

December 11, 2008

Re: Senate Report

Dear All,

Last night was the last meeting of the Senate for the fall 2008 semester. Turns out, it was a doozy. It is too bad that it had to occur during finals week, but apparently there is some requirement that the Senate has to meet every month in the academic calendar. So, we bit the bullet and forged ahead.

During our committee meeting, I successfully kept my mouth semi-closed, only opening it to clarify and not to offer opinions. We were still talking about summer school, allocation/distribution of funds, cost of course production, the creation of a winter term, etc., all in the absence of data, or at least the necessary evidence to get a handle on whether or not summer school as it stands works, how we can modify it, and who we go to for answers. As one person put it, "It all seems a bit cloudy." That may be an understatement. Nevertheless, we charged ahead with plans to recommend some modification to Summer/Winter curricula.

The Senate meeting opened with a presentation from Chuck Scott and Enid Cardinal concerning the Green Team. I was not at the AP Council for her presentation, though I think it was the same. She talked about the College Sustainability Report Card, Campus Initiatives and what is going on next semester.

Dr. Bowman followed. We all expected him to lead off with a joke concerning our esteemed governor; he abstained because he wants to keep his job. He did mention that most likely budget issues would be placed on the back burner because of the governor's legal problems, but he was very positive about Senator Cullerton (sp?), the new President of the Senate. Dr. Bowman thought that this would break down some or the barriers to doing what was necessary concerning the budget and some of the party in-fighting as well. Over all, the president thought this was an excellent semester.

Provost Everts focused on the highlights: freshmen applications are up; College of Nursing Dean search committee will meet Friday; December 27-29 anyone relying on Julian Center for computer networking will be out of luck.

Vice President Adams noted that there would be two commencement ceremonies at 9am (CAS and CFA) and 1pm (the rest). Residence Halls will close on Saturday at 2pm, except Atkin-Colby and Hamilton-Whitten(sp?). The halls will reopen on January 9th, three days before classes start. Watterson will be the only food court open until Friday 2pm; the others close Thursday.

Vice President Bragg noted about the financial news: there will be "choppy waters, but no reason we won't be able to navigate them." The state owes I.S.U. \$21 million, enough to pay for three months of salaries, though they usually run behind 6-8 weeks this time of

year. One note I thought important was that anyone not on year-long contract will now get a note from Central Management Services rather than I.S.U. concerning continued coverage and where to send the check.

The committee reports were lengthy for a change, though mostly summarizing what was on the future agenda. There were three information items. The first concerned a change in language to the Term Paper/Solicitation policy. The second changed the alcohol policy, particularly for dorms. This met with some contentious debate, to the point that the chair of the Administrative Affairs Committee, in response to a comment that there was some hypocrisy in keeping 21 yr. olds in the dorms from having alcohol when the same policy allowed for sale/distribution/possession of alcohol at tailgating, declared, "Well, I am going to refuse to address that." The last information item received the most comment. It was a draft "policy on Dress Codes."

Basically, they wanted to create a generic policy concerning the creation of dress codes that would encourage programs/departments/schools to be as inclusive as possible in making the codes and to be as fair as possible. The problem was that one bullet point included that language: "Dress codes that are of general application should be relevant to academic performance, as defined within the Faculty Code of Ethics Policy 3.3.15," which encourages, in part, "Evaluation of students and award of credit must be based on professionally judged academic performance and not on matters irrelevant to that performance..." So, basically, the problem was in how "academic performance" is defined. I admit that I tried to offer "programmatic needs" as a possible alternative, but basically it was because I wanted to get home by 9 o'clock. My suggestion did little to end debate. I am even sorry to say, it might have prolonged it unduly.

We adjourned with the promise of returning to these issues again in January. Even the Provost commented to me on the way out, "that was quite a lively discussion." And, so endeth my report. Happy holidays to all and I look forward to seeing you in January.

Cheers,

Ron

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