

Minutes of the December 2007 Faculty Meeting

I. Call to Order

II. Opening Prayer

Pastor Benson offered a prayer on St. Nicholas day.

III. Remarks from the President, Part I

President Anderson announced that from this meeting forward, lunch will be served at faculty meetings. This met with great enthusiasm from the faculty.

President Anderson also reported that the campaign for the Science Center received a three million dollar challenge grant from a friend of the College. When the College raises \$3 million, the matching grant will be made, along with a \$5 million bonus. This will close out the campaign, he reported. The faculty responded with applause.

President Anderson also reported on the restructuring of the President's Office, which will now be staffed by two people. Kathleen Carr is the President's assistant. The President introduced Karen Stitsworth, who is serving as the Special Assistant to the President.

IV. Approval of the Minutes of the November 2007 Faculty Meeting

Minutes approved.

V. Report by the Observer to the Board of Regents

John Ferguson reported on the December Regents meeting. Both he and Karen Marsalek attended portions of the meeting. As Marsalek could not attend today's faculty meeting, Ferguson will also relay her observations. Marsalek noted that the Academic Affairs sub-committee expressed interest in exploring off-campus and international opportunities for students during the summer. The committee also continues to be interested in improving communication between the Regents and faculty, Marsalek also noted. Discussion continued concerning retirement packages. Ferguson asked that any faculty who are aware of attractive retirement programs at other institutions communicate their knowledge to the Faculty Observer. Ferguson also reported that in a plenary session in the afternoon, a major discussion took place considering the College's position in the marketplace. Perhaps because no decisions were pressing, the conversation was quite wide-ranging. Ferguson concluded by expressing his appreciation for the commitment to and passion for the College's future success he perceives among the Regents.

VI. Consent Agenda

Approved.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Curriculum Committee

David Booth reported on behalf of the committee on three items.

1. Decision-making procedures. The committee has adopted new standing rules, which will structure how decisions are made. A summary of the new rules and an explanation of the bureaucratic organization can be found on the CC web-site. Curriculum Committee 07/08-03

2. Assessment. The committee continues to work on how to integrate assessment evidence into teaching and learning practices. The committee has been working to communicate existing data on student learning, such as that from the Research Practices Survey, through workshops for faculty.

3. Distinction. There appears to be no campus-wide policy concerning criteria for rewarding Distinction, Booth reported. The committee is considering whether a common standard is desirable, and if so how that might be defined. The Chair of the sub-committee, Kathryn Ananda-Owens, welcomes faculty input on this issue.

B. RPC

Dan Hofrenning provided an update on RPC's initiatives:

1. Salary recommendation. February 15th is the deadline. Hofrenning noted that RPC will follow the same logic as last year, with the goal of achieving 80th percentile for salaries, as gauged by peer institutions' salary levels. More on this to follow.

2. Committee reform continues. Hofrenning said, according to the working draft of the restructuring currently under consideration, the Faculty Life Committee would do the work of the existing FDC and some functions of RPC such as salary and sabbatical recommendations. This committee would include 10 members. This committee would be the steward of the faculty life cycle. The second new committee would be charged with governance. Possible names: "Faculty Governance Committee" or "Faculty Council." This committee would do some of the work of the current RPC, but would also assume duties of faculty liaison to Board of Regents.

Deliberations continue concerning the nomination process, as Hofrenning reported at the November faculty meeting. Hofrenning discussed how nominations are handled at Middlebury College, where nominations are not voluntary. Discussion on this issue will continue, he said.

Jeanine Grenberg raised the issue of the program review of faculty development practices and its relationship to the committee restructuring. Grenberg suggested that perhaps committee restructuring should occur after the program review is complete. Discussion followed.

Hofrenning responded that the Faculty Life Committee would be the committee to consider and review faculty development. Sub-committees could be adjusted if necessary in response to the program review currently underway.

VII. New Business

Laurel Carrington moved that the faculty approve the motion to restore the bells. She noted that the bells bring a structure to the day and a sense of closure to the end of a class. She specified that the motion would only restore bells to where they had been but not impose them in buildings where they have not or would not be.

The motion was seconded.

Gwen Barnes-Karol noted that bells do have an impact on faculty, staff, and students who rely on bells because of disabilities.

Jeanine Grenberg requested that the bells in Holland Hall be brought into synchronization with time on the rest of the campus.

Motion to call the question. Seconded. Such a motion is not discussable and requires a two-thirds vote to pass.

The motion to restore the bells went to a vote. A sizable number of votes in favor were heard, but the majority clearly went to the 'nays.' The motion to restore the bells failed.

Anne Sabo expressed concern that the motions regarding the bells had not been on the agenda at the November meeting nor on the agenda for this meeting.

VIII. Remarks for the Good of the Order

Jonathan Hill praised Gary DeKrey and other faculty for their work in preparing St. Olaf students for the Rhodes Scholarship competition. Hill noted that with two Rhodes Scholars this year, St. Olaf is in league with Harvard and Princeton. The faculty responded with applause. The President noted that since 1990, no college has produced more Rhodes Scholars

Dan Hofrenning announced that events related to the Spring Theme Semester: "Civic Engagement and the Liberal Arts" can now be found on the College's web-site.

IX. Remarks by the President, Part II

President Anderson noted that the Christmas Festival enjoyed great success. Via simulcasts in addition to on campus visitors, roughly 20,000 people had the opportunity to experience the message and beauty of the Christmas Festival. Kudos to all of those involved in Christmas Festival from the President.

The President also made a few remarks on planning issues. Having nearly completed the Science Center campaign, the June board retreat will be a good opportunity to do some long-term planning. The President ended by conveying some of the key questions that will have an impact on how the planning process proceeds: What result would be regarded as a successful planning

exercise by the faculty? What are our top priorities? What kind of process will get us to that point?

X. Open Agenda

Report from the Student Government Association. Tyler Hauger '08 and Ishanaa Rambachan '08 appeared before the faculty to report on the activities and initiatives of the SGA. Hauger reported that communication between students and administration has been improved by breakfast meetings in the cafeteria with the President and by integrating student representatives into various campus committees. As part of an "inclusivity" initiative, diversity events have been made free and open to all students. A new web-site called Oleville.com also has been launched as part of this initiative. Rambachan reported that the SGA has been working to increase civic engagement among students. To this end, the SGA has provided funds to students to attend conferences and other events. The SGA also provides daily newspapers for student use. The SGA also introduced the office of 'Northfield Senator' to improve communication with the town, it was reported. Hauger noted that a code of ethics was adopted to govern leadership practices in the SGA. Finally, Rambachan reported that service initiatives continue. Ole Spring Relief Three will take place over Spring Break on a service trip to southern Minnesota to help with flood relief. SGA also contributed a gift to Katherine Olsen Memorial to honor her life.

Meeting adjourned.

Minutes prepared by Anna Kuxhausen, Asst. Prof. of History

A sound recording of this meeting has been submitted to the Archive.