding those individuals. He said they had to make a pretty quick decision on admitting them just with the assurance that they would do these things you're talking about. He went on to say that even with the system we've had from his recollection, it's probably as dysfunctional as it could be. He felt that to relegate this down to one person going to the registrar and vouching for this person would make it even more dysfunctional. How far down these standards do we go?

Dr. McDaniel replied that for ACT it's 15. Win Bridges said the lower the GPA the higher the ACT score; he expressed that he didn't understand that logic. He felt sure a significant number of the students could be successful but we might get some students who wouldn't make it.

Dr. McDaniel said the faculty have to keep in mind that in the state of Arkansas requires a certain standard and it hurts our athletics department if we don't meet these standards, so it's in our best interest. Bill Rowe said you couldn't even have a senior show or graduate with a GPA of 2.3; it's unacceptable. He expressed that he had shared this proposal with two or three people and if they are going to do it, they need to do it for everyone, not just athletes.

Cherisse Jones-Branch asked of the athletes currently enrolled, what sports do they represent, and Dr. McDaniel said she could find out.

President Phillips thanked Dr. McDaniel for coming to talk with us and answer our questions. He asked if there was anything else the Senate needed to address, to which Loretta McGregor provided an update on the Sexual Harassment Task Force. She indicated they are having a face to face meeting this coming Friday at 3 pm in Education 110 and anyone who is interest in coming is welcome; it is open to

everyone. Their goal is to discuss what the faculty think the issues are, and also to make any recommendations, which will be sent to the Faculty Senate.

She also shared that they are looking at summer school pay, but that group had not met yet. They were also hoping to make recommendations that would come through the Faculty Senate.

At 3:59 p.m. Bob Bennett made a motion to adjourn and Loretta McGregor seconded.

Minutes submitted by Claire Abernathy, Acting Secretary of the Faculty Senate.