Faculty Senate Minutes

October 12, 2009

I. Call to Order: Senate president Dan Krejci called the meeting to order at 3:20 p.m.


Members absent: Edwin Bellman, Kimberly Craven, Mike Davis (Athletic representative), Curt Gladen, Bill Lowe, Keith Lowe, Greg Pass, Tim Roberts

II. Approval of Minutes: Senator David Dempsey moved that the minutes of the last meeting be approved as written. The motion was seconded by senator Paul Beezley. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Special Guests: Dr. Lori Owens, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Alabama Higher Education Partnership, invited all senators and the faculty of their departments to attend a Picnic with the Partnership to be held on Thursday, November 5, 2009, at noon on the eleventh floor of Houston Cole Library. A free lunch of sandwiches, soft drinks, and cookies will be provided. Dr. Gordon Stone, Executive Director of ACHE, along with Whitney Wood and Diane Causey, will be here to address attendees. The picnic will last until around 1:00. Dr. Owens also announced that copies of The Scholarly Gourmet, ACHE’s popular cookbook, will be available at $15 each. Those planning to attend the picnic should RSVP to Lori by November 2. The picnic is a lead-in to the membership drive; to be on the membership team for JSU, contact Lori. The team will meet on October 29 at 2:00 p.m. in 302 TMB.

Randy Jones, a member of the Jacksonville State University Board of Trustees’ Academic Affairs Committee, was the other special guest. Mr. Jones comes from a long line of JSU graduates, including his brother and sister; he also said that because of his education at JSU, he is “the freaking American dream,” starting with nothing and becoming quite successful. Mr. Jones priorities for academics at JSU are communication, a vibrant honors program, a doctoral program, and admissions/retention. He pointed out that the numbers show that 1048 freshmen became 495 sophomores, according to the latest data, and that the number of Hispanic students is also down. He posed the question to the senators of what can the university, including the faculty do to retain students better. The more students we retain, the better our financial situation will be, and at the moment, to put it in Mr. Jones’ words, “we are broke.”

He told about a recent conversation he had with the manager of General Dynamics about how to get JSU students involved in that company’s activities, asking him to consider how the company might be able to use our students.
Mr. Jones talked about proration and the fact that the university loses $400,000 in state funding for every one percent the state prorates the education budget. He wants to know what the university can do besides the easy fix—raising tuition—to offset this loss. He feels universities should not be run like businesses because they are NOT businesses. He also feels the university needs to improve student life at JSU, saying that perhaps the proposed Student Activities fee might help with this.

He announced that the other members of his committee, Randy Owen and Thomas Dedrick, were unable to be present because of other commitments.

President Krejci then presented a short Power Point to Mr. Jones to inform him of some of the senate’s proposals and concerns. He started by acknowledging the senate’s appreciation for things the board has initiated to improve the university, then turned to senate proposal’s to change the quality of life of faculty members and, in turn, the quality of an education at the university. The proposals included (1) change in tenure and promotion policy, (2) increase of pay upon promotion, and (3) faculty tuition remission. He pointed out these changes would help us to recruit and retain faculty.

Tenure and Promotion: The proposed change would allow faculty to go up for tenure/promotion after 4 years (instead of five). President Krejci pointed out that currently, only Auburn University has the four-year plan.

Increase in salary upon achieving tenure/promotion: When proration ends, we would like to see an increase in pay from $5,000 to $7,000 for promotion from assistant to associate professor. The senate recommends a $3,500 increase upon promotion from associate to full professor.

Faculty tuition remission: The senate recommends that faculty be able to take classes with full tuition remission.

The adoption of these proposed changes would help in the recruiting and retaining of excellent faculty and will improve the reputation of JSU.

President Krejci also pointed out that there had been no merit raises at JSU since 1998 and that there is no motivation to excel if every pay raise is across the board for all faculty.

Mr. Jones then asked whether 4th year tenure would help retention. He also asked if merit pay could be on top of ATB pay raises.

Senators were then invited to voice comments and concerns to Mr. Jones:

David Dempsey commented that we submit a list of activities to be considered for merit pay and that the process is perceived by some to be biased.
Senator Jenny Savage asked how faculty are supposed to go to conferences and participate in other activities to achieve merit if the money is not there for faculty to attend these activities. She also pointed out that we can’t take students because there is no money for that, either.

President Krejci then asked the senators if their departments have brought potential faculty in for interviews, offered them positions, and been turned down because of (a) condition of university facilities, (b) salary (c) lag in advertising time (d) length of the hiring process/response time before a position is offered.

Jeffrey Hedrick commented that TV 24 is moving off campus and that the relationship between the station and the university has changed. Like everyone else, the stations has had cutbacks and does not provide as much media coverage of university events any more. He said we would need to replace them in some way once they move to Oxford.

Mr. Jones asked Jeffrey if there would be a possibility of acquiring a low transmitting television station.

Senator Heidi Dempsey made a comment about having to wait until the new fiscal year begins before departments are able to post announcements for positions to be filled while other schools are able to do this during the summer. This often makes the paperwork chain take too long.

Senator Paul Beezley said that the new department head in history only arrived six weeks before the fall semester began, not giving him much time to get ready for the fall semester.

Betty Morris said that she teaches nine classes a year and tried to find adjunct help, but adjunct pay is so low that the person she found wouldn’t come, so the dean and department head added money from their budgets to give her some relief. Her comment was that the university does not pay adjuncts and graduate students enough to get quality instruction.

President Krejci said that people do not mind waiting for a job with good benefits, but that they will turn down those without such benefits.

Benjie Blair pointed out the graduate teaching assistants in biology only get $500 a month plus their tuition.

Mrs. Jones again pointed out that the university is “broke” and asked how we can get money—student tuition, increased enrollment, etc.

President Krejci pointed out that higher education doesn’t get its share of state funding and that we need lobbyists to speak on our behalf.
Mr. Jones said he would like the board to have more information on why hiring processes are so lengthy and that bureaucratic excuses would not be acceptable.

Heidi Dempsey stated that as a faculty member, she probably could not do any more than she already does. The more students we have, the more work we have. Her recommendation is that we recruit higher-level students rather than lower-level students.

Dan Krejci suggested we might get high school test scores if we call or write the schools.

Mr. Jones said The Victoria should be used as a recruiting tool and that perhaps we should have events there for high school counselors.

Jeff Headrick said we should go electronic as much as possible. He pointed out that Banner has deficiencies concerning student registration that make advising more difficult than before.

Charlcie Pettway Vann (?) said that we need more women in leadership and suggested a mentoring program might help in retention of women.

Paul Beezley said that if a student is connected with someone, the student is more likely to come back but that we cannot keep growing the student population without faculty to teach the students.

Heidi Dempsey stated that we are losing more students at the freshman level.

Paul Beezley said that at Appalachia State, they have a Freshman College that has worked well to retain freshmen. Central Arkansas has a residential program which includes dorms for specific majors.

Jenny Savage asked what we are doing about retaining traditional/nontraditional students.

Mr. Jones stated that the university needs to build pride by working together.

Paul Beezley suggested that we may need to wean ourselves from state funding.

Mr. Jones responded that we just raised 31 million dollars in a capital campaign and that we need to improve relationships getting our alumni to love JSU so much they want to give back.

Senator Ron Mellen asked if there was a way to get a resource person to help faculty to apply for larger grants.

Mr. Jones thanked the senate for inviting him to attend the meeting.
IV. Old Business: President Krejci had covered all the old business during his Power Point presentation, so we moved on to new business.

V. New Business: Committee assignments have been made and are posted on the web site.

The following recommendations have been assigned to various committees:

(1) New academic rank—Distinguished Instructor
(2) Graduate Comprehensive examinations—Dr. Carr will talk to the council of deans and ask that the deadline be moved from September 18 to October 12.
(3) Summer course load and (4) summer pay across colleges—an ad hoc committee of deans will meet to discuss these items on October 12. Dan will do a presentation on behalf of the senate.

(5) Recommendation for the creation of a Staff Council—The senate executive committee discussed this and determined that staff are not included in the Faculty Senate charter. Instead, the senate will recommend to Academic Council that such a body be created.

Betty Morris asked if the senate could meet an hour earlier since she has a 4:30 class.

President Krejci reminded senators that there would not be a December senate meeting because of final exams; he also said he would send an e-mail reminding senators of the November meeting.

David Dempsey asked why the campus bookstore does not keep enough textbooks for those on financial aid to purchase them when their checks come.

President Krejci explained that the bookstores normally only order a percentage of the totals they are given when faculty fill out textbook requests because there are multiple bookstores and online availability. He said we may not be able to do a course breakdown of students receiving financial aid to remedy the situation David referred to.

Paul Beezley stated that Cengage Publisher is going to start renting textbooks for 30% of list price, much in the way Netflix does movies.

There being no further new business, Paul Beezley moved that the meeting be adjourned. Gloria Horton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Gloria Horton, Secretary