

Winthrop University Faculty Conference
4 October 2013
2:00 pm Whitton Auditorium, Carroll Hall
Quorum Reached

The meeting was commenced by Dr. Bird at 2:00.

I. Approval of minutes for August 16, 2013 Faculty Conference

The minutes, with minor corrections, were approved.

II. Report from the Chair, John Bird

Dr Bird attended the Board of Trustees meeting held on the day of Convocation. Dalton Floyd was honored. The Board invited the Faculty Representative and the Student Representative to stay for the Executive Session for the first time. Dr. Bird was very pleased to see the opening of these new lines of communication. The next board meeting will be held on October 11, 2013. During this meeting, there will be a time designated for public comment. Please look for an email on how to participate, if you wish to do so.

III. Report from the President, Jayne Comstock

The president noted that one trustee was in attendance at the Faculty Conference Meeting: Sue Smith Rex. She was welcomed by the faculty.

The president reported that the university's holiday schedule is being changed through a consulted process. Labor Day and Memorial Day will now be holidays. The president expressed her appreciation for the academic leadership and faculty who participated in discussions about this issue; as the academic calendar was changed, all participants were asked to think about the impact these changes would have on students. The university is going to try celebrating these two holidays; if these changes cause unintended negative consequences, they won't be implemented again.

The president then gave a legislative update: She gave a presentation at CHE this August and made a budget request for 886 thousand dollars. This request included new staff lines, an additional person for academic support for athletics, and some one-time expenses. She asked for questions. There were none. The president encouraged the faculty to email any future questions to her. The president then noted that she has realized even more university needs since the semester has begun, and she noted that she is adding to our request to CHE under the umbrella of promoting affordability. She is asking for additional funding to staff online services and to get additional support for trainers to teach faculty how to use technology for education in a way that is appropriate. There is currently a 65 million budget surplus in SC; the president hopes that the legislature will use it to fund some of our requests. We have a strong list with safety and accreditation issues. (Note: The roof of Withers tops the list.)

The president noted that she has conducted three town hall meetings so far and that she saw many faculty members there. The next step is to conduct small group workshops. Please participate; they will be scheduled soon.

The administration plans to revisit the budgeting process. President Comstock may not be able to revise the budget this first year, but she does want to open up the process and show people how it works. She also wishes to assess the process itself. She is concerned that the process lacks transparency and doesn't include five-year-plans and predictive elements. We need a budget model process that is systematic and predictive.

Jennifer Solomon: Can faculty see the budget and how it's broken up?

Dr. Comstock: Yes, this year's budget is in the library now; it was walked over the day after it was approved. We hope to make it more informative and easier to read in the future.

Frank Pullano: When will the new schedule with holidays be released?

Dr. Boyd: This fall. We need to determine a new schedule, convocation dates, etc. We do plan for Maymester faculty and staff to have Memorial Day 2014 "off."

IV. Report from the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost, Debra Boyd

Provost Boyd noted that celebrating Labor Day and Memorial Day holidays creates issues for Monday classes on certain years, but the administration is working these issues out as quickly as possible. Provost Boyd has a November 1 goal to release the new 2014-2015 calendar.

Provost Boyd thanked all who participated in Preview Day activities. Currently, she is working to determine goals and to clarify the purpose of the day. The University wants to let students see and experience a variety of things. Provost Boyd noted that she recently sat at a table with a group of seniors at a scholarship luncheon. While doing so, she realized that these rising graduates may be some of our best recruiters. They feel they have earned a valuable degree, and these students see their studies at Winthrop as having been more worthwhile than those of peers at other institutions. They attribute their success to Winthrop.

Provost Boyd thanked those who participated in First Look Friday today. Please be aware that the university hosts tours on Saturday. Please stop and speak to those taking tours; it really has an impact. Faculty can be a friendly face and a friendly voice.

Jeannie Haubert, sociology: Thank you for this work on the calendar and budget. It is important and means a great deal to all of us.

V. Committee Reports

a. Academic Council, Will Thacker

The faculty voted to approve changes in the BFA VCOM program.

The faculty was notified of a series of course action items and shown the list of courses recertified for the Touchstone Program.

b. Rules Committee, Paula Mitchell

The Rules Committee unanimously recommended that the proposed amendment of Article II, Section 3 be placed on the ballot for the next Faculty Conference (November 22, 2013). Proposed amendment to existing Bylaws:

Section 3. The Faculty Conference shall be the principal legislative body of the faculty. All actions of the Faculty Conference shall be subject to review by the President of the University. ~~Any disapproval shall be communicated to the faculty, with reasons therefore, within thirty days.~~ If the President cannot support the actions taken by the Faculty Conference, the President shall communicate the reasons for this lack of support to the faculty within thirty days. By a two-thirds vote of a quorum, the Faculty Conference may appeal the President's disapproval to the Board of Trustees.

Jenny Rakestraw noted: Should the wording read "support an action" instead of support "the action"? One assumes a particular action may be in question, not all action.

The recommendation passed. The issue will be on the agenda in November for a vote.

The committee also suggested that Faculty Conference take appropriate steps to contact the Board of Trustees and request that the Board amend Article VI Section B of their Bylaws accordingly.

VI. Unfinished Business

There was none.

VII. New Business

There was none.

VIII. Announcements

a. Cheryl Fortner-Wood noted that the McNair Scholars Program is accepting applications right now. The deadline is November 1 at 5pm. This program serves first generation college students as well as other underrepresented student populations that wish to attend graduate school. Please inform strong students in your classes (who meet these requirements) that they should look into these opportunities. Dr. Boyd asked for an update on current students in the program; Dr. Fortner-Wood noted that almost all enrolled students have gone immediately into graduate programs and that a few are going for a PhD. The current success rate is great.

b. Frank Pullano reminded faculty that the window to enter midterm grades closes at 11:59 on Sunday. This is a critical retention effort; please participate.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Casey A. Cothran

Next meeting November 22, 2013

Faculty Conference Membership (329) 35% = 115 20% = 66