

Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Council
September 16, 2009
Excerpts

Present: S. Andrews, V. Bentley-Condit, R. Osgood, M. Schneider, P. Smith, B. Trish, A. Vishevsky

The meeting came to order at 4:15 p.m. in the Nollen House conference room.

The minutes of September 9 had been approved via email.

Joyce Stern, Dean for Student Academic Support and Advising, was invited by Council to discuss academic accommodations for students with disabilities. She noted that the growth of students who self identify as having a disability and who seek academic accommodations is outpacing the growth in enrollment. She acknowledged that she is aware that there are also many students being accommodated by different campus offices and programs (housing, dining, etc.), but her office only focuses on what goes on in the classroom. She was hopeful that at some point in the future there will be a higher degree of centralized oversight of accommodations for each student who needs them. She noted that new federal requirements for coordinated reporting will present a challenge to the College. The President noted that Cornell University had tried a centralized system but it had not worked. He also noted that in his time in office there have been no complaints. In response to a question about how such student requests are vetted, Stern responded that in the case of significant accommodation, she requires documentation.

<http://www.grinnell.edu/offices/studentaffairs/acadadvising/disabilityservices/accommodation/>

One Council member noted an increase in these requests and wondered if they are all really necessary. Stern asked Council if the faculty would welcome a series of informational sessions on issues of teaching students with disabilities, for example on those conditions which present most often or are little understood. Council responded that it might make sense based on an “opt in” process. Stern was thanked for her presentation and left the meeting at 4:45 p.m.

President’s Remarks

The President remarked on the importance of remaining vigilant in our attempts to prevent the flu.

He thanked everyone for their support and participation in events last weekend, such as athletic contests and the Second Year Retreat.

He noted that he favors adding an ombudsman element to the campus. However, there are many issues ranging from scope and procedure to determining who would need to assent for approval.

Finally, he reported that he is writing two reports to the Board of Trustees on facilities improvements and programmatic activities since he took his office 12 years ago. He offered to send an outline around to Council members later in the week.

Dean’s Remarks

A second outside consultant in linguistics will be on campus Friday to help our faculty frame staffing needs for a revision of their EKI proposal and to consult on the curriculum in this area.

Budget requests are due earlier this year (September 30).

The Interdisciplinary Advisory Board is a body that receives Executive Council oversight. Marci Sortor needs to replace three faculty members and would like to run some names by Council for their reaction. The Dean presented these names, but Council members said they would like to consider the list when C. Lindgren, as Council liaison to the IAB, can be present.

Council Remarks

M. Schneider reviewed the agenda for the September 21 faculty meeting.

SGA Discussions of Academic Calendar

M. Schneider summarized a conversation he had with the SGA President. There was some discussion of the desire to add stress reducing elements (such as more numerous, shorter mid-semester breaks to the calendar as well as some possible experimentation to see what types of change would be effective.

The President left the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Executive Council 2009-10 Agenda

Council continued discussion and prioritization of the agenda items for the year.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Secretary
Karen Wiese