BSUFA Faculty Senate

Date: 1/24/05 A continuation of the 1/10/05 meeting


Absent: C. Brown, P. Donnay, E. Hoffman,

Excused: D. Bilanovic (Drago), V. Boudry, R. Koch,

Guests: Deb Peterson

Called to Order: 4:00 PM

Larkin: Before we begin, I want to pass around to the members a thank you note from Janice Haworth, acknowledging the plant that we sent to her.

Larkin: I’ve gotten reinforcement for moving things along in previous senate meetings, but concerns were expressed after the last time we met about my having railroaded Curriculum Report 5, the Liberal Studies Bachelor of Arts, through. I’ve asked Rosenbrock to address the parliamentary procedure for reconsidering a motion that has already been passed by this body.

Rosenbrock: Read criteria for a motion to reconsider. To be brought forth, it must be made by a person who voted for passage of the motion. Anyone can second a motion to reconsider. It is debatable. Because today’s meeting is a continuation meeting from 1/10/05, a motion to reconsider is an option. If it were a new meeting, parliamentary rules would not allow for such a motion.

Larkin: Does any one want to bring back Curriculum report 5 for further consideration?

Adequate wait time was observed. There was no response from the senate.

Principles of Calendar Development

Larkin: Last time, Oldham moved that we take the proposed principles of calendar development back to our departments for consideration.

McManus: I move to approve the proposal outlining the principles of calendar development principles.

Wolf: Second

Dada: For clarification, we are voting on the principles not the calendar.

Brouwer: I recognize Deb Peterson.

Peterson: Ivy Knoshaug brought to my attention that if hold to the principle of commencement on the second Friday in May, there are some Mays when that occurs on May 8 or 9 which would mean we wouldn’t have a 3 week break. I recommend that we change the principle to reflect a desire for commencement occurring on a Friday near the middle of May.

McManus: If we approve this, we would get out of the business of setting calendars. We would be handing the principles to the administration.

Peterson: I would like to say yes. The principles could eliminate problems in calendar construction.

Wolf: Reading day isn’t included in principles. I’ve heard feedback that students find reading day to be helpful, particularly since finals don’t begin on Monday. There is the potential for students to finish a class late on a Thursday afternoon and have the final for that class at 8:00 the next day. One possibility would be to have only 4 days of finals.

Peterson: We asked Dave Carlson whether we could schedule finals on 4 days rather than 5. I recollect that he indicated that it would be a scheduling challenge because we have evening classes. Our counter suggestion was that we might condense breaks between the finals as they are currently scheduled, and get in another test session each day. We can go back to Carlson and
ask him. Some of our sister institutions and some much larger universities manage with 4 days of finals.

Oldham: Reporting on Education Department discussion, they were supportive of the principles with the caveat that fall semester begin after Labor Day.

Kippenhan: My department likes ending by December 20. Many international students were unable to go home for break because of the problem of getting airline tickets for the days just before Christmas. Regarding the current reading day, there are advantages and disadvantages. Faculty can also use the day for catching up. There is also a problem of fishing opener and commencement. There can be a problem with people coming for commencement that occurs the same weekend as commencement. Hotel rooms could be hard to come by.

Donovan: English agreed on four recommendations, including that finals be completed by December 20, a 3 day Thanksgiving hiatus, a 3 week semester break, and urging the bodies to consider a change in the overall number of instructional days for fall down to 69/68/67.

Peterson: Suggestions?

Welle: This may be a situation where devil is in the details. In some years, all of these things will work, but there will have to be tradeoffs. The most laudable goal is that students have enough weeks to earn their maximum income. This is a reason for starting after Labor Day. They may be able to earn up to $500 that last week. Many faculty support starting after Labor Day so that students can earn this extra money. We also need a balance between days of the week. We had far fewer Thursdays this year. It can be a serious concern, especially when setting up a lab. Having enough days for all students to finish each required lab can be problematic. It’s often not possible to cram in a lab and a half into 2 weeks to equal 3 lab days.

Peterson: One principle is to try to maintain 15 classroom hours per academic credit. If we know and schedule classes and labs based on this, it can work. Regarding the post Labor Day, in 2003, students in my social research class did a random survey of 250 students regarding academic calendar issues including whether to start after Labor Day. 49% were against starting before Labor Day, 18% wanted to start before Labor Day, and 33% were neutral. We don’t have an apparent majority of students who want to start after Labor Day. Additionally, 57% wanted to eliminate Veterans Day and have a full week off for Thanksgiving instead, 55% wanted more vacation days built into fall semester even if it means starting before Labor Day, and 52% favored having vacation days given to BSU students that would match MEA breaks as much as possible.

Bland: Our department wanted clarification. Is this assessment day required or optional?

Peterson: Nationally the higher education assessment body (HLC) suggests that faculty are doing assessment and have trouble getting in while teaching full time. The assessment day is designed to help faculty do that important assessment. It is however, only a suggestion.

Bland: So we are to use it in our departments to assess student outcomes.

Kippenhan: We are required to have 168 duty days. No matter how we manipulate the instructional days, we still have the same amount of duty days.

Welle: What attention will be paid to those people who teach labs in order to balance the Tuesday/Thursday disparities? I would like to offer an amendment. I propose that attention be paid to a balance between days of the week so that there is a rough similarity in days such as Tuesday/Thursday and Monday/Wednesday/Friday.

Meyer: Second.

Milowski: I’m not sure how paying attention to those days when we aren’t scheduled will help. Any day that we aren’t here will have an impact on someone teaching something.

McManus: Syracuse University addressed this by defining some days as other days. In other words, Monday might be defined as a Tuesday to ensure that one day of the week wasn’t over represented in days of not teaching.

Meyer: This also has implications for evening classes. We need to keep this as even as possible.
Peterson: This is a good idea.

Witt: This is why I don’t want to lose the right to comment on the calendar all together. We will all have to make accommodations. I don’t want to cede that authority entirely. Fauchald: Call the question

Webb: Second.

Vote on Welle’s amendment to the principles of calendar development.

Amendment approved.

Webb: I call the question on the original motion.

Dunn: Second.

Motion to approve principles of calendar development (as amended) approved.

Fixed Term Math Positions

Larkin: At Meet & Confer, the administration proposed converting one of the fixed term math positions to probationary, but asked if we can be flexible about the other fixed term position. Executive committee wants senate to consider the following draft:

- Members of the BSUFA believe that the new probationary position in mathematics is appropriate to, and in keeping with, the contract. We believe that the language in Article 21, Section E., Subd. 1. does provide the administration with considerable flexibility insofar as the appointment of fixed-term positions is concerned. We request that the provisions of this Article be carefully considered whenever faculty appointments are made.

Fauchald: I move to accept the draft.

Brouwer: Second.

Lee: I interpret your statement as a long and nice way of saying no, we won’t grant flexibility.

Fauchald: We are saying yes, go forward with the probationary potion. There is a clause that says the president can make fixed term decisions the good of the University, as long as there is justification.

Lee: It reads like a “no” to me. But the contract allows that flexibility.

Dada: But regarding this fixed term position in Modern Languages, we are pushing for more probationary positions. I think we need to vote in favor of more probationary positions.

Milowski: I read this as “yes, convert one to probationary.” But we will not agree to something that isn’t already in the contract. The contract says the president must write a letter of as to why a fixed term position is to be continued. We will now expect to get those year after year. We will then have them when it comes time to discuss positions in the future.

Meyer: What about 4 years in a fixed term position?

Milowski: The contract actually refers to 12 months. We did also ask what was happening with the Modern Language position.

Meyer: I wasn’t aware of the 12-month appointment issue. I assume Math is talking about those positions that would go beyond 4 years. Is it the president going to bring this to Meet & Confer?

Milowski: The language suggests that there would have to be an exceptional reason for continuing a fixed term position beyond 4 years.

Fauchald: We used to get these letters. They have just gotten out of the habit of writing them. What we can do is start keeping track of sabbaticals. If we can keep the record, we can keep these straight. Biology and math have been examples of departments where a fixed term person rotates through sabbaticals.

Donovan: Administration perennially asks for flexibility. Contractually, we might ask them what flexibility they might grant us. Fewer instructional days, perhaps.

Wolf: For clarification, they didn’t specify the additional flexibility they might want?

Larkin: If anyone would like to draft additional or better language, I would welcome it.

McManus: Administration doesn’t need more flexibility.

Nielson: I have suggestions for a revision of this draft.

Rosenbrock: We could vote on the motion in principle and edit it after this meeting.

Fauchald: Then I withdraw my motion.
Brouwer: I withdraw my second.
Lee: I move to accept the principles and work on wordsmithing later.
Wolf: Second.
Motion approved

A message of the Grievance Officer
Witt: In the words of Rodney King, “Can’t we all just get along together?” The union and grievance function are for those situations where the union or a member has a problem with administration. Recently, 75% of our time has been taken up with faculty against faculty problem. PLEASE, I implore you. We understand that there are often departmental relationship problems, but those are not a part of the grievance process.
Meyer: Is there a process for faculty/faculty conflict?
Rosenbrock: Through Lorena Cook.
Witt: And the deans are supposed to help resolve this type of problem. If worse comes to worst, we can grieve the dean.

Costing Teaching Workload Task Force
Papanek-Miller: We had a meeting in St. Paul to summarize costing and workload. Faculty are looking at adjustment of workload, MnSCU is looking at how to fund an adjustment of workload. The faculty on this task force believe that our workload is extraordinary. It is certainly remarkably misunderstood at the Board Office. They just don’t get what we do. The MnSCU representatives to this task force had an “ah hah” as they were told that we actually do far more than just teach and have office hours. The second meeting is next Friday. We were asked to bring back samples for that next meeting, but were given no direction. I developed a possible information-gathering document and I need feedback. There is national information that our 12 credit work load is extensive.
Applause for a wonderful presentation!
Kippenhan: What about questions regarding the time it takes to do masters advising.
Papanek-Miller: We are looking for ammunition, please respond to grad school assignments under B. 6. Other.
Hauser: Given the number of committees and the number of faculty who serve, 1 hour per committee, per week, it would seem that we spend lots of time there.
Larkin & Gritzmacher: That brings up all the committee seats that are still vacant, and the dearth of committees. We need to address this in the near future.
Milowski: IFO downstate asked for this committee. We are losing ground. At MnSCU, there is less and less understanding of what we do. Nothing in the MnSCU marketing plan addresses graduate programs or applied research. We are doing more and more work and there is less and less understanding.

Master Academic Plan
Dunn: After the Provost came to senate to ask how she should proceed with the Master Academic Plan, the Executive Committee discussed the problem at length and wishes to offer two proposals for the consideration of the Senate.

1. We propose that the Senate confirm that the Provost may direct the Dean’s Council to compile a master academic plan by working through their respective Chairs’ meetings and academic departments. The Provost should also consult with relevant BSUFA committees, for example the Graduate Program Committee and the Liberal Education Task Force. Once the colleges generate their plans and committees provide input, the Provost will draft the master academic plan and pass it to the Senate for comment and consideration. The final document will then be produced by the Provost.

This is, in fact, moving outside the planning process. But there are two reasons to do this. 1. The master academic plan is an academic thing; it doesn’t need all the other bargaining units to comment on it. 2. The departments and colleges already have academic plans and those will form
the basis of the master academic plan. This is the best way to formulate that master plan.

**Fauclald:** Second.

**Donovan:** What role is envisioned for the Academic Affairs Planning Committee if it is to have no role in relation to the master academic plan.

**Milowski:** That umbrella committee would have no role in this. However, the BSUFA Academic Affairs may well have a role, as would liberal education and curriculum committees. Those will all have to be rolled into the master academic plan. Agreement has been worked out with administration to take this route.

**Dunn:** The second motion will address some of those bigger issues.

**Donovan:** So what is the purpose of the volunteering to serve on the Academic Affairs Planning Committee?

**Hauser:** Assessment.

**Dunn:** The Provost’s main concern is to move the master academic plan through as quickly and efficiently as possible. The departments and colleges have already done so much of the work involved.

**Donovan:** What happens when the Liberal Education Task Force is no longer in existence?

**Dunn:** This proposal is just for this cycle. We hope to have something else in place in the future. No BSUFA committees are being excluded.

**Milowski:** Fredrickson has a short time frame; she wants this completed this academic year. Motion carried.

**Dunn:** The second proposal is as follows:

2. Since much planning seems to be taking place outside the campus planning structure now in place, we propose that the Senate authorize the executive committee to begin a conversation with the administration regarding the overall planning process.

**Brouwer:** Second.

**Fauclald:** This was coming anyway.

**Larkin:** A consultant has been hired to review our current planning structure. Do you want to see him come before Senate?

**Witt:** Not to preclude executive committee?

**Larkin:** Yes.

Motion carried.

**Larkin:** Next meeting February 7.

Adjourned 5:10 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Gritzmacher