

Faculty Senate Minutes
November 15, 2004

Senators Barry Anton, Bill Beardsley [Chair], Kris Bartanen, Ryan Cunningham, Alyce DeMarais, Houston Dougharty, Julian Edgoose, Robin Foster, Bill Haltom, Suzanne Holland, Keith Maxwell, Eric Orlin, David Tinsley, Brett Veerhusen,

Guests Dave Balaam

Order Senate Chair Beardsley called the meeting to order at about 4:05 pm.

Minutes Minutes of November 1, 2004 were approved.

Chair's Report The Chair announced that he drafted an amendment to the Faculty Code that provides for open files for all faculty evaluations. This proposed amendment is on the agenda of the December 6 faculty meeting.

Special Orders **Senator Cunningham** introduced **Brett Veerhusen**, the new ASUPS liaison to the Faculty Senate. Cunningham also provided the senators an update on the trial run of the online faculty evaluation project. He mentioned that the faculty are locked out of the site. **Senator Holland** asked why the faculty is locked out, to which Cunningham responded that it is to prevent the online evaluations from becoming a part of the regular code reviews of faculty.

Old Business **Senator Orlin** reported that the Curriculum Committee is taking a look at the idea of lengthening the Fall Break. **Senator Holland** reported that in response to a request from the Committee she is forwarding past Faculty Senate minutes of prior senate discussions of the academic calendar.

Senator DeMarais distributed for the senate's consideration a formal motion regarding the issue of the Professional Standard Committee (PSC) publishing non-formal Code interpretations:

(M/S) The Professional Standard Committee (PSC) shall record in the minutes that they post on the campus website any interpretation of the Faculty Code reached by at least a majority of the committee. These interpretations shall be recorded in general language, commenting directly on the section of the code involved, with case-specific details excluded.

Senator DeMarais wondered if there might be a more general term to substitute for the word “interpretation.” **Senator Maxwell** suggested “application” as a possible alternative. **Senator Haltom** opined that “application” might be too broad and could generate much minutiae that do not warrant being recorded. For example, the FAC sometimes asks the PSC for a second opinion on the proper application of procedural provisions; these are usually ad hoc and nonrecurring. **Senator Bartanen** offered that [John Riegsecker is working on making the PSC minutes searchable through Google, thereby making the minutes](#) more accessible for finding interpretations and clarifications of the Code.

Senator Anton moved that further consideration of the DeMarais motion be postponed until the PSC has an opportunity to respond and comment. (M/S/P)

The senators shifted their attention to other old business when **Senator Holland** moved that an ad hoc committee be created to conduct a review of the extant tenure and promotion process. (M/S/P)

The following discussion ensued:

Senator Edgoose asked what this committee will do. **Senator Holland** suggested that the committee (1) determine the number and demographics of tenure grants and denials, and of those tenure track faculty leaving the university prior to their tenure evaluation, (2) draft amendments to the code providing for formal meetings between a the department and a faculty member immediately following their third-year review, and providing for a meeting with the Advancement Committee prior to the committee’s final tenure recommendation. **Senator Edgoose** felt that these matters should be addressed by the senate, not by an ad hoc committee. **Senator Holland** responded that the ad hoc committee could report to the senate on a regular basis. **Senator Foster** pointed out that an ad hoc committee is better equipped to gather data than is the senate. **Senator Tinsley** stated that there are many more issues that need to be discussed. He suggested that the ad hoc committee conduct a broad study of people’s concerns about problems in the process. At this point, **Senator Bartanen** distributed data on [faculty retention, including](#) gender differences in the outcomes of tenure and promotion. **Senator Orlin** pointed out that the data did not reveal the tenure status of those faculty hired during the period covered.

The question was called and the motion introduced by Holland was passed (6 ayes, 5 nays, 2 abstentions).

The senators than focused on the questions of how the committee should be constituted and what its charges should be. **Senator Edgoose** offered

that there should be representatives from each area, to wit: humanities, arts, sciences, social sciences, and professional schools. **Senator Bartanen** noted that it seemed awkward to have an ad hoc committee without specific charges and worried about the possibility of the committee conducting a fishing expedition. **Senator Foster**, apparently not at all concerned with the committee casting into the depths, stated that it would be good, if by doing so, the committee determined what the faculty's discontents are with the process. **Senator Maxwell**, seeking respite from his duties as appointed scribe, suggested that the model for this committee could be the 1997-1998 committee, which had a very broad charge and gathered data about the faculty's concerns through a detailed survey of all career faculty. **Senator Holland** wondered if the suggestions itemized in **Professor Balaam's** letter (Attachment to the November 1, 2004 senate minutes) could serve as charges. **Chair Beardsley**, with an air of authority and a hint of inquietude, suggested that the senate might want to consider giving this matter more thought between now and the next meeting when specific charges could be made. **Senator Edgoose** wondered whether this should be part of Phase II of the Code revision process. It was generally agreed that with the letter of Phase II being non-specific (or even non-existent), this study of the tenure and promotion process could come within its spirit. **Chair Beardsley** averred anew his hope that the senate postpone this matter until the next meeting.

Chair Beardsley asked **Professor Balaam** if he was satisfied with the senate response to his letter. Balaam said that he generally was satisfied, but hopes that the senate continue to explore the issue of the faculty's dissatisfaction with the process, and volunteered to serve on the ad hoc committee.

The senators' infatuation with old business was further manifested by revisiting its discussion of the evaluation of teaching form. **Senator Orlin** suggested that he and **Senator Holland** collect comments and concerns from the faculty and come to the senate with recommendations for revision of the current form. **Senator Foster** pointed out the value of hiring a consultant to do a validity study of our current form. This study would identify that are not predictive of good teaching. **Senator Orlin** informed the senators that there is some data that teaching evaluations are connected to some degree to the problem of grade inflation. He went on to reiterate **Senator Foster's** point for the need to test the validity of some of our assumptions about what constitutes effective teaching. **Senator Haltom** asked if these consultants would be experts on the *use* of data, as opposed to its collection. **Foster** responded that they were and agreed that it is important to study how data is used. **Senator Bartanen**, sensing that the cart was perhaps outracing the steed, counseled the senators that the first task is to determine our definition of "excellent" teaching, then to determine what instrument best assesses what we have defined, and then

to address how evaluation information is to be used. **Senator Haltom**, as if to redefine the horse in a bid to preserve the adage, mildly emoted the need to “plunge forward” and optimistically predicted that the upcoming discussion would reveal what we value as “excellent teaching.” **Senator Tinsley** suggested that the ad hoc committee consult with the Informal Committee on Teaching that has existed for years and continues to sponsor periodic panel discussions on the techniques of effective teaching.

Senator Haltom announced that a discussion board is being set up on Blackboard that will provide a forum for the campus community to express their views on the evaluation process. **Senator Cunningham** asked whether students will be able to post to the discussion. Haltom indicated that it will be a moderated discussion open to the entire campus community.

With the senators’ interest in old business waning, and nothing waxing under the diurnal orb (which had set at 4:34 PM), a motion was made to adjourn. Those remaining in the room commenced their celebration of the nautical twilight at 5:31 PM.

**Respectful
Submitter**

Keith Maxwell