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## Faculty Senate Chronicle for October 2, 2014

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**Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting of  
October 2, 2014**

The regular meeting of the Faculty Senate took place Thursday, October 2, 2014 in room 201 of Buckingham. Senate Chair William D. Rich called the meeting to order at 3:02 pm.

Of the current roster of 62 Senators, 50 were present for this meeting. Senators Cutright, Freely, Gandee, Kemp, Klein, Kidd, Morath and Onita were absent with notice. Senators Arter, Braun, Srivatsan and Youngs were absent without notice.

**I. Approval of the Agenda**

Senator Raber moved to adopt the proposed agenda. The motion was seconded by Senator Schaffer.

**The agenda was adopted without dissent.**

**II. Approval of the Minutes**

Senator Bouchard moved to adopt the proposed minutes of the September 4, 2014 meeting. The motion was seconded by Senator Clark.

**The minutes were adopted without dissent.**

**III. Remarks of the Chairman**

Chairman Rich remarked as follows:

We have a relatively light agenda today. The only action item on it is the approval of the curriculum proposals reported out by the Curriculum Review Committee.

Among the documents distributed along with the agenda for today's meeting was a report of the Distance Learning Review Committee (DLRC) containing recommendations about the proctoring of on-line examinations. DLRC is a subcommittee of CRC. The report, appropriately, was made to CRC, not directly to the Faculty Senate. CRC has yet to act on any of DLRC's recommendations. At the direction of the chair of CRC, it was sent to the Faculty Senate for informational purposes only. If you have any comments about the recommendations you wish to make to CRC, please send them to the CRC chair, Rex Ramsier.

As you will recall, last May the Faculty Senate passed a recommendation that the teaching load limit for part-time faculty members be increased from eight to nine credit hours per semester, and that part-time faculty members no longer be required to report the number of hours they work each week. In the September Faculty Senate meeting I reported that the Administration had referred these recommendations to outside counsel for a legal opinion, and that this opinion had not yet been received by the

Administration. I am informed that the Administration has received the opinion. The issue remains under discussion. To date, no change has been made in these policies.

As you know, in August the deans were invited by the central Administration to submit requests for authorization to conduct searches to fill full-time faculty positions that were budgeted for this fiscal year if and only if there is a "critical need" to fill the position. Deans submitted such requests several weeks ago. Decisions were promised by a certain date, which came and went without any decisions having been made. More such promises were made, and broken. In our September 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Provost was asked when these decisions would be made. He replied that he hoped to have them all made by Friday of the next week, which was September 12<sup>th</sup>. It is now October 2<sup>nd</sup>. To my knowledge, no such searches have been authorized.

The President has said that, as much as possible, decisions about which full-time faculty positions to fill should be based on the planning and budgeting process that will conclude during the Spring Semester. Earlier this week, he agreed to meet with individual department chairs and their respective deans to consider pleas to conduct searches if the failure to fill the position would jeopardize program accreditation or otherwise destroy the program.

My view, which I expressed to the President in a meeting yesterday, and with which he expressed agreement, at least in principle, is that those grounds for authorizing the initiation of searches this Fall are too narrow.

Year after year, full-time tenure-track positions have gone unfilled. Year after year, the academic programs in certain departments and schools have withered as a result. The quality of those programs has suffered, as have their reputations. Consequently, student enrollments have declined as students have sensibly opted to pursue their education elsewhere. The morale of the faculty who teach in those programs and care about their quality also has suffered.

The plain fact is that, at a university, the quality of its academic programs matters. If the quality of its academic programs declines, its reputation suffers, enrollment and completion rates decline, and so do its revenues. When these things happen, the university goes into a downward spiral.

In a perfect world, all decisions about which full-time faculty positions to fill would be determined by a thorough, university-wide planning and budgeting process. We do not have the luxury of living in that world today. I am hopeful that our current President will be able to move us much closer to that world than we have ever been. In the meantime, however, we must deal with the world in which we *now* live.

There are some faculty positions that any reasonable planning and budgeting process would tell us must be filled. As to those positions, there is no reason to wait until the

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Spring, and there are good reasons not to. In many academic disciplines, if searches are not begun by the middle of October, the best candidates are lost to other universities.

Let us not fool ourselves. The planning and budgeting process will not conclude until well into the Spring Semester. It can take up to a month, occasionally longer, for a search, once authorized, to clear the bureaucratic hurdles within the University. What this means is that waiting to decide which positions to fill until the planning and budgeting process has concluded will result in most of those positions remaining vacant during the next academic year, or at best being filled on a temporary basis with visiting faculty. For yet another year, academic programs will wither, quality will decline, program reputations will suffer, faculty morale will sink lower, and students will go elsewhere to pursue their educations.

We desperately need a sound planning and budgeting process. I fully support the President's efforts to create such a process, and I trust that he has the skills, knowledge, and determination to bring it about.

But what we need right now is triage. There are some decisions that can wait, and some that should not.

This concludes my remarks.

### **III. Special Announcements**

Chairman Rich reported the deaths of two members of the University community:

*Andrea D. Martin Sands*, who worked first in the Government Documents section of Bierce Library and later in the Law Library, died on September 2 at the age of 80. She earned her bachelor's degree in Library Science and a master's degree in English. She oversaw government documents and served as a reference librarian for students, the faculty, and the public. She was a great supporter of the Humane Society and, for many years, the Copley Historical Society.

*Marion Ruebel* died on September 28<sup>th</sup> at the age of 81. Over the course of a nearly 28-year career at the University of Akron, Dr. Ruebel held many positions from professor to provost to university president. A native of Manson, Iowa, Dr. Ruebel launched his academic career as a high school teacher and coach after earning a bachelor's degree in biological sciences in 1958 at the University of Northern Iowa. In 1962, he earned a master's degree in school administration at Northern Iowa. In 1969, after several years as a high school principal, he earned a Ph.D. in Educational Administration at Iowa State University. The next year he came to the University of Akron as an Assistant Professor of Secondary Education. Over the next two decades, Dr. Ruebel served as an Assistant Dean of the College of Education, Dean of University College, Executive Assistant to the president, Interim Senior Vice President and Provost, Acting Vice President of Student Support Services, and Director of Alumni Affairs and Governmental Relations. During this period, Ruebel

never completely left the classroom. He continued teaching undergraduate and graduate students as a Professor of Education.

After retiring from the University of Akron in 1994, Ruebel became President of Saint Vincent-Saint Mary High School in Akron, serving as Chief Executive Officer of the 600-student school. He returned to the University of Akron in 1996 to serve as its president. He served in this position through 1998. During his term as president, Ruebel focused on enhancing scholarship opportunities and academic support for students. The Scholarships for Excellence Initiative was launched to increase the number of full time academic scholarships, and the University of Akron's 125 million-dollar fundraising campaign concluded three years ahead of schedule. In 1998 he created the Retiree Association.

The Senate stood for a moment of silence in memory of our deceased colleagues.

#### **IV. Reports**

##### **Executive Committee**

Senator Schulze reported as follows on behalf of the Executive Committee:

Since we last met on September 4th, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee met twice by itself and once with the President, the Senior Vice President and Provost, and Vice Provost Ramsier.

The Executive Committee met on September 18<sup>th</sup> to prepare for the meeting with the President and Provost. Immediately afterward, the EC met with the President, the Provost and Vice Provost Ramsier to discuss faculty position searches, fall enrollment/revenue update, status of CHP dean search, teaching load limit and hours reporting requirement for part-time faculty, and implementation of general education revision.

The EC met on September 25<sup>th</sup> for regular senate business. The EC appointed members to the Accessibility committee, Distance Learning Review Committee, Faculty Research Committee, and University Council.

The EC certified the senate election of Nidaa Makki of the College of Education. As a result of the relocation of the Department of Counseling from the College of Education to the College of Health Professions, the EC reapportioned Faculty Senate seats between those two colleges, with the result that the College of Education's apportionment was reduced by one seat and the College of Health Profession's apportionment was increased by one. Senator and counseling professor Rob Schwartz retains his seat and now represents CHP. The EC also appointed faculty to serve on the eight General Education Learning Outcome Committees.

Senator Bouchard asked when we will know who will be on the General Education Outcome Committees. Chairman Rich answered that the committee lists are on the web now, and an E-mail will go out with an announcement about it.

### **Remarks of the President**

President Scarborough thanked Chairman Rich and the senators for the opportunity to speak to the Senate again. President Scarborough talked to the Senate about the first 90 days of his presidency, and what he sees happening in the next three months.

President Scarborough has spent the majority of his time during the first 90 days meeting people. He has listened a great deal to a variety of stakeholder groups including Faculty Senate, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Student Government, Student Trustees, the Board of Trustees, legislators, business letters, alumni, community organizations, etc.

President Scarborough sees this continuing, but will begin to spend less time on such meetings because there's a great deal of work to be done. In the next 90 days, he will spend time with each individual college to complete a process that will allow him to get to know the university from the college level to the institutional level.

He explained the process. The first meeting will be held with the college leadership. He will talk to the college leadership for about an hour and a half, and listen to them talk about the college: the composition of the faculty, the issues that they face, their goals, the marketplace, and what's happening with enrollment. For most of these meetings, he will sit and listen. He will read through all the material they provide.

Once he's read through all the material from each college, he will schedule a second meeting. Some have already occurred. In these meetings, he will summarize what he's heard them say, and what he's learned from the written materials they provided him. Then he will share some of his ideas and ask questions. After he's had time to consider feedback from the second meeting, he will schedule a third. None of the third meetings have occurred yet, but they will occur during the months of October, November, or December.

After the third meeting, there should be a shared vision about the direction of the college. If the college has not already gone through its own process, he will schedule an all-faculty meeting within the college. He will explain the process, the issues that were discussed, the proposal for a shared vision of moving forward, and then will ask for general feedback from all the faculty within the college.

About 75% of the time that he's followed this process in the past, the faculty approve the plan. If that does not happen, a second meeting will be scheduled to review the feedback from the first meeting. If necessary, a task force will be formed comprising the

college faculty and the college leadership. The task force will develop an amended plan or rationale for why the faculty feedback was not followed. Then a second all-faculty meeting will be held, and, in every case in the president's experience, the faculty have agreed on a strategic direction for the college.

It is important that these meetings are completed by December because the budget process for the following fiscal year begins in January. Then the administration will determine how to resource the shared vision of the college. The budget will be an instrument by which these plans are fulfilled rather than an instrument that drives the strategic thinking.

As Chairman Rich described, this is not a perfect world, so there are issues that need to be addressed in the meantime. The most pressing issue is the one he reported on: critical faculty hiring needs. So, over the last couple of days, the president has had the opportunity to meet with deans, associate deans, department chairs, and constituency leaders who are part of the president's biweekly staff meeting. They have discussed a "triage process" an emergency process by which these critical faculty hiring needs are addressed. The first of these meetings has already occurred.

### **Remarks of the Provost**

Provost Sherman thanked Chair Rich. The Provost reiterated the good news related to the census information recorded after the first week. The positive numbers are a result of the excellent work of the faculty, the staff, and students. We have the highest number of applications in our history—more than 18,700. We have the highest average GPA, 3.37, in our history for this entering class. We have the largest numbers of entering honors freshmen. We have had significant gains in retention of all students who entered as freshmen a year ago, and the highest number of entering minority freshmen honors students. We have seen a significant rise in retention among all minority freshmen who entered in 2013. Overall, freshmen enrollment held relatively steady at 4,131 students compared to 4,177 students last year: only a 1.1% decline. This is a significant improvement over the declines of previous years, which were 3.6% and 9.4% respectively.

Among the first-time, full-time freshmen on main campus pursuing a bachelor's degree, enrollment was up 7.9 % compared to last year. This cohort of students also had higher GPAs compared to the previous year. The Honors College is seeing record enrollment of 478 new freshmen compared to 354 last year. Minority students comprised one quarter of the entering class, and nearly seven percent of the entering class comes from outside the state of Ohio.

The Provost also remarked on the retention rates for this year compared to last fall. Minority students entering in the fall of 2013 have been retained at a rate of 60%, up 15.7% from the previous year. Eligible students entering fall of 2013 have been retained

at a rate of 67.5%, up 9% from the previous year. And first generation students entering fall of 2013 were retained at a rate of 66.6%, up 8.8% from the previous year. Student credit hours of instruction were down 2.5 %; the university budgeted for a 4% overall decline. That differential is now under consideration by the University Council Budget Committee.

The Provost said that he is looking forward to working with the Faculty Senate to support revision of our general education curriculum. He reiterated some of the president's remarks with regard to visiting colleges through the strategic planning process. The provost asked the deans last April and May to put together a "welcoming packet" for the president that reported on each respective college's progress toward Vision 2020 goals and other points of pride and information related to the college. The president received those in the summer. Those, as well as the initial interactions with the deans and their leadership, have helped to inform the president about each college.

## **V. Committee Reports**

**Curriculum Review Committee** – Senator Hajjarfar reported. There are two items. One item is a set of course proposals that have passed all necessary stages including CRC and are now presented to this body for approval.

Senator Ducharme expressed concerns about two Death and Dying classes: proposals 14-9719 and 14-9728. Senator Ducharme raised questions about the necessity for two classes that appeared to be identical. He did not see attached syllabi, and noted a lack of criteria regarding faculty teaching the course. He was also concerned about the addition of ethics as subject matter to be covered in the classes. The Philosophy Department only learned about these proposals two days ago.

Senator Ducharme moved to divide the question and refer those two items back to the Curriculum Review Committee and for the CRC to meet with the Philosophy Department and any other parties of interest in these classes. Seconded by Senator Gatzia.

Senator Jones asked that Interim Associate Dean Kennedy be recognized to discuss this issue. Chair Rich recognized Interim Associate Dean Kennedy with no objection.

Interim Associate Dean Kennedy clarified that the Death and Dying class has never been a required course for the Respiratory Therapy Program, nor would it ever be in the future. It is a general education elective taken in CAST, formerly Summit College, and it is part of the undergraduate certificate in Gerontology. It has been approved as a "split level course": a 200/300 course. This was done to serve baccalaureate degree students who need upper level electives (modeled after the undergraduate/graduate course split—400/500). Students who take the class at the 300 level have additional requirements. Death and Dying serves as a broad, introductory level course in the field of thanatology. Interim Associate Dean Kennedy proposed to increase the class from 2



to 3 credits in order to reflect developments and growth in the field of thanatology. The “clumsiness” of our current curriculum proposal system requires that each level, 200 and 300, has its own curriculum proposal.

Interim Associate Dean Kennedy explained her credentials to teach Death and Dying. She went on to explain that students in the Respiratory Therapy program will continue to take Introduction to Ethics from the Philosophy department. The Respiratory Therapy proposals seek to include in its curriculum a course already approved through the curriculum system titled Death and Dying for Healthcare Professionals.

Senator Ducharme expressed the view that there were still things to be sorted out, and asked that his motion stand.

Senator Sterns noted that all affected programs should have been notified. That clearly did not happen, so the curriculum review system is not working as it should.

Interim Associate Dean Kennedy attempted to clarify that, if there was a problem with the Respiratory Therapy proposal, the motion on the floor would do nothing to address it. There seemed to be confusion between the Death and Dying proposals (14-9719 and 14-9728) and the Respiratory Therapy proposal, about which there was discussion but no motion.

Chair Rich called for a voice vote. Unable to determine which side prevailed, Chair Rich called for a division of the house. The vote was 22 in favor of the motion and 22 against.

**The motion was defeated.**

There being no further debate on the main motion (approval of entire list of curriculum proposals), Chair Rich called for a voice vote.

**The motion was adopted.**

Senator Hajjifar reported for the Senate’s information that a policy has been recommended by DLRC to CRC regarding 100-percent online courses. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that stated tuition and fees represent costs accurately.

**Athletics Committee** – The Athletics Committee sent a written report. Senator Lillie added that the Athletics Committee is asking the Accessibility Committee to set up sub-groups of the two. The purpose would be to see if there are ways we can coordinate policies regarding issues such as absences due to head injury.

## **VII. Report from Faculty Senate Representatives to University Council**

Senator Lillie reported. The University Council continues to “operate as it operates.” The president has referred the bylaws back to the governing board. Senator Lillie hopes that will clarify some of the issues that have arisen.

At that last meeting, Senator Lillie made a motion to have a transcription of UC meetings to supplement the minutes. After some discussion, the motion failed.

#### **VII. Unfinished Business**

There was no unfinished business.

#### **VIII. New Business**

Senator Hallett announced a convention that the School of Speech Language pathology and Audiology is holding at the University of Akron. The conference will be held Saturday, October 11 at Quaker Square from 8:00 am – 4:00 pm.

#### **IX. Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 4:37 pm.

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Any comments concerning the contents in *The University of Akron Chronicle* may be directed to the Secretary, Pamela A. Schulze (x7725). [facultysenate@uakron.edu](mailto:facultysenate@uakron.edu)