

Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Council
September 17, 2008
Excerpts

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

Marci Sortor, Vice President for Institutional Planning, was invited to Council to review Trustee plans for updating the Campus Plan which is now ten years old. She was also invited to review progress under the EKI.

The meeting came to order at 3:30 p.m. in Macy House conference room.

President's Remarks

The President noted that the North Central Association reaccreditation team has just wrapped up their work at Grinnell and they will recommend a full "no report back" accreditation. They liked our special emphasis reporting. They did comment on assessment of learning outcomes needing to be undertaken at a more micro-level than current practice. He thanked Henry Reitz, Angie Story, and Vicki Wade for their efforts in facilitating the work of the NCA team.

CERA celebrates its 40th anniversary during the College's Family Weekend, Sept. 20. The celebration will include guided tours of the environmental site at 2:45 and 3:15 p.m., and a short program at 2 p.m. with remarks from the President, a brief history of CERA, and a question-and-answer panel with some of CERA's past and present stewards.

He will attend the SGA Joint Board meeting this evening which he does at least once a semester.

He noted turmoil in the stock market and made some observations on potential budget implications.

Dean's Remarks

The Dean distributed a table showing the tenure-track interview assignments of members of Council for searches to be conducted this year.

She noted that the Personnel Committee has responsibility for assigning merit scores for those faculty in the third year of their review cycles. Those scores then go to the Faculty Budget Committee. She asked the Council members who sit on the Budget Committee to provide guidance to the Personnel Committee who will begin their work after fall break.

Council Remarks

J. Cummins asked if the Chair of the Faculty typically shares tenure-track interviews. The Dean responded that the Division Chair and Member at Large are assigned to represent Council.

C. Lindgren noted that the faculty meeting on Monday had been scheduled against the opening of the Rosenfield program on Islam. After talking with Rachel Bly it was discovered that her office has not been considering the calendar to avoid scheduling against the faculty meetings, but will do so in future.

K. Jacobson noted that some faculty are reacting negatively to the idea of extending the hours of daycare for their children while they attend faculty meetings claiming that the extended hours are not good for the young children.

B. Ferguson noted that the Science Division's HHMI faculty retreat held at CERA last weekend was great and very engaging.

Report on Proposed Campus Plan Update and Review of the OIS Advisory Board

Sortor noted that, of the many potential facilities projects originally listed in the Campus Plan, many of the projects had been undertaken or nearing completion and that we were nearing the end of the useful life of that plan. She reviewed how things have changed in the ten years since the original plan and what we have learned. Considerations include universal accessibility, classroom space for Social Studies and Humanities, collaborative teaching space needs, and implications of increasing numbers of staff and faculty. The President added that deliberate environmental consideration has become more prominent in facilities planning. The current plan is to carry out a classroom utilization and library needs study with a preliminary report out by April and a final report to be ready for the fall 2009 Board meeting. The President noted that the Board prefers to maintain consistency in planning by retaining SBRA to carry out the studies.

The President left the meeting.

Using her annual report to the President (5/23/08) from the Office of Interdisciplinary Studies, she reviewed the activities of the OIS Advisory Board. She reviewed new EKI faculty appointments and curricular initiatives B. Trish urged the AB to consider statistics as an interdisciplinary area, both generally and as it applies to expanding the faculty. J. Cummins observed there is a difference between advocating and facilitating when considering the role of the AB. Sortor acknowledged the tension and noted that it would likely be that way for the life of the AB. The AB sees its role as stimulating discussion, listening to that discussion, and acting as a catalyst for change across the campus. Affirming Sortor's call to sit down and take stock of the EKI at this midpoint in its implementation, Jacobson sees a role for Council. Sortor noted that the AB plans to meet with the faculty to discuss next steps in relation to the EKI. She also noted that the AB plans to meet with individual departments to specifically plan how teaching of new interdisciplinary courses could be sustained over the long run.

Commencement Speaker—Honorary Degree

M. Schneider moved, B. Ferguson seconded, that Council recommend approval to offer Thomas Friedman an honorary degree at the next Commencement. The motion was approved.

Draft Letter Sent to Initiate Faculty Salary Reviews

The item was postponed and acknowledged as more relevant to the Faculty Budget Committee.

Metrics from the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees

The Dean distributed a list of metrics requested by the Academic Affairs Committee. She noted that the College is already collecting information on many of the metrics. K. Jacobson argued for transparency in relation to the faculty. The Dean stated her intention to include reference to the metrics when she reports to the faculty on the October Board meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Secretary
Karen Wiese