Academic Council
Minutes of Meeting
October 3, 2005

[Approved by the Academic Council on November 7, 2005.]

Faculty Members Present: Abbott, DeWitt, Dohm, Gibson, Greenberg, Haug, He, D. Keenan, Lakeland, Lang, Lange, Ligas, Mulvey, O’Neill, Rakowitz, Sapp, Steffen, Yarrington

Administrators: A.V.P. Grossman, Deans Hadjimichael, Novotny, Simoes, Snyder, Solomon, Wilson

The meeting was called to order at 3:33 pm.

1. Presidential courtesy: The AVP had nothing to report.

2. Report from the Secretary of the General Faculty
The Secretary reported that: the next faculty meeting is 10/28; all committees are at full strength except for a one-semester opening for someone from the School of Business on the UCC; all committees have elected chairs except for the Library and Athletics committees which are scheduled to meet and elect chairs this week. Once all committees are fully staffed and have chairs, the faculty directories will be printed and distributed.

3. Report from the Executive Secretary
   a) The Executive Secretary reported on ongoing agenda item number 1. Correspondence from the AVP indicates conflicts between athletic events and final exams on 12/14 and 12/17.
   b) Approval of minutes of meeting of April 4, 2005: Prof. Mulvey, who had constructed the minutes because the Recording Secretary, Prof. Winn, had not turned in minutes, asked which Deans, besides Snyder, had attended this meeting. Deans Solomon and Novotny said that they had also been present. Prof. DeWitt thanked Mulvey for her work on these minutes. Motion (O’Neill/Haug) to approve passed.
   c) Approval of minutes of meeting of May 2, 2005: AVP Grossman said that the sentence on page 9, “Perhaps what is needed is looking at areas that the AVP missed that require attention” should be deleted because it was misleading. The issue is that some items had not been sent to the AVP, rather than that the AVP missed them. He asked to delete that sentence. With that change, Motion (O’Neill/Ligas) to approve passed, 10-0-4.
   d) Approval of minutes of meeting of September 13, 2005: Prof. O’Neill indicated that the third person accidentally replaced with computerese on page 13 was Joan van Hise. Dean Solomon said that in the middle of the third paragraph on page 15, the phrase “which also might cause a project to be multiply supported” should read “which also might cause a faculty member to be multiply supported”. Regarding the last line on page 14 prior to the President’s arrival, Prof. Rakowitz pointed out that she had said a faculty member who “negotiated 3 or 4 years of prior service should (rather than would) be eligible…”. With these changes, Motion (Steffen/Haug) to approve passed, 13-0-1.

4. Council Committee Reports: Subcommittee on Academic Grievance
Prof. Lang introduced the report by noting that there are a variety of policy statements in the Journal of Record (JOR), including statements on academic grievance, dependent leave, maternity leave, etc, that end up in other documents like the Catalogue or the Benefits Handbook. At some point, the origins of the statements may be lost, and then, when the other documents are edited, the policy standards laid out in the JOR may be changed. He suggested that policy statements transferred from the JOR to other documents be marked in some way to make it obvious that they cannot be casually edited.

Lang then went on to explain the committee’s process. Rather than simply insisting that the Catalogue language revert to JOR language, they looked at each discrepancy and made a recommendation regarding each, sometimes suggesting maintaining JOR language, and sometimes suggesting changes to the JOR. The packet includes a list of the discrepancies and the committee’s recommendations. Recommendations to maintain the JOR language don’t require a vote because they simply affirm current policy. Recommendations to adopt the Catalogue language in place of the JOR language require Council approval of the policy change.

**Motion (Lang/O’Neill) to accept the changes recommended in the document.**

Prof. Dohm suggested that we review and, if necessary, discuss, each item, prior to voting on the motion. The following discussion refers to pages 24-26 in the packet.

- Subsection headings: no objections
- Use of she or he: no objections
- Rewording of “purpose”: no objections
- Prof. Haug asked that references to “academic competence” be changed to “academic/professional competence”. After a brief discussion, the chair ruled this request out of order.
- Adding “academic dishonesty”: no objections
- Explaining academic dishonesty: no objections
- Time limit: Dean Snyder asked why more than a semester might be required. He thought it problematic for students to be able to begin a complaint several years after an incident. Lang responded that the JOR language, which uses a semester as a guideline rather than a mandate, should give administrators leeway to object to a several year old complaint. But the committee felt that there could be extenuating circumstances requiring more than a semester, like study abroad. Dean Solomon noted that the Catalogue language of “must be initiated” could just mean sending notification that a complaint would be filed, and that would be easy enough to do despite study abroad. He too preferred the clarity of the Catalogue language in fairness to faculty and students. Lang pointed out that under the Catalogue wording, a student who wanted to file a grievance regarding a test given at the beginning of a semester would have to do so at the beginning of the following semester. Prof. Steffen extended the hypothetical case by imagining a student in a 2-semester course with a grievance arising during the first semester and therefore needing to be initiated during the second semester of the same course. Prof. Yarrington argued that students should be given a clear deadline, and then it should be up to them to negotiate extensions of that deadline with the Dean. Mulvey responded that the Catalogue language allows no room for negotiation. She then reminded the Council that the current policy is instantiated in the JOR language, and therefore, a motion would be required to change the
policy to match the Catalogue language. Grossman said that he would like advice from the University attorney regarding which would be a better policy from a legal standpoint. Lang suggested that procedurally, a motion could be made to amend the policy to the Catalogue’s version, and then the Council’s recommendation could go forward to the attorney. DeWitt argued against such a motion, noting that broader issues were involved. For example, faculty do not currently have a timeline for making accusations of academic dishonesty, and so could hold off such an accusation for a semester in order to avoid a grievance. Dohm asked whether anyone had a motion to offer, and no one responded.

- Consulting the chair: no objections
- Clarification of relevant Dean: no objections
- Formal procedure, step 1: Snyder worried that this wording would be inconsistent with the previous clarification if a student from one school takes a course in another. Lang explained that the target Dean ought to be clear in the context of the prior sentence; the change here was concerned with the notion of a hearing being held in the AVP’s office. Prof. Lange wondered whether the student’s dean would know of a grievance involving another school, and Snyder said that that information is shared. No further objections were raised.
- Formal procedure, step 2: no objections
- Consistency of bullets: no objections
- Reference to committee structure for grievance: Grossman said that he would prefer that students have access to the full procedure without having to go to the JOR. Lang explained that the committee had suggested two possible courses of action, and Grossman’s comment would favor the first (i.e., including the committee structure in the Catalogue). Motion (DeWitt/Keenan) to accept the first option in the committee’s recommendation on this point, passed 17-0-0
- Addition of bullet on dishonesty: Snyder commented that this was an important change because there isn’t currently a policy in the JOR on academic dishonesty. There were no objections.
- Statement on AVP settlement: no objections
- Bulleting change: no objections
- Adding academic honesty appeals: Motion (O’Neill/Steffen) to change “honesty” to “dishonesty,” passed 15-0-0.
- Snyder pointed out that the first and third bullets on page 18 of the packet are ambiguous regarding which Dean will serve on the committee. He suggested that those paragraphs should follow reference to the Dean with, parenthetically, “other than the Dean of the school in which the course was offered”. Motion (O’Neill/Ligas) to make the change suggested by Snyder, passed 16-0-0. Dean Wilson wondered whether the texts need to be reviewed more carefully for those sorts of discrepancies. Mulvey said that she would double check in preparing the texts. Wilson also asked whether the academic honesty document from the Dean of Freshmen’s office had been checked, but Dohm said that that was beyond the subcommittee’s charge.

As amended, the motion to accept the subcommittee’s recommendations passed, 16-0-0
Snyder asked whether the Catalogue will now follow from the newly revised JOR, and whether something will go to the Dean of Freshmen for consistency, as well as to the other Deans and relevant Vice Presidents. Mulvey echoed Lang’s preamble about the need to maintain JOR policy as JOR language gets transferred to different documents. DeWitt indicated that he would send the grievance information to the appropriate administrators, including the Dean of Students.

5. Petitions for immediate hearing: none

6. Old Business: none

7. New Business
   a) Review of distribution of Council seats (Pending Item C): Mulvey explained that with the addition of BEI, there was a concern about the representation of engineering faculty on committees, so the initial policy was that engineering faculty would be eligible for any math/science slot on committees. The understanding was that this policy would be reviewed later, and it may now be time for such a review. Motion (Lang/O’Neill) that a three person committee be formed to recommend a distribution of Council seats keeping the Council approximately at its current size and, as far as possible, giving proportional representation to the current schools, passed 16-0-0.
   b) Motion (DeWitt/Keenan) to reorder the agenda to take up 7d next, passed 14-0-1.
   c) Committee on Conference with the Board of Trustees: Prof. Lakeland explained that it is customary for the Council to advise the Committee on Conference about agenda items, but the timing is difficult because the Trustees are meeting this Thursday, and the agenda was provisionally set prior to the first Council meeting. The current agenda includes: discussion of the incoming class enrollment and financial aid; discussion of the strategic plan; and an ongoing item listed as Board/Faculty relations. He asked whether there were other issues. Snyder suggested that it might be worth accompanying the incoming student data with information about the new faculty. Grossman explained that he does that. Wilson mentioned the support of the entire faculty for the 55 students from New Orleans. Grossman said that the President will tell the entire Board about that.
   d) Subcommittee to consider Handbook descriptions of non-tenured positions. Mulvey said that this issue appeared and disappeared sometime last year, but she thought there should be a three person subcommittee to look at the Handbook and at current practices for compliance with the Handbook. DeWitt/Greenberg moved such a committee, consisting of DeWitt, Lang, and Snyder. There was some discussion of including representation from the professional schools, but DeWitt said he didn’t think that was necessary because the committee would just be looking for discrepancies, and reporting them back to the Council. Motion passed 15-0-1.
   e) Discussion of the Strategic Plan: Mulvey announced her intentions to put the Strategic Plan on the General Faculty agenda for 10/28.

8. Motion (Greenberg/Lang) to adjourn, 5 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Rakowitz

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