

Winthrop University Faculty Conference
Minutes for October 1, 2004
2:00 pm
Barnes Recital Hall

I. Approval of Minutes from August 20, 2004 Faculty Conference

At 2:00 p.m., Dr. Marilyn Smith, Chair of Faculty Conference, called the meeting to order. The minutes of the August 20th meeting were approved.

II. Welcome and Introductory Remarks

After welcoming the faculty, Dr. Smith reported that she and Dr. Moore are working to develop a system of feedback by which Faculty Conference would be informed of what happens to approved items once those items have moved on in the administrative process. In the interim, after each Faculty Conference, the Chair will forward to the Vice President anything we pass during that meeting within one week. (Even though the Vice President has the agenda, this approach will allow for the event of the absence of the Vice President or for modifications to be noted clearly). When the Chair meets with the Vice President to review the agenda before distribution, the Vice President will brief the Chair on those things that have been sent forward and where they stand.

Along these lines, Dr. Smith reported on two items that Faculty Conference passed at its last meeting: 1) approval of some changes to the bylaws. She also noted that the administration had congratulated Faculty Conference for bringing the Faculty Manual up to date. 2) the Merit Pay Policy. She reported that she had received a letter from Dr. DiGiorgio about the policy. While a complete copy would be posted with the minutes (see Attachment 1), she did highlight five principles that he noted about the current policy:

- 1) it allows for flexibility
- 2) it allows for administrative judgments with documented evidence for support
- 3) it clearly states that it does not discriminate against gender, age, race, creed, or religion
- 4) it allows for the inclusion of outside activities and
- 5) it requires information from many sources, including the faculty member's annual report.

The specific item with respect to faculty performance is that it requires the faculty member to demonstrate meritorious performance, especially teaching effectiveness. It applies to the current year, and it does allow for retroactive awards. The performance criteria are also consistent with the Faculty Manual, and scholarly long-term projects are evaluated on an annual basis as well as at completion. With respect to the percentages, Dr. DiGiorgio said he feels that it is important to examine the circumstances each year. The policy that we passed at the last meeting argued for a 2% fixed increase, with additional amounts given based on merit; however, sometimes only 2% may be available. In reference to concerns about communication, Dr. Smith read this line from the letter: "We are committed to communicating this information to each faculty member for every merit pay evaluation and commendation."

III. Report from the President

Dr. Smith reminded faculty of President DiGiorgio's email that he had distributed since he was unable to attend today's meeting.

IV. Report from the Vice President for Academic Affairs

Vice President Moore reported that several of our goals for this year, including merit salary increases, are in process. Dr. Moore noted that discussions had occurred evaluating the shift in the school calendar, with most seeing the shift as a positive change. Dr. Moore also reminded faculty that classes in the spring would begin on Monday with student move-in days beginning on Friday. Dr. Moore concluded by inviting feedback from the faculty.

V. Committee Reports

Dr. Frank Pullano, Chair of Academic Council, brought forth a proposal for Faculty Conference approval. Currently, the technology requirement of the GNED program must be completed by the end of 54 hours. Academic Council proposed changing 54 hours to 75 hours. This item was approved.

Mr. Brien Lewis, Chair of the Nature and Character of the University Task Force, reported on two items. First, a list of 88 recommendations has developed from the Committee's work. Because feedback so consistently revealed a concern for the future of these recommendations, a progress report of each would be completed. Second, the President has asked committee members to examine the current vision/mission statements and make suggestions so that the statements are in line with each other.

Dr. Alice Burmeister, Chair of the Task Force on Academic and Institutional Integrity, reported that 111 faculty surveys had been returned. Joe Prus has compiled the data, and the committee has been examining the results, including the gaps between student and faculty perceptions, and using the information to plan future events. She also noted the Council of Student Leaders' work with suggesting panels and presentations focused on Academic Integrity.

Dr. John Robbins, Chair of the Rules Committee, presented proposed amendment changes to the Faculty bylaws to be discussed at the November meeting of Faculty Conference. (See Attachment 2). Faculty Conference approved that these items be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

VI. Old Business

There was no old business.

VII. New Business

Dr. Jo Koster began a discussion about the disposal of exam copies because of a lack of clarity about how South Carolina views this issue. Dr. Koster will be serving as a contact person for faculty to send comments to about this issue, so that we as a campus community can determine what current views are among the faculty.

VIII. Announcements

Dr. Frank Pullano stated that he had received questions about the Kerley method and invited faculty members to continue to contact him if they needed help with the approach.

Vice President Moore reported that the Chemistry department has received authorization to give American Chemical Society certification to graduates, the Athletic Training program has received full accreditation, the Dance program has been accredited by the National Association of Dance, and we had a successful visit for the Computer Science program.

Dr. Alice Burmeister invited faculty to the University production of *Blithe Spirit*.

Dr. Smith announced that there would be no Graduate Faculty Assembly after the meeting today.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Kelly L. Richardson
Faculty Conference Secretary

ATTACHMENT ONE

September 15, 2004

TO: Marilyn Smith, Chair, Faculty Conference
FROM: Anthony DiGiorgio, President
SUBJECT: Recent actions of the Faculty Conference

Thank you for forwarding the actions of the August 19, 2004, Faculty Conference meeting to Tom Moore, Vice President for Academic Affairs. The items passed at that meeting included changes to the by-laws and a policy for determining merit pay increases. I have reviewed these matters and discussed them with Dr. Moore and the other Executive Officers.

I congratulate the Faculty Conference on the changes to the by-laws that clarify eligibility of faculty to serve on standing committees and make the by-laws more consistent with current practice. These changes strengthen the by-laws and thus strengthen faculty governance.

I appreciate the intent of the merit pay policy, however I find the current policy superior in a number of ways. The current policy presents five basic principles that should be considered when awarding merit pay increases:

1. Criteria must remain flexible to allow for individual uniqueness and creativity in performance.
2. Administrative judgments by those responsible for making merit decisions will always play a role in determining who is awarded merit. However, documented evidence consistent with the purpose of Winthrop University must be used to support the decision.
3. Consideration for merit awards will not be influenced by the age, gender, race, creed, or religion of the faculty member.
4. Activities in which a faculty member engages outside of the University should not restrict the opportunity to be considered for merit as long as they are within the individual's legal right and are consistent with the traditions of academic freedom.
5. Documented evidence supporting a faculty member's qualifications for consideration for merit may be submitted or solicited from many sources, such as the faculty member, the department chair, other colleagues, students, or persons outside of Winthrop University who have had contact and are qualified to evaluate the faculty member's work.

The existing policy also includes four guidelines for evaluating faculty performance:

1. Those to be recommended for merit must show evidence of meritorious performance, especially in teaching effectiveness.

2. Merit evaluations should be based upon performance during the current academic year. In the event that funds are not available in a given year for merit raises, a complete evaluation for that year should still be conducted and documented so that retroactive awards of merit may be possible in a subsequent year.
3. Satisfactory performance should be judged by the criteria in the Winthrop University Faculty Manual with respect to teaching effectiveness, scholarship and professional recognition, and professional service and academic responsibility.
4. Scholarly activity involving long-term projects should be evaluated on an annual basis with respect to effort and progress rather than entirely on the end result.

I see in the existing policy clear statements of overarching principles and guidelines for assessing performance and determining increases without any rigid or restrictive percentages as the forwarded policy presents in the table. While in recent years we have been sensitive to cost of living issues and have based only salary increases of more than 2% on evaluations of performance, I think it important to reserve that judgment to the circumstances in a particular year. Whatever policy is used, an essential aspect of any merit salary increase is clear communication of the process that we use and the basis for the judgment of merit for each individual. We are committed to communicating this information to each faculty member for every merit pay evaluation and determination.

I hope these explanations are clear. Thank you for your leadership of the Faculty Conference.

ATTACHMENT TWO

(From an email from *John E. Robbins, Ph.D.*
Rules Committee Chair)

NOTE: Changes are highlighted in **BOLD**

Appendix I: Faculty Governance

Article IV – Officers

Change From:

Section 1 The Chair of the Faculty Conference shall be elected biennially by the Faculty Conference, shall be a full-time tenured faculty member, shall be the official representative of the faculty to the Board of Trustees, and shall represent the faculty on ceremonial occasions. Administrative officers and department chairs shall be ineligible to serve as chair. A vacancy in the office shall be filled by election of the Faculty Conference for the unexpired term. (Amended by Faculty Conference, 4-20-88, 8-21-91.)

Change To:

Section 1 The Chair of the Faculty Conference shall be elected biennially by the Faculty Conference, shall be a full-time tenured faculty member, shall be the official representative of the faculty to the Board of Trustees, and shall represent the faculty on ceremonial occasions. **The Chair of the Faculty Conference will be responsible for establishing a suitable schedule of regular meetings of the Faculty Conference and for recommending the agenda for each regular meeting with the approval of the Rules Committee.** Administrative officers and department chairs shall be ineligible to serve as chair. A vacancy in the office shall be filled by election of the Faculty Conference for the unexpired term. (Amended by Faculty Conference, 4-20-88, 8-21-91.)

Article VII – Committees

Change From:

Section 2 The Rules Committee **shall be responsible for establishing a suitable schedule of regular meetings of the Faculty Conference**, for calling special meetings of the Faculty Conference when it deems such meetings appropriate, **for recommending the agenda for each regular or special meeting of the Faculty Conference**, for inviting guests to meetings of the Faculty Conference, for recommending to the Faculty Conference special rules of order and appropriate changes in the Bylaws of the Faculty Conference, and for reviewing bylaws and amendments to bylaws of constituent assemblies to determine whether they are consistent with these bylaws. The committee shall consist of six members elected by the Faculty Conference. (Amended by Faculty Conference, 11-15-77.)

Change To:

Section 2 The Rules Committee shall be responsible for calling special meetings of the Faculty Conference **and determining the meeting agenda** when it deems such meetings appropriate, for inviting guests to meetings of the Faculty Conference, for recommending to the Faculty Conference special rules of order and appropriate changes in the Bylaws of the Faculty Conference, and for reviewing bylaws and amendments to bylaws of constituent assemblies to determine whether they are consistent with these bylaws. The committee shall consist of six members elected by the Faculty Conference. **The Rules committee will approve the Faculty Conference meeting schedule and agendas provided by the Chair of the Faculty Conference.** (Amended by Faculty Conference, 11-15-77.)

RATIONALE FOR AMENDMENTS

Prior to and including Marilyn Smith's term as Chair of Faculty Conference, the schedule for Faculty Conference has been set by the Chair working with the Executive Support Specialist for the VPAA (Joyce Stafford), and coordinated to not conflict with the Board of Trustees, since the President and Chair of FC attend both. Joyce reserves rooms and also double checks the University calendar for major conflicts. The Chair then communicates the FC schedule to the Chair of Academic Council to set their dates. Joyce then passes the dates and places for FC and AC to FYI for publication.

The agenda has followed the following format for a very long time. Notes about why the Chair of FC should plan the agenda are in parentheses.

- 1. Minutes (Reviewed by the Chair of FC and the VPAA before they are published.)**
- 2. Report from Board of Trustees by Chair**
- 3. Report from the President (Chair meets with the President prior to each FC.)**
- 4. Report from VPAA (Chair meets with the VPAA to review the agenda prior to the publication of the agenda.)**
- 5. Committee Reports (We always have an Academic Council report, and the Chair attends the AC meetings. Also, it the Chair makes sure committees elect chairs and report to FC regularly or at least once a year, so there is already communication.)**
- 6. New and Old business (We have very little business that does not come through one of the standing committees.)**

We have only had two special meetings in the past five years, and they were both to get resolution on general education issues before the end of the academic year. So these were both called by the Chair of FC working with the Chair of AC. We propose that special meetings could be called by the Chair of the FC or the Rules Committee (In case we want to vote the Chair of FC out, and they refuse to call the meeting.)