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Fort Hays State University Faculty Senate Minutes, February 1, 2016

FHSU Faculty Senate

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Faculty Senate Meeting
1 February 2016

The meeting was convened by Faculty Senate President Lorie Cook-Benjamin at 3:30 PM

- I. The Minutes from the 7 December 2015 meeting were reviewed.
Senator Gable noted a typo in Section 4a: replace “meeting” with “meetings”.
A motion was made and passed unanimously by voice vote.
- II. Announcements
 - a. **FHSU President Martin** presented a report from her recent meeting with members of the Kansas Legislature. She noted that all the university CEOs supported continuation of the block grant approach to funding. She also noted that one representative asked “what can the legislature do for the state’s regional institutions?” She indicated that she will consult with the other regional CEOs.
Senator Donnelly commented that the KBOR report indicates FHSU accepted a significant number of freshman as exceptions in the fall of 2014. President Martin noted she is working with admissions to reduce this number in the future.
Senator Britten inquired as to the source of funding for new construction on campus. President Martin indicated the money came from a \$26 million bond issue and the rest came from internal funds. She also noted that the current capital campaign is in the silent phase, and that fund raising looks promising.
Senator Brinker asked for clarification of the block grant funding model for state universities. President Martin discussed the funding process and indicated the legislature provides funds to KBOR which then disburses the funds to the individual institutions. She noted that KBOR prefers that the institutions advocate for higher education collectively and not as individual institutions.
 - b. **Provost Glynn** presented a brief report.
President Cook-Benjamin asked about the changes in the composition of faculty search committees. Provost Glynn referenced his recent email to all faculty clarifying the role of the student on the committee. Senator Brinker noted that “it’s better”, and Provost Glynn emphasized that student input is necessary.
 - c. **Report from President Cook-Benjamin**
 - c1. **President Cook-Benjamin** provided a report from the last KBOR meeting. She noted that the COFSP presented their weapons on campus survey to the board and it was received with little comment. The board passed a new weapons policy that directs each of the Regents institutions to develop their own policies in a way consistent with KBOR policy and state law. These policies will be due to the Regents for approval by 1 October 2016 and must be in place by 1 July 2017. FHSU Attorney Wasinger will chair a policy development task force that will include representation from Faculty Senate and the student body. Significant discussion ensued; however, no action was taken.
President Cook-Benjamin referenced the “Minimum Admission Standards at State Universities” in the KBOR Annual Report. The document was made available to the full senate.

- c2. **President Cook-Benjamin** noted that a draft of the “Journey to Distinction” strategic plan and the video of the recent town hall meeting are available in Tiger Central. In addition, a link to a survey concerning the plan is also available. She noted that a draft of the rather lengthy academic portion of this plan should be available soon.
- c3. **President Cook-Benjamin** provided a list of senators who act as liaisons to a wide range of committees convened by the University Academic Affairs division.

III. Reports of Standing Committees

a. **Strategic Planning and Improvement**

Senator Goodlett noted the committee met last week where they reviewed approaches to new faculty mentoring solicited from faculty. The committee will produce a draft survey instrument for presentation to the full senate in March or April.

Senator Goodlett noted that the senate bylaws state that senators should be elected not selected and encouraged senators to urge compliance in their departments.

Senator Goodlett indicated that Senator Miller will be soliciting nominees for senate officers to be elected during the April meeting.

b. **University Affairs**

Senator Hamlin indicated the library staff had provided additional information as requested concerning their request for Faculty Senate support of reestablishing position rank for library staff. Senator Sauer noted that this is an issue of “policy and practice” as the MOA already contains the needed language, and she noted that library staff are asking for senate support.

c. **Student Affairs**

Senator Walters presented a new university policy proposed by SGA entitled “Student Success Week” (SSW) - SGA is asking for Faculty Senate support. The policy would exclude exams and major assignment due dates from the week before finals week unless the exam/assignment was authorized by the department chair before the start of the semester and the exam/assignment was listed in the course syllabus. The goal of SSW is to allow students time to prepare for final exams. Senator Walters relayed student anecdotal complaints that some professors give the final exams in week 15, or give other exams or have significant assignments due in week 15 without giving feedback on the material before the final exam.

Senator Park asked if making paper(s) due in week 15 with the final exam time used to discuss the papers would be ok. Senator Walters said yes if the exception was approved by the department chair and listed in the syllabus.

Senator Britten asked for a clarification of “seat time” and noted that given the timing of the thanksgiving break this policy could push the last exam/assignment due dates into November. He also asked if the college dean would arbitrate student complaints if faculty did not follow policy. Senator Walters stated that student complaints would need to be in writing and submitted to the department chair.

Senator Britten asked and Senator Walters confirmed that that term papers could be due in the last week as long as it was preapproved and stated in the syllabus.

Senator Brinker asked if classes would meet during SSW. Senator Walters said yes. He also asked if quizzes could be given during SSW and Senator Walters replied yes as

long as it was approved by the department chair and listed in the syllabus.

Senator Rolls related that SUNY reagents mandate two “dead” days before finals and noted other institutions have similar policies - quizzes are ok but no other exams or assignments worth a substantial portion of the course grade may be given.

Senator Deyo expressed concern that this might seem that faculty are not holding students to a high standard.

Senator Bartlett noted that composition classes do not have typical final exam but use the time for reflection on material covered. She also noted many student have told her they took classes that did not meet during finals week as they had taken the exam in week fifteen - she had heard this anecdote repeatedly.

Senator Park pointed out that current policy indicates all classes should meet during finals week. She also indicated agreement with Senator Deyo.

Senator Orth noted that lab finals are given during week fifteen, and also expressed agreement with Senator Deyo.

Senator Brinker noted that the Provost distributes notification that finals should be given during finals week and that classes must meet during finals week.

Senator Britten noted that some faculty do not follow policy.

President Cook-Benjamin reiterated that this is policy, and Senator Walters noted that the SSW policy would be added to current policy.

Senator Sauer related observations of students in the library dealing with week fifteen “gotcha” assignments not spelled out course syllabi.

Senator Orth questioned whether students concerns might be driven by lack of grade information as late as finals week. She noted some faculty do not submit mid-term grades, and student want feedback.

Senator Burnett noted that the grade feedback issue was discussed in depth several years ago.

Senator Hamlin noted that faculty might be tempted to use SSW for all grading, and students may be tempted to not return for the final week of class.

Senator Cook-Benjamin suggested the senators bring this to their departments for discussion.

Senator Gable noted that we are in an unusual period with only one week between fall break and finals week, but that there normally two weeks. Also, he asked for confirmation that quizzes could be given in week fifteen as long as they were approved and listed in the syllabus, and Senator Walters indicated that was correct.

Senator Brinker noted that this is possibly the result of a small group of faculty being insensitive to student’s concerns.

Senator Gable noted the lack of midterm grades for virtual college courses and indicated it may be time for a uniform, system wide policy.

Senator Greenleaf indicated a change in the policy wording concerning quizzes might be in order.

Senator Walters concluded the discussion by asking the senate to consider the spirit of the policy and noted that it would have little if any negative impact. She noted that Faculty Senate support would be a positive response to the SGA.

IV. **Unfinished Business**

Senator Bartlett reported on the progress of the Faculty Workload Taskforce. She stated that the Task Force has been collecting information from chairs including course caps, room

capacity, and enrollment caps. They are working to set target number based on a set of guidelines. She noted that there should be discussions within each department to address these issues. Departments should be aware of target enrollments and the resources required to meet the target. The analysis will include advising as well. They are “crunching numbers” and will try to develop a gage for workload equivalency. She noted this does not include scholarship time requirements.

Senator Goodlett reported on the progress of the Faculty Values Task Force. He noted that they have been meeting with small groups of faculty in intimate locations with only one left. They are “building a database” of comments.

Senator Cook-Benjamin reported on the redevelopment of UNIV 101. She noted that a forum was held last week and a link to a video of the meeting is available. She noted that it seemed to be a repackaging of the same topics. She expressed concern over the method by which instructors are chosen and that it has been an issue in the past.

Senator Shen reported that faculty spouses are now able to take virtual college courses as part of the employee benefit.

Senator Park asked about the progress of the Promotion and Tenure Joint Taskforce. Senator Donnelly reported that the task force had met and produced a draft recommendation document. President Cook-Benjamin asked that the document be shared with all senators - Senator Donnelly agreed to forward the document to President Cook-Benjamin for distribution.

President Cook-Benjamin adjourned the meeting at 4:51 PM.