

Faculty Senate Meeting

January 18, 2000, Fergusson Forum

The Secretary called the roll. The following Senators were absent: Majeed Alsikafi, Martin Bakker, Betty Bryce, Ashley Evans, Philip Johnson, Richard Lowry, Stephen McCall, Ann McFadden, Lee Pike, Robin Rogers.

Norman Baldwin was represented by alternate Terry Royed.

Approval of Minutes

The Senate, upon motion and second, unanimously voted to accept the minutes of the December meeting.

Suspension of Rules and Discussion with Members of the Human Relations Council

On motion and second, the Senate unanimously suspended the rules to permit Dr. Harold Bishop and Ms. Cheree Causey to address the Senate on behalf of the Human Relations Council. Dr. Bishop spoke to the issue of low rates of retention for minority faculty. He noted that the University, and its faculty, need to create a more welcoming and supportive climate for African American and other faculty who are members of minority groups. Complacency looms as a major obstacle in constructing a more supportive and positive culture. The Human Relations Council will host an open forum at noon, on Thursday, March 2nd.

President's Report

Rob noted at the outset the importance of the Higher Education Partnership and the availability of membership forms, which he encouraged Senators to give to their colleagues. He also noted that the colleges would soon hold elections for senators whose terms were expiring, and that the Senate itself would be holding officer elections.

Rob reported that he spoke with President Sorenson concerning campus and greek diversity, and that President Sorenson said he was working on the issue. Sybil Todd is in the process of forming another group to look further into the situation.

Rob also reported that he transmitted to the provost the language passed by the Senate on the franchise for University faculty referenda. The Provost said that the Council of Deans had some suggestions regarding the document. At some point, the policy will be brought back to the Senate.

Rob indicated that President Sorenson is presenting a proposed University budget to the Ways and Means Committee tomorrow (January 19th).

Finally, Rob informed the Senate that ACHE continues to discuss the faculty workload issue.

Secretary's Report

The Secretary reported on a task force that is looking at University policy on reimbursement, particularly but not exclusively relating to travel and entertainment. Pat Bauch and Bill Andreen are also on the task force.

Reports from Senate Committees

Academic Affairs--no report.

Financial Affairs--no report.

Planning and Operations--no report.

Research and Service--no report.

Student Affairs--Dexter Gordon reported on concerns referred to the Student Affairs Committee concerning the Student Health Center. Dexter reported that the Center, less than a year ago, hired a new director with a mandate to address various problems. The Committee believes that the new director should be given a reasonable amount of time to do so. Bob Sigler noted that the Center is financed from student fees, and that the student committee responsible for allocating student fees denied the Center a fee increase. Rob said he would follow up on the funding issue.

Senate Operations--no report.

Reports from University Standing Committees

Faculty Staff Benefits--Norman Stein reported that the University, effective January 1, added coverage of oral contraceptives to its health insurance program but did not add alternative means of prescriptive birth control. The Benefits Committee believed that this limitation unnecessarily interfered with the physician/patient relationship and recommended that the University add coverage for forms of birth control in addition to oral contraceptives.

There were no other reports from University standing committees.

Report from Legislative Agenda Committee

Margaret Garner urged all Senators to write, and to urge their colleagues, to write to the Governor and other state officials asking that the 2-to-1 split of new money between higher education and k-12 be continued. Without such a push, it is possible that we will end up with a small share of new money, and possibly even cuts in our budget.

Old and New Business

There was no old business. Norm Stein brought up as new business a United States Supreme Court decision that adversely affects the rights of state employees, including faculty and staff at the University, with respect to claims for age discrimination. The decision seems, at the least, to bar employees from recovering financially against the University for age discrimination, and might, depending on how it is interpreted, to bar other relief as well. Depending on how it is interpreted, the decision might also have an impact on claims involving sex, ethnicity and race. Norm said he would report back to the Senate on this matter.

The Senate adjourned at 4:45.