

**Winthrop University Faculty Conference**  
22 November 2013  
2:00 pm Dina's Place, DiGiorgio Campus Center  
Quorum Not Reached

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

I. There was a motion to proceed without a quorum (with 95 members in attendance); it passed.

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

The minutes were approved.

III. Report from the Chair, John Bird

a. The Board of Trustees met in the fall; Dr. Bird was excluded while they discussed the budget but invited back to the session as they discussed amendments to their bylaws.

b. Dr. Bird noted that full committee reports are available online.

IV. Report from the President, Jayne Marie Comstock

a. President Comstock introduced Dr. Danny Nicholson, the new Vice President of Institutional Advancement. Dr. Nicholson, the newest member of Winthrop's leadership team, has thirty years of experience in higher education, and will provide oversight, guidance, and leadership.

b. President Comstock discussed Winthrop's budget process. She noted that there is an administrative effort to organize budget information in ways that will make it easier to understand. She distributed a blank template document to the faculty and emphasized how one needs to understand the budget form before looking at numbers. Dr. Comstock explained the structure and use of the form, pointing out that it provides a new template for Winthrop, but that it is commonly used among university systems. Then, the president brought up the numbers in Winthrop's current budget (planned last year under the former president) on the overhead screen and showed them in the new template.

Greg Oakes: Is there a decrease in non-recurring state appropriations?

President Comstock noted that there is less available this year than before because we spent money on some one-time expenses. State appropriations typically fluctuate based on need. The president noted that 45% of the budget represents academic allocations of funds. She noted that this allocation should be largest portion of university expenses, and the percentage at other universities might be higher than 45%.

Jeff Sinn: What would you do differently?

Dr. Comstock noted that the people who built the current budget did so with the best of intentions and it is currently serving the university; currently her goal is to study it and to determine if "rolling forward" (repeating current expenses and allocations) is the right thing to do. Sometimes new allocations need to be made in order to better fund the mission, but she doesn't know yet what these are.

Kim Daily: Can we get further details about what income streams can be put towards what commitments?

Joe Rusinko: What about Foundation money and spending? Can we learn more about that?

President Comstock noted that further information on those topics can be found online; it is public information. She offered to explain how foundation dollars are invested at a future meeting. Dr. Comstock then explained that Kim Keel is bringing new oversight to the foundation these days and is doing an excellent job. The University is now paying salaries of advancement staff with a fundraising arm that will pay for itself. Winthrop is also designing a plan for how to fix overlapping connections between the university and the foundation by separating the payroll. The president also has plans to use foundation money to generate exciting new student scholarships.

The president then noted that the university does need to build reserves. Winthrop must increase student population; the revenue from tuition can fund raises in pay. One hundred new students could result in a 1% raise. Overall, Winthrop's student population must grow in order to change the budget picture.

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

a. Provost Boyd reminded the faculty that exams *must* be held. Faculty must use exam periods appropriately, as they are important to students' intellectual development. Exams offer students the opportunity to exercise their minds; as Alexander Pope once wrote, "The sign of strength of mind is exercise, not rest."

b. Provost Boyd noted that Winthrop has finally gotten approval from SACS for a BA in individualized studies. This is a special program intended for some of the university's best students who have an idea of a problem they want to solve or an issue they'd like to address, and the university wants to help them design a program of study to address their specific intellectual goals. This option might be especially attractive to honors students. Faculty should contact Marsha Bollinger in order to learn more.

c. Applications are up by 10% thanks to the great work of those in admissions. Criteria have not changed; Winthrop is just looking for more excellent students. Admissions are up by 360 compared to the same time last year; in turn, last Saturday was one of the largest Preview

Days since 2009. The provost thanked the faculty for paying attention to the families that come to campus.

#### VI. Report on Textbooks and the University Bookstore, Frank Ardiolo and Leann Johnson

a. Follett gave a presentation of bookstore sales numbers that included a breakdown of sales. Winthrop supports a "healthy" bookstore, but, overall, fewer students are buying from school bookstores. Notably, increased sales means increased scholarships (10% of profits) for students. Faculty were presented with a booknow+ video. The video provided an overview of a soon-to-be-available program that can be used through blackboard. WU will be beta testing the program in February, and it will be available for summer and fall textbook adoptions. Guest speaker Jim Coat, a regional manager from Atlanta, discussed benefits and opportunities that arise with this new system. In the spring, there will be training and practice sessions for faculty.

Greg Oakes: Are all textbooks (anything with an ISBN number) available through this system?

Jim Coat: Yes.

Jo Koster: I saw that the demo showed an article from a journal was used... what about copyright issues?

Jim: We will work on that issue for you, if possible. We try to get approval for users. We'll be around in March to show you some more options.

#### VII. Report from Academic Council, Jo Koster

a. Academic Council follows strict procedures and meeting dates; the council needs to meet deadlines in order to get curriculum actions approved. This includes new courses submitted to the General Education Committee as well as courses that need to be recertified to serve as "global" components. Please be aware of these dates, all of which are posted online.

b. Dr. Koster presented a proposal to change the S/U Declaration date. This suggested change in date arises from the notion that students need more time to decide about the S/U option. Dr. Koster discussed the philosophy behind the S/U option (to let students try new courses that may not be within their field of expertise, to encourage experimentation and intellectual growth) and referenced a recent study/article on the topic from *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Academic Council encourages faculty to discuss the philosophy of the S/U, and invites response and input from faculty to help shape the council's discussion of the issue. Currently the council is simply addressing the S/U Declaration date. Moving the S/U deadline to the time of the drop/add deadline would allow students and faculty to base this decision off of some graded material.

Michael Lipscomb: Could we adopt language to help students not disadvantage themselves?

Jeff Sinn: Is this letting students trick the system?

Dr. Koster responded that the goal of this change is to give students grades on which to base a decision.

Brad Tripp: Students are concerned with a lack of data; it is hard for them to determine how to proceed in a course.

Greg Oakes: Can we postpone this decision until we discuss the philosophy behind the S/U option?

John Bird: I think moving the date fits our stated goal and the goals of students who may be using the S/U option for GPA reasons.

Brad Tripp: It is a luxury for students to explore new intellectual fields. Many students don't have this opportunity because of major requirements.

Gloria Jones: There is a need for oversight of the option; some students S/U and can't graduate. A D allows a student to graduate, a U does not.

Greg Oakes: I move to postpone this vote (on the change of date) until our next Faculty Conference meeting on March 7.

The motion was seconded .

The vote was close, and there was a call for voters to raise their hands for counting. 32 supporting/31 opposing. The motion passed.

#### VIII. Report from University Priorities, Michael Lipscomb

a. There will be an upcoming proposal that a faculty member on the University Life Committee become an ex officio member of the University Priorities Committee. This will facilitate communication and action.

b. Dr. Lipscomb reviewed a list of the issues that have been brought to the attention of the committee.

c. Dr Lipscomb discussed the work of the committee. The committee discussed the goal of pay raises with the president; this was a very positive discussion. A discussion concerning Faculty Compression was also conducted with Provost Boyd; all are looking for ways to creatively address this issue. The committee discussed foundation issues with Kim Keel and specifically addressed Emeritus President DiGiorgio's compensation package. The committee is working on written report for university faculty to see so Faculty Conference will be aware of how specific questions are being addressed.

#### IX. Report from University Life, Jennifer Disney

a. Dr. Disney reviewed a list of the issues that have been brought to the attention of the committee.

b. Dr. Disney discussed the committee's process to address concerns. Queries are divided into two types of questions: questions that require one on one conversations to provide answers, and questions that require conferences with groups of individuals (health and safety, human resource policies). There will be a written report, as well as outcomes, presented at the next Faculty Conference meeting.

#### X. Unfinished Business

There was none.

#### XI. New Business

a. The Rules Committee presented their proposal to amend the Bylaws (Article 2, Section 3)

b. There was no discussion.

c. The motion passed.

d. President Comstock noted that the Board of Trustees is prepared to change the language of their Bylaws to be in line with those of the faculty.

#### XII. Announcements

a. Tim Drueke reminded faculty to pay attention to emails about grade deadlines, especially for students who are graduating.

b. Cheryl Fortner-Wood: The McNair Scholars Program received 86 submissions (to discover eligibility) and 39 complete applications. There are 9 slots in the program, and of those 9 slots, at least 2/3 must be low income *and* first-generation. The other three positions can be met by underrepresented populations. There were many who were deserving of this incredible opportunity, but only a few could make it into the program. Dr. Fortner-Wood thanked faculty for amazing letters and support of students. Please don't let the students who are disappointed let this define them.

c. John Holder was congratulated on the recent completion of his doctorate degree.

#### XIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Casey A. Cothran

Next meeting March 7, 2014 -- 2:00 Kinard Auditorium

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