

Winthrop University Faculty Conference
September 25, 2009
2 pm Plowden Auditorium, Withers Building

I. Call to Order

Mr. Hamilton called the meeting to order at 2:05. As there wasn't a quorum, the faculty voted in favor to continue the meeting.

II. Approval of minutes of August 21, 2009 Faculty Conference

Minutes were approved as amended.

III. Report from the Chair

Marsha Bollinger

Dr. Bollinger was ill and unable to attend the meeting, but sent some comments for Mr. Hamilton to share. Among other things, she urged faculty to communicate with her if they have concerns or would like to convey any other information so that she may better represent them. Dr. Bollinger also asked that everyone be responsive to requests for information related to SACS reaccreditation.

IV. Report from the Vice President for Academic Affairs

Thomas Moore

- Dr. Moore began by announcing the dedication ceremony of Carroll Hall. There will be an event for all of campus later in the fall.
- Dr. Moore continued by stating that Winthrop is experiencing two major undertakings at the same time. The first undertaking is Banner, which has three parts. The first part, Banner Finance, is up and running, but still requires some tweaking. We are working on the second part, Banner Student, and hope to have it running by March. Much faculty training will be required.
- The second undertaking is the SACS reaccreditation. Academic Affairs is studying "assessment and how we report it." Dr. Moore continued by saying we have to create an infrastructure for the data; every program needs to show an assessment template and there must be consistency across campus.
- Tom Moore also asked faculty to complete the QEP survey. The faculty's broad input is important.
- Sabbaticals (5 half-year allotments) will be reinstated next year.

V. Committee Reports

Academic Council

Mark Hamilton

- Mr. Hamilton began by quoting Eldridge Cleaver saying "Too much agreement kills a good chat." His reason for quoting Cleaver was to argue that the Academic Council is not in place to just "approve things."

- AC is doing many things for the upcoming SACS certification. Mr. Hamilton said “let's try to remember that the main reason for doing this should be improving the effectiveness of our programs for our students.”
- Mr. Hamilton went on to announce proposed changes from the Committee on Undergraduate Instruction. All motions were passed undisputed. For these changes see materials posted with the September 25, 2009 meeting agenda (www.winthrop.edu/facultyconference).
- Items approved by CUI on pages 9 and 10 of the agenda did not require action and were just informational.
- Mr. Hamilton finished by encouraging faculty to attend the next Academic Council Meeting (October 2nd at 2:00 in Tillman 308).

VI. Unfinished business

Bylaws amendments discussion

1. The discussion began by a motion to postpone the discussion of the bylaws items to the next meeting. The following statement was introduced by the Chair of the Faculty Concerns Committee:

MOTION to POSTPONE:

The Winthrop University Committee on Faculty Concerns moves that the proposal to consider a new structure for Faculty Governance be postponed until the next meeting of Faculty Conference, Nov. 20 2009.

RATIONALE for Motion to Postpone:

During our regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, Sept. 24 2009, the Winthrop University Committee on Faculty Concerns addressed issues raised by faculty relevant to today's discussion of a new Faculty Governance structure. One primary concern raised by faculty centered on the fact that Faculty Conference is being asked to vote on a new Faculty Governance structure that includes several proposed amendments from President DiGiorgio, yet President DiGiorgio is not present to join our discussion and deliberation. While President DiGiorgio did e-mail his justifications, questions remain about both the governance structure and the justifications offered regarding the changes. It would be best if we could discuss the proposal for our new faculty governance structure and the suggested amendments with all relevant parties, including the President, in attendance.

With a vote of 29 to 26, a decision was made to move ahead with a discussion of the bylaw amendments.

2. In reference to proposed bylaw text, Article VIII, Section 7, the following comments were offered:
 - The President's changes were consistent with what was originally presented by the Governance Review Committee.
 - Were the changes semantic or were the changes substantive?

- Changes do not take away faculty authority and that the spirit of the document remains the same. Others countered that if the document essentially remains the same, why is there a change at all? Another stated that the suggested changes actually make the committee stronger.

A vote was taken on Article VIII, Section 7.

Faculty Committee on University Life. This committee shall be responsible for examining issues submitted by faculty members that affect the conduct of university life, and shall address these issues by communicating directly with appropriate administrators and members of the University faculty and staff to understand the issue more fully and to facilitate a resolution to the concern as needed. The committee shall report its findings, and the status of the issues to Faculty Conference, to the Committee on University Priorities, and to the President at least once each semester.

The committee shall consist of nine members: two members elected from each of the degree-granting colleges and one member elected from the Library faculty. At least one member elected from each of the degree granting colleges and the member elected from the Library faculty shall be tenured. The Chair of the committee shall attend open meetings of the appropriate committee of the Board of Trustees.

The item passed unanimously.

3. Article VIII, Section 8 was discussed. The following points were made.
 - One faculty member spoke in favor of increasing the number of meetings with the president, but did not offer an amendment.
 - Several individuals offered comments about how one would communicate anonymously with the president. The concern is that untenured faculty may not feel comfortable speaking on behalf of themselves. Some felt that the custom of openness of communication should be written down and not just assumed.
 - Another faculty member reminded the conference that the bylaws are “a working document.”
 - David Meeler expressed the following statements on behalf of Faculty Concerns concerning the President’s changes:

Statement from Faculty Concerns: On the President's reliance on custom or practice rather than policy:

While we are appreciative of the many customs you adhere to that benefit us as a faculty, the proposed changes to faculty governance may very well last past your tenure as President. There have been some concerns expressed by the faculty that these customs need to become policies so that customs under your leadership continue going forward into the next administration.

- Discussion occurred about the process once the body passed bylaws. These included discussion over whether the Financial Exigency Committee would exist in the future.
- Whether or not untenured faculty should be able to be on this committee was discussed. The decision by the Faculty Governance Review Committee to only have tenured faculty on the committee was to provide a wall of protection.
- One member felt that faculty need to see the budget earlier in the fiscal year (July 1).
- Another argument to postpone the discussion of Section VIII, Faculty Committee on University Priorities to the next meeting was made and discussed. The motion to postpone failed by vote.

Article VIII, Section 8. Faculty Committee on University Priorities. This committee shall be responsible for meeting at least once per semester with the President and the other Executive Officers of the University to provide a faculty perspective on admissions policy, planning, objective setting, and resource allocation, as well as other areas that are important to the University's future.

The committee shall consist of eight members: one member elected from each of the degree-granting colleges, one member elected from the Library faculty, one member elected from the faculty of University College, and one member elected by the Graduate Faculty Assembly. All members of this committee shall be tenured. The Chair of the Faculty Conference shall serve as an ex officio member with vote. The Chair of the committee shall attend open meetings of the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees.

The amendment passed by vote.

4. The third bylaw change was introduced into discussion.

Article II, Section 3. The Faculty Conference shall be the principal legislative body of the faculty. All actions of the Faculty Conference shall be subject to review by the President of the University.

Statement from Faculty Concerns: On the Board's decision to formally refuse to hear any appeals from the faculty:

As many of us are aware, the Board of Trustees recently voted to eliminate the faculty's ability to formally appeal any decision the President makes to the Board. If we can no longer appeal to the Board, what is the formal appeal process going forward? Concerns have been raised to the Faculty Concerns Committee that the appeals process may have been totally eliminated by the Board and that our role, as Faculty Conference has become advisory rather than a "principal legislative

body" as outlined in the current Faculty Manual. We ask for clarification on the current appeals process given the Board of Trustees's decision.

- One member explained that there are two outlets for communicating concerns. The faculty can speak to the formal representative for the Board of Trustees who provides a formal report during an open meeting. There is also a public comment period available to the campus community.
- Faculty Concerns Committee is worried that this amendment would remove the ability to communicate a possible two-thirds vote against a decision by the President.
- Dr. Moore said that this is a board decision about board function. Any issues raised at Faculty Conference can be brought to the Board. Dr. Moore explained that when faculty concerns are brought to the Board, they are attentive and inquiring about the nature, character and basis of those concerns. Dr. Moore also said that it is very common for schools to remove any appeals to its Board of Trustees.
- One member was concerned about "giving up rights" and that the faculty has never abused this process. She questions their decision to remove themselves from this process.
- After a question about "to whom do [faculty] bring their appeals," a section of the "new" Faculty Conference bylaw was consulted. If the President decides adversely to a faculty member, that faculty member may appeal the decision to the Board of Trustees. There was some question as to whether or not this was the case due to the change in the Board bylaws.
- One member expressed his concern over the micromanaging of the bylaws and that whether we vote on the changes or not, it's moot.
- Another member said that if the mode of appeal is stricken by approval of changes today, the faculty are held responsible for expressing concerns through the two modes of communication and would hold faculty accountable to show up to public Board meetings as well as Dr. Bollinger to express the faculty concerns.
- There was a motion to add an amendment to the end of item 3: Any disapprovals shall be communicated to the faculty, with reasons therefore, within thirty days.
- Since there were less than 65 faculty present at this point, a vote could not be made on either the amendment or to Article II, Item 3 as proposed.

SACS Progress Report

Pat Graham

Dr. Pat Graham said the SACS report was attached for reference.

Talons Report

Cheryl Fortner -Wood

Dr. Fortner-Wood thanked Tom Moore and reminded faculty of the Talons website.

<http://www2.winthrop.edu/TALONS/>

She also announced Banner training sessions.

<http://www.winthrop.edu/controllersoffice/default.aspx?id=7420>

VII. New business

Report on Summer Session

Yvonne Murnane

Dr. Murnane announced that Winthrop was doing well in regards to summer sessions. There was a 1.4% increase in enrollment. She also announced that tuition for 2010 will be the same as 2009 (which was equal to 2007). Other data are available online.

Faculty Leadership Committee amendment

Cheryl Fortner-Wood

Dr. Cheryl Fortner-Wood said that no motion could be made without a quorum.

VIII. Announcements

Faculty Concerns announced a meeting with the President for Friday, October 23rd. The committee itself will be meeting on Tuesday, October 13th to finalize the agenda for the meeting with the President. Any concerns should be brought to the faculty concerns committee.

An announcement was made regarding mid-semester progress reports. The faculty was asked to respond to this email announcement. Faculty can report on any student even if they are not struggling.

The English department invited faculty to attend a reading of banned books on Monday, September 28th at 7:00 in Owens Hall.

Dr. Fortner-Wood announced that the McNair Scholar Application would be coming out soon.

IX. Adjournment

The Meeting was adjourned at 4:12.

Respectfully submitted,
L. Mark Lewis