

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Council  
December 10, 2008  
Excerpts**

Present: J. Cummins, B. Ferguson, K. Jacobson, C. Lindgren, R. Osgood, M. Schneider, P. Smith, B. Trish

The meeting came to order at 3:30 p.m. in Macy House conference room. The minutes of 12/03/08 were approved.

**President's Remarks**

The President thanked Mike Cavanagh for giving an excellent mid-year graduation talk.

The President recently attended a MAP presentation and complimented Bill Ferguson for the work of one of his students.

The President remarked on the quality of the current round of candidates for faculty positions and noted that he is enjoying his interviews with them.

Finally, he mentioned that he is continuing to work to develop the budget for next year.

**Dean's Remarks**

The Dean noted that the Academic Standing Committee will try an experiment next semester which will involve adding two students to the Committee. They will be selected through an internal SGA vetting process. They will sign a pledge of confidentiality. While they will participate in the meetings, they will not vote. After one semester the Committee will assess the experience. If they deem it successful the Committee may come to the Executive Council with a recommendation to establish student participation permanently and this would entail a change to the Faculty Handbook.

She noted that the Academic Budget Subcommittee has completed its discussions of requests for term positions and will be making recommendations to the President soon.

The Dean acknowledged that interview season is in full swing and updated Council on the status of offers of appointment.

She distributed a mock proposed position advertisement which was developed by Terri Phipps as a suggestion for achieving significant savings. Essentially, the ad copy would be shortened to include information about the position, with a link to the department website where they would find additional information including application instructions. Council was in favor of adopting this plan.

**Council Remarks**

Referencing a 12/8/08 memorandum from the President to the College community on the current state of the economy and implications for the College, J. Cummins asked the President for his thinking on the potential impact on future EKI positions. There was discussion.

C. Lindgren asked other members of Council if they have heard about a student meeting to be held tomorrow. The President responded that he had been approached by several students who told him that there are several end of semester and other issues that are widely affecting the students and there is a

sense that there is a need for discussion. As an aside, the President noted that he and Houston Dougharty are beginning a discussion of the effectiveness of the current RLC program in meeting the goals set out for it and the needs of our students.

B. Ferguson noted that there was another joint meeting of the Social Studies and Humanities Divisions on facilities planning, at which Jim Swartz gave a talk on the process undertaken by the Science Division, which was well attended.

### **Report on Conversations with Library and Physical Education Faculty on How to Align Three-Year Salary Reviews and Five-Year Contract Renewal Reviews—Mark Schneider**

M. Schneider reported that he has talked with both Richard Fyffe and Greg Wallace and attended a department meeting of the Library and Physical Education Departments. All are content with the idea of extending the re-contracting period for Associate Professors from the current five to the proposed six years in order to synchronize merit and recontracting reviews. This would mean that every three years would generate a merit review and the next three years would generate a re-contracting review. The President noted that this would then create an asymmetrical review cycle between faculty in the rank of assistant (five years) and associate (six years). The President stated that he would look at the Faculty Handbook for structure impediments and for any mandates that are provided by the AAUP. The Dean asked for next steps. Schneider suggested that the President will determine if there are problems with a six-year cycle and, if so, suggest ways to resolve them. At that point, a decision should be made whether or not to make a proposal for change.

### **Continued Discussion of Council Role in Department Reviews of Last Year, This Year, and the Future—Kathy Jacobson and Mark Schneider (two external reports from 2007-08 reviews previously distributed)**

M. Schneider reminded Council that he and K. Jacobson had recently looked at the external reviews of the Math and Computer Science Departments and have learned some things that they would like to share. There was discussion of the extent to which departmental responses to the review team reports address the most pressing issues and recommendations, assessment, and inconsistency in the prescriptive/directive nature of each. He would generally like to see review teams push the envelope. K. Jacobson noted that assessment is generally not on departmental radar screens and believes that a more uniform message should go out to the faculty about the importance of assessment. B. Trish noted that the Council is coming in at an unusual stage in these two external review processes and wanted to confirm that this is a special situation. There was general agreement that Council should be engaged at the point that the departmental response to the review report is on the table. There was general agreement that a précis should be provided by the department, as a cover to the full response, which would list issues and action items. The Dean thought that Council could have a greater and better effect by looking at the guidelines with a view toward assuring clarity of purpose and outcome. B. Trish noted that she has just come off of a second external review where the team was provided with an internal team who provided institutional context and she found that very helpful. The Dean reviewed the next steps and timeline for the Sociology and Library reviews now underway. She also noted that next year the Political Science and Religious Studies Departments will undertake reviews.

### **Discussion of Best Practices for Mentoring Early Career, Faculty of Color, and EKI Faculty**

M.Schneider noted that he has spoken with groups of early career and EKI faculty, who voiced concerns about feeling somewhat disconnected from the rest of the faculty. The President expressed support for inclusive solutions rather than strategies targeted toward specific categories of early career faculty. There was discussion of various mentoring structures, including that which should be occurring within departments, and informal two-way classroom visitations, and support networks.

### **Meeting Time and Preliminary Agenda for Spring Semester**

It was agreed that Council will continue to meet at 3:30 p.m. next semester. The Dean presented her items for the agenda, including part-time regular faculty, report on MAPs, distribution of advising across the faculty, synchronization of the Library and Physical Education review schedules, College policy regarding religious holidays and accommodation of students observing them, finalization of honorary degree recipients, and provision of guidance to departments regarding position requests for the April 1 review cycle. The President noted that normally review of facilities planning would be on his schedule to present to the Council, but the current situation has put most on hold. He did note that he would be going forward with the design of a new pre-school.

The President left the meeting at 4:55 p.m.

The discussion of mentoring early career, faculty of color, and EKI faculty continued. It was decided that this discussion should be taken up again next semester. M. Schneider stated his intention to continue to meet with Marci Sortor and Elena Bernal on this issue.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Secretary  
Karen Wiese