

Faculty Governance Committee
Minutes
September 24, 2008

Present: Robert Entenmann, Tina Garrett, Jonathan Hill, Erik Lane, Karen Marsalek, James May, James McKeel, Diana Neal, Bruce Nordstrom-Loeb, Alan Norton, Arnie Ostebee, Wes Pearson, Steve Reece, Mark Schelske, Doug Schuurman

Guest: Kathy Ruby (Assistant VP for Enrollment & Dean of Student Financial Aid)

Jonathan Hill called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

1. The minutes of the meeting of Sept 10, 2008 were approved.
2. The committee welcomed its new student member, Erik Lane.
3. The committee chose five delegates to form the Regents-Faculty Conference Committee (RFCC) for the October 3 meeting with the Board of Regents. The committee considered representation of the different faculties of the college as well as delegates' teaching schedules, since the meeting will take place on Friday from 8:30-10:00. The following members agreed to constitute the RFCC for the upcoming meeting:

Robert Entenmann
Tina Garrett
Jonathan Hill
Jim McKeel
Bruce Nordstrom-Loeb

4. Alan Norton and Kathy Ruby then addressed the FGC on the topic of the size and composition of the student body, the subject of the RFCC's upcoming conversation with the Regents. The Regents are pondering the impact of increasing the student body to 3200, decreasing to 2900 or 2800, or staying at the current size of roughly 3000.

Alan explained that the discussion of growing or shrinking is not based solely on financial considerations; the college could be viable in all four scenarios, though given the fixed costs of the college, a larger student body would bring in some increased revenue. He also noted that if the student body grew or shrank, the college would still strive for the same percentage goals in a class's composition— the percentage of multicultural or international students, percentage of students on different kinds of aid, etc. is assumed not to be affected.

Kathy explained the tricky business of accurately predicting class size, and noted that maintaining the high academic profile of incoming classes is more challenging if they are larger. However, it is also difficult to say "no" to deserving students if the college is trying to recruit a smaller class, and that might affect the admission of less academically qualified students.

The committee discussed the physical and philosophical implications of the different models, and while the committee did not aim for a consensus on the issue, more concerns were raised with the model of a larger student body than with the other two options.

If the student body rose to a figure beyond the current 3000:

- We would need a new residence hall (our current capacity supports a total enrollment of 2800)
- We would need additional faculty and support staff, as well as additional office space
- The cafeteria would probably need to move to a model of all-day service.
- It would be difficult to predict which programs would grow or shrink. Additional advising loads would accrue to those programs that grew and thus, even if the college maintained its student/faculty ratio, some faculty would still serve a disproportionate number of advisees.
- The capacities of musical, theatrical and athletic groups would remain the same, resulting in even greater competitiveness for places in ensembles, casts and teams.
- Demand for off-campus programs (and for scholarship funding for those programs) would increase.

We are currently one of the largest liberal arts colleges in the country; how would further growth affect our ideal of “community”?

The committee agreed to meet again on Oct. 1 to further discuss the four options in advance of the RFCC meeting with the Regents.

The committee thanked Alan and Kathy for helping them understand the different scenarios under consideration.

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Marsalek
Secretary pro tem