



THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE

MINUTES
FACULTY SENATE MEETING
NOVEMBER 18, 2009
DODD HALL AUDITORIUM
3:35 P.M.

I. Regular Session

The regular session of the 2009-10 Faculty Senate was held on Wednesday, November 18, 2009. Faculty Senate President Eric Walker presided.

The following members attended the Senate meeting:

I. Audirac, T. Baker, E. Baumer, K. Bearor, P. Born, P. Bowen, J. Bowers, M. Burmester, K. Burnett, D. Butler, M. Cai, E. Chicken, I. Chiorescu, J. Clendinning, R. Coleman, D. Cooper, R. Doel, G. Doran, J. Dorsey, J. Druash, I. Eberstein, J. Fiorito, S. Fiorito, A. Gaiser, K. Gallivan, L. Garcia-Roig, J. Geringer, K. Harris, R. Hauber, C. Hofacker, R. Ikard, E. Klassen, J. Koslow, D. Latham, B. Lee, J. Leiber, L. Lyons, C. Madsen, D. Moore, A. Mullis, P. Munton, J. O'Rourke, R. Pekurny, J. Pignatiello, G. Rogachev, J. Saltiel, R. Schwartz, J. Sickinger, S. Southerland, T. Stallins, J. Standley, E. Stewart, L. Wakamiya, E. Walker, Y. Wang, P. Ward, M. Wasko, X. Yuan.

The following members were absent. Alternates are listed in parenthesis:

M. Allen, J. Beckham, W. Berry (**C. Barrilleaux**), R. Bruschweiler, J. Carbonell, A. Chan Hilton, J. Cobbe, J. Dodge, L. Edwards, R. Eger, A. El-Azab, K. Erndl, M. Fenley, S. Foo, W. Francis, D. Gilbert, J. Hinterlong (**M. Teasley**), E. Hull, P. Iatarola, M. Kabbaj, H. Kim, T. Kolbe, W. Landing (**F. Froelich**), H. Li, T. Matherly, K. McCullough, J. Milligan, S. Milton, V. Richard Auzenne, R. Romanchuk, K. Rost, H. Schmidt, J. Sobanjo, M. Sussman, H. Tang, S. Thomas-Tate, N. Trafford, J. Turner, C. Upchurch, P. Villeneuve, D. Von Glahn (**D. Seaton**), L. Wexler, J. Zheng.

II. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of the October 14, 2009 meeting were approved as distributed.

III. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as distributed.

IV. Report of the Steering Committee, J. Standley

Since the October Senate meeting, the Steering Committee has met 3 times in addition to one meeting with the Provost and two with the President.

In response to Senators' feedback about problems with the textbook ordering deadlines, Senate President Walker met with Joe McElrath concerning the deadline for fall term book orders. Pres. Walker explained that the deadline was so early that often departments had only preliminary information about what courses and faculty might be available in the fall. A compromise was reached and the spring deadline for fall term orders will be extended.

The Provost reported that summer 2010 will be funded at the same level as last year because of stimulus funds which will be available through 2011. If the funding levels to the university are not raised after that point, we will have to make budget adjustments to the summer semester. The September 15 economic forecast for the state predicted that the economic difficulties would bottom out in summer 2010 with a slow recovery following. They also predicted that there would be a population flow back into the state at that time. Currently, the projected state shortfall for 2010-2011 is \$2.6 billion.

The Provost reported that some re-organization may occur within the university this year. Some faculty are approaching other units for consideration of mergers.

The President updated the faculty on the presidential search. That report will be given by Senator Madsen later in this meeting. Pres. Wetherell also reported to us the steps that he has taken to make the transition easier for a new President. He moved the Foundation to report directly to the President's office. He moved the Seminole Boosters directly under the Athletic Director's supervision. He has stabilized the budget and will present a 3-yr. budget plan to the new President. He has also promised that before he leaves office he will resolve the issues with Coach Bowden's retirement.

The final meeting has been held with the NCAA concerning the athletic cheating issues. FSU has appealed only the vacation of wins for the various teams. A decision is expected sometime in January and there will be no further appeals. However, if the NCAA does decide to vacate wins, there will need to be a meeting to decide how to do that. There is no precedent for the complexity of this problem with the number of teams involved. For instance, someone might have cheated before the university was aware of the problem and their team might have been playing in that season's games, but the individual athlete may not have participated in a particular game. Does a win in that game get vacated?

Thank you for your many responses related to "Turnitin," the plagiarism software. We are still discussing this issue and the budgetary implications with the administration.

We asked the President to intervene in current complications occurring with the parental leave policy. There is a memorandum of agreement for this issue that expires in Dec. The administration has declined to extend this privilege in bargaining with the union because they want the union to agree to changes in sick leave benefits upon termination. We asked the President to stop holding the parental leave policy hostage to the bargaining process and he said that he would look into it.

We asked about the travel policy as related to Gov. Christ's mandates itemized in the newspaper this week. Pres. Wetherell stated that the university currently has a travel policy in effect that complies with the Governor's intent and that there would be no changes needed in the current policy.

The Board of Trustees will meet on Friday of this week.

There will be a Senate reception at the President's House after the Senate meeting in December. Please plan to attend.

V. Report of Standing Committees

a. Undergraduate Policy Committee, S. Lewis

Good afternoon. It is my pleasure to report to the Faculty Senate recent actions taken by the Undergraduate Policy Committee. One of the primary responsibilities of the UPC is to review and approve courses for Liberal Studies and other undergraduate basic studies requirements. In that regard, the following courses have been approved for the Multicultural Understanding Requirement: RUT 3504: Modern Russian Life and ARH 4675 The Art and Culture of the Maya (for X credit) and RUT 3523r: Russian Cinema (for Y credit). For the Computer Competency requirement, the following courses were approved: ARH 2814: Information Technology for the Art Historian and STA 3024: SAS for Data and Statistical Analysis.

Another major task this year is the review of all courses that have previously been approved for Liberal Studies Area III credit, History and Social Science. We have already heard reports from African American Studies, Political Science, Economics, Urban and Regional Planning, and Public Policy and Administration. We appreciate very much the level of cooperation we have received from these departments and look forward to continuing this task in the spring.

b. Library Committee, D. Moore

Thank you, President Walker. In a moment I will thank you again, for having forwarded an e-mail to me on Monday morning, October 26, regarding some colleagues' concerns about Strozier Library and about JSTOR. My brief comments this afternoon will also touch on three other items of business that our Faculty Senate Library Committee has been dealing with this Fall:

- The \$100,000 in mini-grants that our Faculty Research Library Materials Grants subcommittee has recommended and that our full committee has approved. Professor Alysia Roehrig-Bice, chair of that subcommittee, reported at our most recent meeting that this year's applications totaled more than \$270,000. Letters have gone out to applicants whose proposals received full funding, to those receiving partial funding, and to those whose proposals we were unable to fund. We will compile and post a list of projects that are receiving funding, with a brief description of each.
- At the request of Julia Zimmerman, Dean of the Libraries -- who has returned to Tallahassee early from a meeting of the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries, on whose Board she serves, in order to attend this afternoon's Faculty Senate meeting -- we identified two faculty representatives for the campuswide committee helping to plan the new "library commons" building, to work with representatives from the School of Library and Information Studies and from the library administration: Professor Lisa Kinch Waxman of the Department of Interior Design, in the College of Visual Arts, Theatre and Dance, and Professor David Gants, of the Department of English and the "History of Text Technologies" Pathways initiative.

- The FACULTY FORUM that our Patron Services subcommittee has arranged for Tues-day afternoon, December 1, in the Reading Room at the Scholars' Commons, located on the Ground level of Strozier Library. That forum will allow faculty colleagues to learn more about JSTOR and to discuss concerns about ways in which Strozier is dealing with the intense pressures on space, or lack of space, that have led to the possibility of moving some holdings from Strozier to individual academic departments.

Referring to JSTOR and to those concerns leads to this second thank-you, Eric, for having for-warded me an e-mail from our Senate colleague James Sickinger back on Monday morning, October 26.

JSTOR, which figures in that e-mail, is, according to the website jstor.org, "part of ITHAKA, a non-profit organization helping the academic community use digital technologies to preserve the scholarly record and to advance research and teaching in sustainable ways." That website calls JSTOR "a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive of over one thousand academic journals and other scholarly content. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship." According to the ITHAKA website, "Ithaka was founded in 2003 and received start-up funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Stavros S. Niarchos Foundation. JSTOR was founded in 1995, also with funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and merged with Ithaka in 2009."

Here is that recent e-mail expressing concern about Strozier vis-à-vis JSTOR:

Dear Eric,

Faculty in the Classics department have just learned/been told that Strozier Library will be withdrawing all items in the JSTOR and Project Muse databases from its print collection. Details are still sketchy, but it seems that some items will be removed to a remote storage facility in Gainesville, while others will be withdrawn entirely (i.e. no hard copies will be retained anywhere on campus or in the SUS system).

Naturally, members of the faculty are concerned: we've had no advance notice of this decision, and it seems to run counter to what we've been told before--that online subscriptions would not replace the print editions of periodicals. As far as we can tell at the moment, this action will remove and perhaps even eliminate the hard copies of the vast majority of Classics journals now found in Strozier--making a weak collection even weaker and forcing users to rely on online access, which, in the view of some users, is less reliable and less user-friendly than print volumes.

We appreciate the challenges that Strozier faces in terms of space, and we are willing to work with the Strozier on this matter. But many of us believe that this decision is short-sighted that it deserves/deserved more discussion and faculty input. Is there anything the faculty senate or one of its committees can do?

Thanks,
Jim Sickinger

Upon receiving the copy of that e-mail, I contacted Richard Morris, who chairs the Library Committee's Patron Services subcommittee, asking that he have that group meet in advance of the Library Committee's regularly scheduled meeting on November 4, to come up with information our full committee could use in discussing what was, clearly, a serious problem. By mid-after-noon that same Monday, Dean Zimmerman addressed this e-mail to Daniel Pullen, chair of Classics:

Dear Daniel,

The removal of these materials was clearly a bad call on our part. I apologize for the error, and for the resulting inconvenience. While lack of space is one of our biggest problems and we have no choice but to weed on a regular basis, we should have caught this mistake before the items were removed.

Roy will be talking to you about ways we can restore these materials into our collection.

Thanks for alerting us to the problem.

Roy Ziegler, the library's Associate Director for Collection Development, has subsequently been in conversation with Professor Pullen and several other concerned faculty members from within the "humanities area departments" of the College of Arts and Sciences and within the College of Visual Arts, Theatre and Dance -- as well as having served as a resource for the Library Committee's Patron Services group and for our full committee.

One suggestion that emerged at the same time as that message Professor Walker e-mailed to me amounts to decentralizing some of the library's collections. In an e-mail to me, Professor Pullen suggested that "[i]f Strozier doesn't want us to be able to read things in print, then the very least they could do would be to offer the basic academic resources to the affected departments before discarding them!" and two days later a colleague in Art History suggested in a group e-mail, "it is imperative that fields such as art history and classics, but also others, need to maintain the print versions of these journals. If they cannot be housed in Strozier, then they should be offered to the departments."

In advance of the Library Committee's November meeting, Roy Ziegler and Julia Zimmerman both attended the Patron Services group's meeting and the full committee meeting, and I quote here, briefly, from the update they provided. In a moment I will refer you to a portion of the Faculty Senate website where we have posted a link to that full text we received from the library:

Rationale for Weeding print content archived in JSTOR

University Libraries at FSU have severe space constraints. Two of our three Remote Storage facilities are at 100% capacity. The recently acquired space at the third facility has some available space but it is needed as a staging area for processing collections.

Shelves in Strozier Library are badly overcrowded. They're at 90% capacity; the maximum recommended capacity for a working collection is 75-80% [. . .]

The national trend is to create statewide, regional and national repositories for low circulation book and journal materials. Some repositories are centralized with varying degrees of access (some circulate materials, other[s] provide scanning services, while others are completely dark archives that provide no access. FSU is participating in the developing statewide JSTOR print archive and the national CRL [i.e., Center for Research Libraries] archive. Both of these projects offer print access to JSTOR materials. [. . .]

JSTOR Project Mistakes

The library assumed that book length works on the JSTOR platform presented the same usability and image quality in all instances. Subsequent conversations with faculty have shown instances where the JSTOR scan quality was in fact less than the original print.

After first contributing volumes to the developing, statewide JSTOR print archive and to the national archive at the Center for Research Libraries, a number of monographic series and journals were consigned or recycled rather than offered to the academic departments.

The library did not communicate effectively with the academic departments in the early stages of the project.

Corrective Actions

The library will give the highest priority to reacquire the monographic series that are needed by the academic departments. Due to continuing space constraints the library will gift these materials to the academic departments.

The second priority will be to reacquire journals where the online images, drawings or plates lack quality or usability equal to the print. The purchase of these titles will be handled on a title-by-title basis.

The library continues to have access to holdings at UF, CRL and Ringling (for arts and humanities content) for material that we are unable to purchase.

The Faculty Senate Library Committee will review the library's weeding policy document and will make recommendations for greater involvement by the faculty.

Library administration and liaisons will improve communication at all levels with faculty in making collections decisions.

That process of improving communication is well underway, and the library administration has been fully cooperative with planning for the Faculty Forum that the Senate's Library Committee has scheduled for Tuesday afternoon, December 1. Meanwhile, I encourage fellow Senators to visit the Library Committee's portion of the Faculty Senate website to see the helpful contextual information contained in these materials:

- the full text of that November 4 document from which I read excerpts, including its complete sections on “JSTOR Project Mistakes” and “Corrective Actions”
- a link to the document “What to Withdraw: Print Collections Management in the Wake of Digitization,” prepared by ITHAKA, the non-profit organization of which JSTOR is a part
- a link to the Center for Research Libraries’ repository and distributed JSTOR archives
- Before asking if you have any questions that I may address or any suggestions for the Library Committee, I will point out these three details that Dean Zimmerman emphasized in our committee’s most recent meeting:
- the statewide repository at Gainesville will contain one continuous run of all the materials under discussion here
- there are duplicates of all these materials at the Center for Research Libraries and at many other statewide networks
- requesting hard copy of these materials involves a process that is simpler and more direct than InterLibrary Loan

Thank you for your attention to the details in this update on behalf of the Senate’s Library Committee, and thank you ahead of time for your thoughtful contributions to that Faculty Forum we have scheduled, at Strozier’s Scholars’ Commons, for Tuesday afternoon, December 1.

c. Teaching Evaluation Committee, J. Geringer

See addendum 1.

John Geringer, the chair of the Teaching Evaluation Committee, presented three motions from the committee for action. All three motions had been circulated in advance to the members of the senate.

First motion from the committee: “Course evaluations should be administered for all classes in fall and spring semesters that have undergraduate enrollment of 10 or more students and graduate enrollment of 5 or more students.”

Senator Geringer explained that the only change to current policy in this motion has to do with graduate courses, many of which enroll in the 5-9 student range. There was a friendly amendment by Senator Baker accepted to change the phrase “course evaluations” to “SPOT forms.” The Senate then proceeded to pass unanimously the following motion:

First motion: SPOT forms should be administered for all classes in fall and spring semesters that have undergraduate enrollments of 10 or more students and graduate enrollments of 5 or more students.

Senator Geringer then presented the second motion from the committee: “Individual instructors may choose either method of evaluation (online or in-class) for some or all of their courses at the time evaluations are ordered.”

Senator Baker again offered his friendly amendment, which was accepted, to replace the word “evaluation” with “SPOT forms.” The form of the motion then on the floor for discussion became: “Individual instructors may choose either method of SPOT administration (online or in-class) for some or all of their classes at the time SPOT forms are ordered.”

Senator Geringer explained that the reason for this motion was that both methods of SPOT administration had advantages and disadvantages, and that many units and instructors would like the flexibility to choose one method or the other. The response rate on in-class forms university-wide is only about 65%; the response rate in FSU pilot tests of online forms ran about 20% less than that (unremarkable) number, so there are problems with response rates in both systems. Both systems have various loose parts when administered, whether proctor and instructor behavior and form delivery or the uncontrolled settings of online form-filling. In the pilot studies, the committee determined that the means of the two methods were virtually the same: there was no statistical difference between the averages given to faculty, nor was there any difference to speak of in the distribution of responses. In other words, the fears that some people have about online evaluations—that only students who are the extremes about their feelings about their instructor are going to respond—are not borne out by the data.

In discussion, Senator Pekurny proposed the following amendment, which was seconded: to add the phrase “Unless faculty in the unit vote otherwise,” to the beginning of the sentence that is the motion. **This amendment was approved unanimously.**

The Senate then passed unanimously the following amended motion:

Second motion: Unless faculty in the unit vote otherwise, individual instructors may choose either method of SPOT administration (online or in-class) for some or all of their courses at the time SPOT forms are ordered.

Senator Geringer then presented the third motion from the committee. “Individual instructors using online evaluations will have access to updated information (during the evaluation period) indicating numbers (or percentages) of students in a class who have completed/not completed evaluations.”

Senator Baker again offered his friendly amendment, which was accepted, to replace the word “evaluation” with “SPOT forms.” The form of the motion then on the floor for discussion became: “Individual instructors using online SPOT forms will have access to updated information (during the SPOT administration period) indicating numbers (or percentages) of students in a class who have completed/not completed SPOT forms.”

Senator Geringer explained that the purpose of the motion was to increase response rates, one of the chief worries concerning the online forms. He added that the TEC and APPS staff will continue to work together on other methods to improve response rates.

The Senate then passed unanimously the following amended motion:

Third motion: "Individual instructors using online SPOT forms will have access to updated information (during the SPOT administration period) indicating numbers (or percentages) of students in a class who have completed/not completed SPOT forms."

VI. Old Business

There were no items of old business.

VII. New Business

There were no items of new business.

VIII. University Welfare

- a. Updates on Bargaining and Related Matters, J. Fiorito

Collective Bargaining

There was one bargaining session since our last Senate meeting. We appeared to be near a stalemate. It is nearly time when we should be beginning negotiations for the next academic year rather than trying to wrap up negotiations for this year. Our UFF faculty team proposed a settlement package that would essentially preserve the status quo, meaning no changes in summer teaching pay, no changes in sick leave payouts, and no major UFF-proposed changes. Please note that promotion raises, winter holidays, and some other matters have already been resolved through Memoranda of Agreement and would be part of the settlement. The UFF team made clear that it favors extension of paid parental leave. Bargaining matters are detailed more fully at the "Bargaining News" web page, www.uff-fsu.org/cbac. Our next bargaining session is on Monday, December 7th at 2pm at the FSU Training Center. An Administration response to the UFF proposal is expected. Senators are most welcome to sit in.

Consultations

Last week we met with Provost Abele at a President's Consultation. We discussed two main issues, layoffs and use of student perceptions of teaching for evaluation. Plans to lay off 62 faculty, including 21 tenured faculty members, are unfortunately still on track at this time. The Provost's comments on student teaching perceptions were more encouraging. Provost Abele said he agreed completely that student perceptions should be considered as only one piece of evidence in teaching evaluations, consistent with the Faculty Senate's 2003 resolution. He encouraged inconsistencies with this view to be called to the attention of the Dean of the Faculties. Late last month we met with Dean Rowe in a Provost's Consultation. We discussed textbook order deadlines and other matters, but what remains most prominent in my memory is that our UFF chapter submitted a check for over \$1700 to cover estimated administrative costs associated with our request for selected high-level administrator correspondence concerning layoffs.

Facilitation and Grievance Issues

The UFF Chapter's grievance over layoffs is moving forward. Step 1 meetings with Deans have been concluded. A Step 2 meeting with the Provost will be scheduled as soon as possible.

Professor Matthew Finkin's Visit

Our luncheon this past Monday was well attended. Professor Finkin's draft remarks are available at the UFF-FSU web site (www.uff-fsu.org). His comments on tenure and academic freedom remind us that tenure serves academe and not just tenured faculty. By encouraging academic freedom and free speech directly for tenured faculty, tenure helps create an atmosphere of open deliberation at all levels, even for assistant professors and non-tenure track faculty. A recent report from the Board of Governors suggests that FSU doesn't "get it," to be blunt. We seem to be the statewide leader in layoffs of tenured faculty. I can't help but think there is some irony in the Board of Trustees meeting at the "Chainsaw Al" Dunlap building this Friday. (My English Department colleagues may disagree. When Alanis Morissette popularized a song about irony several years ago, I heard a radio program in which several English professors said the term was misused. There must be some irony in that at least.) Chainsaw Al was well known for slashing employment at companies he ran. If our Trustees are concerned about faculty layoffs, it is certainly not apparent from the Trustees' agenda. So rather than irony, perhaps the location of the Trustee's meeting at the "Chainsaw Al" building is entirely fitting.

I would like to propose a resolution for the Senate's consideration.

Whereas the faculty-to-student ratio at The Florida State University is already far too low, and

Whereas, tenure is a critical institution underlying academic freedom and academic free speech for all faculty members and the broader academic community,

The Florida State University Faculty Senate urges the Board of Trustees to direct the Administration to reconsider plans to lay off faculty, especially tenured faculty, and to consider and if possible adopt alternative methods to resolve the University's budget crisis.

The resolution passed unanimously.

IX. Announcements by Deans and Other Administrative Officers

There were no announcements by Deans and Other Administrative Officers.

X. Announcements by Provost Abele

I was going to reemphasize what we discussed in 2003 which is that student perceptions of teaching is only one source of information and should not be given excessive weight. Nor should any other major decisions be made based on that.

There is a library report statewide that everyone should be concerned about. The legislature is seeking to merge, K-12, community college and university libraries into a common catalog and other interactions. I hope it doesn't go anywhere. The Provosts are meeting tomorrow to try to figure out how to slow it down. There is a legislative statue that requires a study and it's not really clear on how to turn that around. All the cost estimates and ramifications have not been thought out at all. I am hoping we can kill it at the BOG level. If not we would have to work the legislature to see that it dies. There are ways we could work together with the community colleges on some things,

During the NCAA hearings, one of the individuals, Brenda Monk, expressed her view that some on the students have very low IQs so that the only she could help them was to do more than was permitted. This has captured the attention of ESPN. They are now in their second week of interviewing faculty and others on campus. They are likely to come out with quite a negative portrayal. I can assure you that it is a faculty admissions that makes all decisions. I am comfortable with all the decisions they have made. There is nothing in those faculty decisions to cause anyone alarm. But I think in a campus of 41,000 students it is possible to find some students who does meet our standards and has been able to manipulate faculty good will to get through. Part of it is my own frustration that we would never had been in this mess if each of had taken more responsibility for proctoring exams. I have looked in to the situation that ESPN is working on and I don't know how it's going to play out but I guarantee you it will not come out in our favor. This is just to give you a heads up. I can assure you that the faculty committee that administers admissions and reviews appeals have done everything completely proper. There is nothing out of the ordinary. Student athletes make up and very small majority of the number of appeals that are heard. We have no control over that others print and do.

In case you didn't see it, e-textbooks are moving very rapidly now. There are 2 firms now that have approximately 12,000 textbooks. They rent them from anywhere between 180 and 540 days at a cost about half of retail of a new book. One of the companies will send you a course syllabus, assignments, and everything else. I hope that one day there will be enough free material out there that we can build assignments about that. When you are looking at a \$289 math book and a \$270 history series that is just a lot of money.

I don't know in terms of the legal issues of senate resolutions and administration discussing bargaining issues but it seems a little unfair that when a faculty committee had an open website and open meetings for months offering to take up any suggestions whatsoever and the only suggestion made was furloughs. And the feeling was that furloughs should be reserved for what is most likely to happen next. As you heard we are 2.6 billion in the hole right now and there doesn't seem to be a lot of movement on the part of the legislature. So it is hard to say what is going to happen. We are going to have to find some way working together to find ways to deal with this that do the least amount of harm to institution and to the community in which we live. If you look at the 3 year budget we did the least among possible and are devoting all new resources for the next 3 years to avoid layoffs. I don't the actual facts about who got laid off at what institution and under what circumstances. But every institution is different and unless you have someone there that can work with you and their HR department it is hard to figure out how many people were laid off. I have seen numbers that range at different institutions by a factor of 2. One is the Federal report that we are required to do by stimulus funds. FGCU announced that 498 people are being paid on stimulus funds so it is very hard to get numbers. I can assure you that there is no animosity to any group on campus. This is a very special campus.

XI. Announcements by President Wetherell

President Wetherell was not in attendance.

XII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:01p.m.



Melissa Crawford
Faculty Senate Coordinator

TO: Faculty senators

RE: Report from Teaching Evaluation Committee at 11/18 meeting

On the agenda for the 11/18 Senate meeting circulated earlier this week, you will have seen that the Teaching Evaluation Committee, chaired by John Geringer (Music), will be making a report. That report will have three action items, all of which have been approved by the Teaching Evaluation Committee and by the Senate Steering Committee. Prof. Geringer's report will supply more background and context as necessary, but the Steering Committee wanted you to have advance notice of the action items that will be a part of that report. I've copied below Prof. Geringer's summary of the report and the three action items.

Teaching Evaluation Committee Report for Faculty Senate Meeting of November 18, 2009

For the past 18 months, the committee has been discussing the pros and cons of doing faculty evaluation online. We did pilot studies using the online format in Summer 2008 and with a larger sample in Fall 2008. The following is a reduced summary of the report following the Fall, 2008 semester pilot study: Ten academic units participated: Communication Disorders, Dance, English, Film, Mathematics, Music, Nursing, Statistics, Textile and Consumer Sciences, and Theatre. The results of the pilot study suggested that using online course evaluations to evaluate classroom based courses has little practical effect on the overall average instructor rating (item D8 Means were 1.54 for paper, 1.62 for online), or in the distribution (spread) of the ratings, i.e., standard deviations were virtually the same. The response rate of online course evaluations for classroom based courses, however, was significantly reduced (near 45%) as compared to paper based (79%) evaluations administered in class. A complete summary report of the Fall 2008 study is available, including all data and strengths and weaknesses of both paper-based and online evaluations. These data are consistent with the vast majority of those found in published research studies, c.f., although response rates are indeed lower with online forms, a review of the literature consistently finds little difference in ratings (means and distributions are virtually the same) or in quality of comments.

We deliberated concerning the relatively poor response rates of the online survey in Fall 2008 and possible ways to address this. Much of the negative reaction to the pilot among faculty was related to low response rates. A number of positive reactions were given to the Comments Summaries that were provided with the online surveys, and some faculty perceived that the quality of written comments was improved with the online format.

Motions for the Faculty Senate to consider:

Issue I: Size of classes and mandated evaluations

Course evaluations are now mandated for Fall/Spring semester classes with enrollment of

more than 9 for all course levels, and available for all other courses. Given that a number of graduate courses have enrollments with fewer than 10 students, we felt that these courses should be included as well in official evaluations.

Motion: Course evaluations should be given for all classes in fall and spring semesters that have undergraduate enrollment of 10 or more students and graduate enrollment of 5 or more students.

Issue II: Choice of online vs. in-class evaluations

We now are able to allow individual instructors to choose to have any or all of their classroom courses to be evaluated online (or in-class). This decision would be made at the time evaluations are ordered (after which changes in format would not be possible).

Motion: Individual instructors may choose either method of evaluation (online or in-class) for some or all of their courses at the time evaluations are ordered.

Issue III: Updates of response rates

It is now possible (with online evaluations) for course instructors to receive an update of the ongoing response, that is, the number of students who have/have not completed forms up to that point in time. This would allow instructors to remind students to go online and complete the forms prior to the deadline.

Motion: Individual instructors using online evaluations will have access to updated information (during the evaluation period) indicating numbers (or percentages) of students in a class who have completed/not completed evaluations.

Present at the meeting of the TEC at which these items were discussed and approved were representatives from the Colleges of Criminology; Social Sciences and Public Policy; Education; Visual Arts, Theatre, and Dance; Music; and Communication and Information; and ex officio representatives from the Center for Assessment and Testing (which administers the system) and the Provost's office.