

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Council**  
**February 11, 2009**  
**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 2/4/09 were approved.

The Dean welcomed three SGA officers to the meeting at 3:30 p.m. Neo Morake, John Burrows, and Julie Hoye were invited to Council to repeat a presentation on student life and culture which they had presented to the Board of Trustees at their recent meeting. Their premise is that there is a widely held perception of a lack of transparency and miscommunication leading to a cultural disconnect among students, faculty, and administration. They believe that perception leads to reality. They are witnessing a great increase in the number of alcohol related events/hospitalizations and serious increase in property damage. They are very concerned and have devised a preliminary plan to move forward with the hope of altering reality. Discussion ensued. The students left the meeting at 4:15 p.m.

B. Ferguson offered a remark ahead of leaving Council at 4:15. They are reported under Council Remarks below.

**President's Remarks**

The President, reflecting on the SGA presentation, remarked that the number of students coming to meet with him lately has increased dramatically. He suggested that good mentoring is a key element of a good undergraduate education.

He reported on the recent meeting of the Trustees. They were concerned about the budget for next year and created a new surplus policy representing a significant reserve for the next one to two years. They are building up to a hard view of investments in April. While they heard from the SGA group that addressed Council today, they do not want to weigh in on the current personnel situation, but because students came to them about the issue of faculty and administrators putting students in the middle of this controversy they are developing a response. There was discussion.

Finally, the President reminded members of Council that Grinnell is hosting the Midwest Conference Swimming Tournament this weekend.

**Dean's Remarks**

The Dean reinforced the President's comments about the budget by noting that the Trustees have a great deal of confidence about the on-campus process. On the other hand, there is uncertainty about the economic situation among them.

The Dean noted that the Trustees voted to approve the new voting eligibility policy changes to the Faculty Handbook and agreed that the new rules would be put into place in the fall semester.

She reported that Chris Hunter and Dan Reynolds presented their work as part of a working group on diversification of the faculty.

She distributed a packet of four proposals for Consortia for Faculty Diversity at Liberal Arts Colleges proposals for Council discussion and ranking at its next meeting.

Finally, she updated Council on the status of faculty searches.

### **Council Remarks**

B. Ferguson noted that the Des Moines Register carried a very good article, with high praise, on Karla Erickson's new book.

K. Jacobson requested an update on Gender and Women's Studies. The Dean responded that she would be happy to do so.

K. Jacobson reported that Karen Voss and Leslie Gregg-Jolly remarked on the great efforts of many departments at reducing/tightening budget requests in the academic budget for next year and noted that this is highly appreciated.

J. Cummins remarked that he thinks some recent discord in the college has been serious and is highly in need of resolution. He offered the opinion that a statement from the Trustees would be desirable and perhaps helpful.

J. Cummins noted that he hopes that the College continues to provide printed copies of the catalog. Both the President and M. Schneider were in support and expanded that thought to include the phone book.

B. Trish noted that at the recently held Social Studies Division meeting there was a rumor of the College planning to cut mental health budget allocation for external services. The President responded that while there is some alteration of the provision of mental health care, the budget and service will actually be expanded.

Trish responded to Schneider's memorandum to the faculty regarding dissatisfaction with the current personnel situation and asked him if the SGA presentation given today is the same as what was presented to the Board of Trustees. Schneider and the Dean responded that they are identical.

Finally, in the context of looking at course proposals in the Social Studies Division, Trish noted that there is some interest in making connections among faculty with special interests in teaching and asked if the Dean could give thought to developing new mechanisms to enable this.

M. Schneider commented that he believes that it is very important for him to continue to address the current campus climate because the Trustees are so concerned about a situation which puts students under any unusual pressure. He suggested that he will be looking for a multiplicity of resources to provide better and more consistent mentoring to our students. B. Trish noted that the Faculty Mentoring and Advising workshops have, historically, attempted to broaden the mentoring network to include staff and coaches.

M. Schneider remarked on the very positive things that happened during the recent Trustee meeting with regard to interactions between faculty, faculty leadership, and the Trustees.

### **Request for Unpaid Leave**

Council took action on a request for one semester unpaid leave next year.

### **Message to Departments Regarding Faculty Position Proposals**

There was discussion on language of a memorandum to departments which will modify expectations of departments regarding consideration of position proposals in light of current budget exigencies. There was agreement and the Dean will distribute to department chairs.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Secretary,  
Karen Wiese