

Faculty Senate Steering Committee Meeting
September 18, 2008

Dr. Manoj Chopra, Faculty Senate Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. The roll was circulated for signatures. The minutes of August 14, 2008 were approved as recorded by unanimous vote.

Steering Officers Present: Drs. Chopra, Cook, Jewett, and Chase.

Steering Committee Members Present: Drs. Belfield, Covelli, Gause, Gunter, Kamrath, Kassab, Kaufman, Koons, Kovach, Leigh, LiKamWa, Lynxwiler, Nutta, and Pennington.

Administrators Present: Provost Terry Hickey, Drs. Alison Morrison-Shetlar, Patricia Bishop, and Diane Chase.

Steering Committee Members Not Present: Drs. Daniell and Quigley.

Recognition of Guests: Greg Schuckman, Director, Federal Relations; Robyn Sidersky, Intern, Orlando Business Journal.

Announcements

Federal Relations update – *Greg Schuckman reporting*

Mr. Greg Schuckman, Director of Federal Relations, coordinates UCF activities in Washington. He spoke about the Federal priority process, now underway. No appropriations bills have passed yet even though fiscal year will start October 1 and thus there will most likely be continuing resolutions to allow spending at the current level at least through early next year. Mr. Schuckman discussed the difference between authorization (creating programs and suggesting spending levels) and appropriations (actually allocating money). No new initiatives are being put forth from UCF this year because of the continuing resolutions. UCF has six primary appropriations requests: marine coastal research, *in vitro* lung, patient safety, biofuels, x-ray photonics, and solar power. Federal Relations will be bringing some federal officials (such as from NIH) to UCF this coming year to familiarize them with UCF's growth and success.

Provost's Update

The 2009-2010 budget situation is still unclear. The state government has used 600 million dollars in trust fund money to help close the deficit for this year. The provost is hopeful that the 6% escrowed will see UCF through the tough budget year 2008-2009. Statewide, 2009-2010 is expected to be the worst, with a projected deficit of 3.5 billion. To date, each billion dollar state shortfall has meant a 4% cut to the State University System. Lottery revenues are also stagnant or declining. More will be clear after the elections.

A question was raised on the status of the collective bargaining for raises, and the letter from the United Faculty of Florida suggesting that the raise is being tied to other more objectionable measures. The provost is hopeful that a memo of understanding will be reached, but cannot address specifics of bargaining issues. He recommended that faculty contact the union.

A follow-up question was asked regarding the higher raises being offered at FSU and UF. The provost replied that other schools are better funded, and UCF is being fiscally conservative in an effort to prevent future layoffs.

The provost was asked to clarify the purpose of the 96 million dollars in reserve funds. He explained that there are commitments and obligations on much of that money for things including student financial aid, auxiliaries, and housing bonds. Another portion of the funds is the colleges' carry forward reserves.

New Business

Married couple service on Thesis or Dissertation Committees – *Dr. Chopra reporting*

One college is attempting to enforce an internal policy that prohibits married couples from serving together on thesis or dissertation committees. Graduate Studies suggests that such service can be managed to preclude difficulties for students, and does not know why a college would forbid it outright. If such a policy were enacted, it could possibly be considered discrimination on the grounds of marital status.

Dr. Cook stated that the senate does not have all of the information and so this issue is not ready to be discussed in detail in the Faculty Senate. Dr. Chopra explained that he brought this to the committee due to the time sensitive nature of the issue and the potential harm to a student in that college, who is ready to graduate and was told that the committee is invalid. Dr. Bishop offered to have Graduate Studies deal with the issue on an administrative level to rectify the situation and will report back to Steering. The Provost stated that faculty are professionals, and can be assumed to work together without conflict. If conflict is an issue, one should recuse him or herself.

Advisory Council of Faculty Senates – *Dr. Cook reporting*

Drs. Chopra, Cook, and Arlen Chase attended the Advisory Council of Faculty Senates meeting. The budget review by the Chancellor's staff was very pessimistic. The Chancellor is optimistic that they will extend differential tuition to all universities in the State University System. Statewide, there are issues regarding the jurisdiction of campus police, and whether arrests made off-campus are valid. The statewide distance learning taskforce will make recommendations and will be a repository of resources. The State College System includes many community colleges that will or have changed over to offer 4 year degrees. Details regarding common course numbering, accepting and transferring credits are being worked out, and two statewide boards are addressing this. The State College System will exist parallel to the State University System, but will not offer graduate degrees. Details regarding the implementation of the textbook affordability bill are being worked out, including how to implement aid to poor students to help them afford textbooks. Guidelines for the bill are required to be in place by March of next year. Changes in the GI bill might mean more veterans coming to universities, which is a possible new source of revenue.

The provost added an update regarding Courtelis state matching funds for private donations for brick and mortar projects. This year, no funds were made available, and universities can't spend the first dollar on some of these projects until the match has come through.

Standing Committee Liaisons

Liaisons were determined for the Standing Committees. These are:

UPCC – Dr. Bob Pennington

Budget and Administrative – Dr. Patrick LiKamWa

Personnel – Dr. Bill Leigh

Graduate Council – Dr. Alain Kassab (Program Review)

Dr. Cook gave an update on the Committee on Committees. Some senators don't yet have committee assignments because they haven't indicated a preference. If they don't do so, they will be appointed to a committee. Additionally, a COHPA representative has to be elected to the Steering committee.

Dr. Chopra asked Steering members to let him know if they have items for Steering or Senate meetings, and to make their constituents aware that they can bring issues up to be brought to committees. Specifically, information items or policy questions for the standing committees should first be brought to Steering. They will then be referred to the appropriate committee. Email items in advance if possible.

A request was made that links be put on the Faculty Senate website for the Standing Committees and that minutes of the committees be made available as well. Lisa Sklar will work on accomplishing this.

Dr. Cook noted that we have a new Constitution, and if anyone sees something in the Constitution that should be changed they should report it to her.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.