

LSU Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
3:00 P.M., Thursday, February 18, 2010
Student Senate Room, LSU Union
Attendance



Faculty Senate Executive Committee members present:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Kevin L. Cope (Senate President, English) | 2. Andrew Christie (Member-at-Large, Accounting) |
| 3. William Daly (Past-President, Chemistry) | 4. Renée Casbergue (Secretary, Education) |
| 5. Ken McMillin (Member-at-Large, Animal Science) | 6. Priscilla Allen (Member-at-Large, Social Work) |
| 7. Pratul Ajmera (Vice President, Engineering) | |

Parliamentarian: Charles N. Delzell (present)

Senators present:

1. Mary Catherine Aime	2. Linda Allen	3. Gabriel Beavers	4. Jennifer Curry
5. Charles Delzell	6. Josh Detre	7. Susan Dumais	8. Kristopher Fletcher
9. John Fletcher	10. Joseph Francis	11. Juhon Frank	12. Steven Gaunt
13. Wanda Hargroder	14. Wes Harrison	15. Paul Hrycaj	16. Boryung Ju
17. Jeremy King	18. Jeff Kuehny	19. Richard Kurtz	20. Joseph Legoria
21. Michael Leitner	22. Mandi Lopez	23. Kevin McCarter	24. Patrick McGee
25. Rebecca Owens	26. Lawrence Rouse	27. Kresimir Rupnik	28. Kelly Ann Rusch
29. Michael Russo	30. Frederick Sheldon	31. Edward Song	32. George Stanley
33. Gail Sutherland	34. Ed Watson	35. Sue Weintin	36. Paul Wilson
37. Yi-jun Xu			

Proxies for absent Senators:

Jennifer Curry for Jennifer Jolly	Mandi Lopez for Bruce Eilts
Kevin Cope for Craig Freeman	Chip Delzell for Dominique Homberger
Dee Jacobson for Lisa Johnson	Gabriel Beavers for Alison McFarland
Linda Allen for Erwin Poliakoff	Kevin Cope for Cristina Sabliov
Renee Casbergue for Dianne Taylor	Kevin Cope for Jeffrey Tiger
Robert Perlis for Dottie Vaughn	Kevin Cope for Muhammad Wahab

Senators absent without proxies + (# of absences without proxies):

Brittan Barker (6)	Michael Krom (6)	Sue Bartlett	Michael Bowman
Kathleen Bratton (3)	Kristi Dykema (2)	Andrea Houston (2)	P. Lynn Kennedy
Edward Laws	Heather McKillop (2)	Evelyn Orman	John Protevi
Steve Ross	Phillip Tebbutt (2)	Justin Walsh	Richard White (4)

Guests Attending Meeting:

Gregory Molchan	J. Battista	Casey Kayser
Rich Vlosk	Mary Parker	Robert Doolos
Lupe L...	Jacob Most	Tania Nyman
Brian Ainsworth	Andy Nyman	Carruth McGehee
Ava Coleman		

Consideration of the Minutes from January 2010

Motion to accept minutes (G. Stanley; second, Larry Rouse) - Passed unanimously.

President's Report

LSU-BR News:

- Beth Paskoff, Dean of Library and Information Science, is working to establish a graduate student project with the goal of setting forth a program and schedule for records keeping to be implemented at such time as funds and personnel are made available.
- "Dead week" may be adjusted relative to women's basketball. There is some concern that the concept of dead week may be over interpreted and implemented in the extreme.
- Brian Voss is working on a site license for Adobe software products such as Dreamweaver, In-Design, etc.
- Preparation of the university's interim report to SACS is underway. A "Letter of Progress" is completed. The report will be a public document. Some shortfalls (relative to previously stated goals) will be noted. These are mostly due to budget cuts.
- Some faculty members have reported concerns over visitor parking policies that make it difficult for visitors to make quick visits to faculty offices. FSEC will explore the possibility of establishing rapid visitor parking permits.
- Concern was voiced over the Office of Academic Affairs' handling of the Graduate School Dean search and accessibility of information about the search process on the web. OAA claims that technical problems are to blame for lack of accessible information. Kevin has expressed the importance of public forums for finalists to take questions from faculty members.
- Two invitations have been extended to Wade Smith, head of the Lab School, to appear before the senate to address concerns expressed by faculty members and staff (regarding curriculum, admissions, homework policies, etc.). He has not yet responded.

System News:

- No news reported from the LSU System office.

State News:

- The statewide transfer council's requirements for a two-year portable degree are still a work in progress. A proposal to allow transfer credit for "off site" junior college courses (typically taught in local high schools) is under consideration. (A related resolution and further discussion of this appears later in the meeting minutes.)
- The Tucker Commission has finalized its recommendations. The results are disappointing, with political processes holding sway. We will work with the LSU system to be sure that any governing board - in whatever configuration - remains within reach of faculty. A new "super board" will be further removed and responsive to much broader competing interests than is the current LSU Board of Supervisors.
- Another issue of concern to LSU is the proposal to reimburse / fund all general education courses at a common rate, regardless of whether they are offered within two year or four year institutions. The Chancellor is addressing this proposal as ill advised.
- The proposal for automatic transfer of 39 hours taken at two-year colleges is acceptable to LSU as the requirements are modeled on the LSU curriculum.
- Work is ongoing on the remaining 21 hours of a portable 60-hour 2-year degree. It is intended to be general preparation for multiple degrees.
- The Louisiana Association of Faculty Senates will meet at LSU again this year.
- Progress is being made on retirement plan issues. Kevin, Roger Laine, and representatives from health sciences met with the system office to clarify what will be presented to the board of supervisors. Most administrators at LSU and the system office are supportive of these efforts.

Special Announcement

The Bargaining and Representation Committee reported hosting a second program on the history and development of public higher education, with senator John Protevi speaking. Kevin encouraged participation from faculty members across departments.

Report on Graduate Student Association

Ava Coleman, representing the new Graduate Student Association, reported that the organization is now in full effect with a mission to serve as the voice of graduate students whose needs are often separate from those of undergraduates. The organization hopes to sponsor professional development and networking opportunities, as well as a series of meetings with graduate school administrators with the goal of understanding the graduate school role. They intend to push for a change in residency policies by petitioning for in-state tuition rates for all students for whom LSU is paying tuition. They hope for representation in the search for the new Graduate School Dean. Faculty were invited to the mixer they sponsored on March 5.

Report on Phi Kappa Phi

Richard Vlosky reported that the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society is being revived on campus. The organization is recognized as the oldest, most inclusive honor society in the country. An overview of the leadership, including student representatives, was provided. Selection of students is now done according to departments (rather than university-wide) to assure greater representation. Students are inducted by invitation only based on stringent criteria. The goal is to double active membership by recapturing lapsed/inactive members. Grants and awards are available on a competitive basis. There are currently 1,461 invitees. Mayor Kip Holder will be the keynote speaker at the spring initiation. A seminar series was introduced this year, with sessions open to the public. Student officers are leading community service activities, including a 5K walk/run in April or May to benefit Haiti earthquake relief. The organization has a Facebook presence and a website in development that should be active within a couple of weeks. Dues are \$45.00 (national) for the first year, and \$30.00 for subsequent years, with an additional \$20.00 charged annually for chapter dues.

Report from Brian Voss delayed until March meeting

Remarks b Professor Steven Striffler (University of New Orleans)

Professor Striffler addressed the senate regarding the gloomy budget picture for higher education in Louisiana. He noted that Jindal's decision to "spare" higher education in the budget submitted to the legislature is not a permanent solution. The ultimate problem is a tax structure and constitutional protections for most other significant areas of the budget. He also pointed out a prevalent myth, frequently reported in the press, that budget cuts are a matter of "belt tightening" and that universities are just "feeling the pinch." This is not accurate. We may become more efficient, but higher education needs more money, not less.

Professor Striffler reported on a large group called "Save UNO" that is attempting to put higher education on firmer ground. He is asking the LSU faculty to join in a larger scale mobilization of effort that moves beyond traditional forms of lobbying and establishes links among faculty, students, alums, and so on statewide to rally in support of higher education at the capital and get our collective voice acknowledged. (California is pushing for a March 4 nationwide rally date, but our efforts should be local to have more effect.) To join in this effort, contact Dr. Striffler: striffler@hotmail.com.

Old Business

Second Reading

Resolution 10-01

Amendments to Article VI and Article VII of the LSU Faculty Senate By-Laws (Proxy Rules)

Sponsored by Lawrence J. Rouse

Whereas Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, Tenth Edition, 2000 states with regard to proxy voting:

Proxy voting is not permitted in ordinary deliberative assemblies unless the laws of the state in which the society is incorporated require it, or the charter or bylaws of the organization provide for it. Ordinarily it should neither be allowed nor required, because proxy voting is incompatible with the essential characteristics of a deliberative assembly in which membership is individual, personal, and nontransferable;

Whereas Senators should be encouraged to send a replacement to represent them and their College or School at Faculty Senate meetings they cannot attend; and

Whereas such replacements will be able to participate in the discussions and vote on the merits of the debated proposals; Therefore be it resolved that Article VI of the By-Laws of Louisiana State University Faculty Senate, which presently reads:

Article VI. Alternate Representation. 1. By written notice to the President submitted before the meeting, a member of the Senate may choose another faculty member representing the same college or division as a replacement at that Senate meeting. Such a representative must be eligible for election to the Senate. 2. In lieu of choosing a replacement representative, a member of the Senate may, by written notice to the President, give a proxy vote to another member of the Senate. 3. Proxies and alternate representatives shall be announced by the President at the start of the meeting. 4. If a member of the Senate is absent from the campus for a semester or longer, this position will be taken for that period by the eligible nonelected person who received the next highest number of votes in the last regular election in that college. If there is no person thus qualified, a special election will be held. 5. The seat of a member of the Senate who has been repeatedly absent from Senate meetings can be declared vacant by a three-fourths vote of members of the Senate attending a meeting, if a request for such action has been made in writing by at least five percent of the faculty of the college represented. The motion to remove a member of the Senate shall be voted on at the meeting of the Senate immediately following the request. 6. If for any reason a vacancy occurs, as determined by the Executive Committee, the position will be filled by the eligible nonelected person who received the next highest number of votes during the election of that seat. If there is no such qualified person, then the position will be filled by the eligible nonelected person who received the next highest number of votes in the next most recent regular election in that college. If there is no person thus qualified, a special election will be held.

Be amended to read:

Article VI. Replacement Representation 1. By written notice to the President submitted before the meeting, a member of the Senate may choose another faculty member representing the same college or division as a replacement at that Senate meeting. Such a representative must be eligible for election to the Senate.*** 2. Replacement representatives shall be announced by the President at the start of the meeting. 3. If a member of the Senate is absent from the campus for a semester or longer, this position will be taken for that period by the eligible nonelected person who received the next highest number of votes in the last regular election in that college. If there is no person thus qualified, a special election will be held. 4. The seat of a member of the Senate who has been repeatedly absent from Senate meetings can be declared vacant by a three-fourths vote of members of the Senate attending a meeting, if a request for such action has been made in writing by at least five percent of the faculty of the college represented. The motion to remove a member of the Senate shall be voted on at the meeting of the Senate immediately following the request. 5. If for any reason a vacancy occurs, as determined by the Executive Committee, the position will be filled by the eligible nonelected person who received the next highest number of votes during the election of that seat. If there is no such qualified person, then the position will be filled by the eligible nonelected person who received the next highest number of votes in the next most recent regular election in that college. If there is no person thus qualified, a special election will be held.

And therefore be it further resolved to amend Article III.1.ii to read: Replacement representatives shall be indicated in the minutes.

Discussion:

Delzell: There are three ways to handle absence - proxy, replacement, and alternate. We should say "alternates and replacements" should be included in the minutes.

Rouse: Could be at least one alternate from each college as a permanent replacement for a senator who can no longer serve. Alternates will be on the regular roster.

Delzell: Can't we list both?

McGee: Alternates are already elected. Delete reference to alternates from #2 here - just say "replacement."

Rouse: Yes. The whole idea is to have people physically here - one person, one vote. I take that as a friendly amendment. Article 6 will say "replacement representation."

Owens: When do changes in bylaws take effect?

Cope: Next meeting.

Allen: Does it mean we have to run another election for an alternate?

Rouse. No. This is to replace you temporarily. This is not the alternate. It's only if one can't be here.

Owens: Where are the bylaws? Online? Can someone update them?

Cope: They have been online for two years.

Rouse: They are updated immediately as changes are made.

Cope: Can we move to a vote?

Split decision - motion carries on voice vote. No abstentions.

*Second Reading***Resolution 10-02****Embargo on Recycling, Reassignment, or Reallocation of Non-Tenure-Track Terminated Positions
Sponsored by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee**

Whereas, the University administration may decide from time to time to eliminate non-tenure-track positions because of budgetary or other considerations resulting in non-renewal or termination of positions;

Whereas, the threat or impending threat of elimination of positions without a well-defined due process results in adversely affecting academic freedom;

Whereas, one of AAUP's principles is that if appointments are terminated because of financial exigency, the institution will not at the same time make new appointments except in extraordinary circumstances where a serious distortion in the academic program would otherwise result;

Whereas, another AAUP principle is that a position terminated because of financial exigency will not be filled by a replacement within a period of three years, unless the released faculty member has been offered reinstatement and a reasonable time in which to accept or decline the position;

Therefore be it resolved that the Faculty Senate stands by the principle that no non-renewal or termination be made at LSU without a well-defined due process;

Therefore be it further resolved that terminated positions will not be reassigned or reallocated except in extraordinary circumstances with due academic justification following a well-established due process;

Therefore be it further resolved that a terminated position, for causes other than resulting from misconduct or poor performance review, will not be filled by a replacement within a period of three years, unless the released faculty member has been offered reinstatement and a reasonable time in which to accept or decline the position.

Discussion:

Ajmera: The language has been adapted slightly (in response to discussion at first reading). We will vote first on substitute language, then consider the full resolution.

Cope: Move to vote on substitution. (Rouse second). Vote in favor.

Ajmera: The purpose of this resolution is to keep due process in place in the absence of performance cause or poor performance review.

Cope: The recommendations here are congruent with the exigency process being put in place. This will be welcomed by the administration.

Owens: At a previous meeting, instructors reported that in one department received termination letters, but tenure-track searches were ongoing. Will this prevent any openings from being filled? This could be read as "Why are you still hiring here?"

Ajmera: This does not address that. Situations like you describe are different overall.

Kuehny: Should the title refer to non-tenure track?

Ajmera: That is a friendly amendment. This only addresses non-tenure track.

Fletcher: How does this affect the terms of a person's contract? Does reinstatement mean rehire with the same salary and benefits?

Ajmera: Salary negotiation is between individuals and the institution.

Delzell: The exigency plan does address salary, but probably only for tenured people.

Ajmera: The most important reason for this is academic freedom. As an institution, the potential loss of academic freedom is significant.

Delzell: According to the AAUP, all positions should be tenure track after 6 years. Discussion nationally is about two track systems like we have here. The question is whether those who are not tenure track need academic freedom.

Ajmera: The board here takes the position that instructors have academic freedom, but it is hard to exercise with the threat of layoffs.

Beavers: Do we have to vote to change the title? Move to change the title to include "non-tenure track." (Casbergue second).
 Motion approved.
 Cope: Vote on the resolution.

Voice vote - resolution passes.

New Business

First Reading

Faculty Senate Resolution 10-03

“Replacing the Current System of Appointments with a New System of Elections for Members of the Graduate Council”

Proposed by Associate Professor John Andrew Nyman Sponsored by Senator Y. Jun Xu

Whereas the Faculty Senate is a major institutional component of shared governance at LSU and is charged to establish curricula, fix standards of instruction, determine requirements for degrees, and generally determine educational policy for the University, subject to the authority of the Board of Supervisors;

Whereas PS-45 states that “All actions involving graduate degree programs are considered by the LSU Graduate Council. All actions involving individual courses or undergraduate degree programs are considered by the Courses and Curricula Committee of the LSU Faculty Senate, after consideration by the relevant College or School level committee;”

Whereas the LSU Faculty Senate is an elected body and thus academic policies regarding undergraduate education are developed in a manner compatible with principles of shared- governance;

Whereas policy regarding the Graduate Council at LSU states that “The Graduate Council is composed of faculty who consider policy matters related to the Graduate School and advise the Dean of the Graduate School in the administration of academic affairs and polices of the Graduate School. To provide membership representing the breadth of disciplines on the LSU campus, the Graduate Council shall consist of one member from each College or School overseen by a dean and that offers a graduate program of study at LSU, and three additional members appointed at large. Members will be graduate faculty with outstanding records of scholarly and creative activities, who do not currently hold administrative positions. The overall membership of the Council will represent the diversity of faculty and students. The Dean of each College or School will nominate at least two but not more than three graduate faculty members from the unit, and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee will also be asked to submit up to three nominees for each position. Appointments for the College and School positions selected from these nominations will be made by the Graduate Dean with the concurrence of the Provost. Members at large will be appointed by the Graduate Dean with the concurrence of the Provost. Members will serve a term of five years, with membership end dates staggered to provide for continuity of the Council Activities;”

Whereas the Graduate Council is appointed by the Chancellor and thus academic policies regarding graduate degree programs are developed in a manner incompatible with principles of shared-governance;

Therefore be it resolved that the Faculty Senate recommends the election of all members, other than ex officio members, of the Graduate Council and reaffirms its commitment to and responsibility for shared governance in establishing curricula, fixing standards of instruction, and determining requirements for graduate degree programs;

Therefore be it further resolved that the Faculty Senate recommends that the following policy be sent forward to the LSU System as policy regarding the Graduate Council on the LSU campus.

Graduate Council Membership

The Graduate Council is composed of faculty who consider policy matters related to the Graduate School and who advise the Dean of the Graduate School in the administration of academic affairs and polices of the Graduate School. To provide membership representing the breadth of disciplines on the LSU campus, the Graduate Council shall consist of one member from each College or School overseen by a dean and that offers a graduate program of study at LSU, and three additional members appointed at large. each College or School overseen by a dean and that offers a graduate program of study at LSU are represented on the Graduate Council such that units that award less than 9% of graduate degrees are allocated one member on

the Graduate Council whereas units that award more than 9% of the graduate degrees are allocated two members on the Graduate Council. Allocations will be recalculated each decade; allocations for 2010 through 2019 are based on degrees awarded from 1999-2000 through 2008-2009 as reported by the LSU Office of Budget and Planning. Members will be graduate faculty with outstanding records of scholarly and creative activities, who do not currently hold administrative positions, who are full Professors, and who are full Members of the Graduate Faculty. The overall membership of the Council will represent the diversity of faculty and students. The Dean of each College or School will nominate at least two but not more than three graduate faculty members from the unit, and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee will also be asked to submit up to three nominees for each position. Appointments for the College and School positions selected from these nominations will be made by the Graduate Dean with the concurrence of the Provost. Members at large will be appointed by the Graduate Dean with the concurrence of the Provost. Members will serve a term of five years, with membership end dates staggered to provide for continuity of the Council Activities. The Graduate School will hold elections within each College or School as needed to fill positions; all Graduate Faculty within those Colleges or Schools are eligible to nominate and vote. Members of the Graduate Council will elect from themselves a Chair who will serve a one-year term. The Dean of the Graduate School and the Associate Dean of the Graduate School are ex officio members with the same rights as other members except that they may not serve as chair of the Graduate Council or chair of subcommittees of the Graduate Council.

Discussion:

Stanley: How do you envision election to ensure that it is representative?

Nyman: This doesn't entail that level of detail.

Stanley: Based on graduate enrollment, or number of faculty...

Nyman: I assume based on number of degrees awarded.

Delzell: Only graduate faculty.

Nyman: I assume so.

-----: That is problematic since not all are eligible to be full members of the graduate faculty (in Agriculture, or at Pennington, for example).

Nyman: Good reason to consider all graduate faculty, not just full members.

Kuehny: This refers to the graduate council statements of policy - are those internal or Policy Statements?

Cope: It is in their (internal) documents. Not an official PS.

-----: Is there a good reason why meetings aren't public? Personnel decisions (membership decisions) for example? Perhaps word this to exclude personnel decisions.

Ajmera: If this will be voted on at the next meeting, specifics should be there as an amendment.

Nyman: E-mail me if you want to work on specifics.

Ajmera: If you come up with some, send to the FSEC.

Frank: Add "faculty" to the last "therefore."

Stanley: I fully support the rationale for this amendment. I also support the need for a detailed mechanism.

First Reading

Faculty Senate Resolution 10-04

“Full Disclosure of Benefits Packages for Job Candidates”

Sponsored by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee

Whereas the suite of benefits offered to all university employees, whether faculty or staff members, supplies a large portion of the compensation received during a working life and, in many cases, accounts for nearly all financial resources during retirement;

Whereas research by the Benefits Advisory Committee and by Faculty Senate Assistants convincingly demonstrates that LSU, the LSU System, and Louisiana higher education all lag far behind comparable institutions, systems, and states with respect to the benefits packages offered to higher education employees;

Whereas the first qualification to become a great university is a commitment to truth and truthfulness;

Whereas zeal for the advancement of LSU and its sister campuses has led recruiters to stress the advantages of working at LSU while sometimes downplaying the shortcomings of our institutions;

Whereas LSU faculty governance officials and committee members have worked and bargained in good faith with campus and systems officials;

Whereas the progress in the development of adequate benefits packages has been definitive but extremely slow, in large measure owing to the intransigence of state government;

Whereas the inadequacy of benefits, especially in retirement programs, inflicts a "loyalty penalty" by reducing lifelong compensation in proportion to length of service;

Whereas participants in the Optional Retirement Program have been singled out for excessive surcharges to satisfy an "unfunded accrued liability" for which they have no responsibility and with regard to which they can exert little influence owing to the unorthodox and unfair method of managing retirement funds for higher education professionals;

Therefore be it resolved that if, by the end of the 2009–2010 academic year, satisfactory progress toward improving the benefits package and especially toward resolving the problems with the retirement programs has not been made, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee may either provide or may require Human Resources Management provide all finalists for academic appointments at LSU with a plain-language explanation of the limits on and instabilities of the LSU benefit packages; and

Therefore be it further resolved that Human Resources Management may not allow the appointment of any new faculty member or staff member earning a salary above \$40,000.00 per annum until that job candidate has signed an appropriate form acknowledging receipt and understanding of the aforementioned truthful benefits explanation.

Discussion:

Adams: LSU has lots of deficiencies (in its benefits packages). How does this help?

Cope: One needs to start somewhere. There is already work being done, and we have traction and support from administrators, etc. This is a serious issue that entails lots of money - \$8 million per year at least. Employee contribution is going up, but flow through to employee accounts is decreasing. There is potential for LSU to have to come up with even more money to cover TRSL deficits.

Casbergue: What is needed is more disclosure in this case so that job candidates can make informed decisions about entering the ORP pool or opting for TRSL defined benefit plans (as long as they are still offered).

Cope: This problem predates everyone here and goes until 2049 at least.

Adams: I'm not sure that sending letters about this is wise.

Cope: This isn't about sending letters - just having candidates sign off (that they have been adequately informed). This will have a political effect.

McGee: We don't gain anything by being dishonest. This document should be a part of the process when people are hired. (The current situation) impacts the reputation of LSU. It is better to be transparent.

Kurtz: This could have a chilling effect on recruiting. Will people downtown care?

Cope: Note that this says, "IF progress is not made." In the LSU system, people are well connected with people downtown. Amicable, reasonable talks are underway. TRSL is not malicious - just doing what they are told.

Kurtz: The goal is to get the system office to put more pressure.

Cope: Yes - and not just LSU, but all campuses are offering full support.

Harrison: Instead of benefits, should we say retirement specifically? Health care is OK - someone might look at that and sign.

Cope: There are problems with other benefits as well, so we might do better to keep it open. Collective momentum is having an effect. This is an opportunity to paint with a broad brush.

Allen: Lots of people don't think about retirement when they are new in their careers. Social security issues are important. It's crucial that people have a better sense of what they are getting.

Cope: I asked at the system office why more people don't know the social security situation. Information is sent to HRM, but doesn't get filtered down to individuals.

McGee: "Rates may change" will not be in the disclaimer?

Casbergue: That disclaimer is important.

Cope: Plain language is the key: "cut" vs. "increase in normal cost." People hear the latter and assume they are getting a better benefit.

*First Reading***Faculty Senate Resolution 10-05****“Revision of PS-22: Excused Absences from Class”**

Introduced at the Request of Faculty Athletic Representative Dydia Delyser

Whereas it is the desire of the Faculty Senate to ensure that all LSU’s policies and procedures are fair to all faculty, staff, and students; and

Whereas it has come to the attention of the Faculty Senate that irregularities exist in regards to the implementation of accommodations for students excused from class under LSU’s PS-22; and

Whereas the Faculty Senate is aware that some of those irregularities have resulted in students being penalized for their excused absences; and

Whereas the Faculty Senate is aware that accommodating students with excused absences is the responsibility of the instructor, even when it presents additional work for the instructor;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Faculty Senate recommends the clarification of PS-22 amendment of the text as follows.

Paragraph one, reading:

Class attendance is the responsibility of the student. The student is expected to attend all classes. A student who finds it necessary to miss class assumes responsibility for making up examinations, obtaining lecture notes, and otherwise compensating for what may have been missed. The course instructor will determine the validity of a student’s reason(s) for absences and will assist those students who have valid reasons.

shall read instead [new text in bold]:

Class attendance is the responsibility of the student. The student is expected to attend all classes. A student who finds it necessary to miss class assumes responsibility for making up examinations, obtaining lecture notes, and otherwise compensating for what may have been missed. The course instructor will determine the validity of a student’s reason(s) for absences and will assist those students who have valid reasons. **The course instructor will accommodate those students with valid absences in such a way that they retain an equal opportunity for success in class and are not penalized for having missed class with a valid reason.**

Paragraph four, reading:

The student is responsible for providing reasonable advance notification and appropriate documentation of the reason for the absence. Should the instructor and student disagree over the validity of a reason for an absence, the student has the right to appeal the instructor’s decision according to the general appeal procedure in PS- 48.

shall read instead [new text in bold]:

The student is responsible for providing reasonable advance notification and appropriate documentation of the reason for the absence. Should the instructor and student disagree over the validity of a reason for an absence, the student has the right to appeal the instructor’s decision according to the general appeal procedure in PS- 48. **Should the instructor and student disagree over the accommodations offered by the instructor, the student has the right to appeal the instructor’s decision to the Department Chair or Program Director (in accordance with PS-48).**

Discussion:

Cope: The genesis of this discussion is a lack of clarity in PS 22.

Rouse: Which dean - college of the instructor or the student?

Beavers: Does PS 48 spell out which dean? We should be consistent.

Doolos: I tried to look at PS 48 - student starts with instructor, then chair of instructor, then dean of instructor. Why is the second step being skipped in this resolution?

McMillan: Part of the reason is that these kinds of appeals are time sensitive. In most cases, it is quicker to go to the second level.

-----: How widespread is this problem? My policies are spelled out in the syllabus in advance.

Cope: It is an increasing problem. Dydia and Stacia Haynie will be here next month.

Harrison: We need to clarify "equal opportunity."

McGee: In the first case, what does this accomplish?

Casbergue: The intention isn't that students be given the exact same opportunities, but that they be given the same number of opportunities for graded work. This is to prevent an instructor with a policy of dropping a lowest grade, for example, saying that a missed test or assignment will automatically be dropped. That would deny the student the opportunity to perhaps do well for that portion of the course, and drop a grade for something done less well. In the case of a course with just two exams, the final exam would determine the entire grade.

-----: But if the policy is spelled out in the syllabus.....

Hargroder: Why skip over chairs?

Harrison: An instructor shouldn't be able to use a dropped exam policy, for example, to address absence.

Beavers: This issue comes up for me a lot. Students who have to miss a lot for a required course (such as music performance, for example) need some accommodation. They have no choice - between a rock and a hard place with two absolute requirements.

Fletcher: If students have validated absences, they are not being treated the same. Legitimate excuses are not recognized equally.

Beavers: It's different if the reason for the absence is part of the curriculum and the student has no choice.

Fletcher: I'm in theater. We tell our students to check ahead of time.

Beavers: I'm not suggesting that students circumvent the grading policy.

Kurtz: I agree with the first change in bold. Dropped tests, for example, may be unfair. I disagree with the second change - violates PS 48 which requires going up through structure of departments.

Delzell: Putting a policy in the syllabus doesn't cover all possibilities. Does having it in the syllabus make it legal?

Rouse: Second bold statement should say "expedited."

Kurtz: PS 48 spells out timelines.

-----: Excused vs. official absence needs to be considered.

Harrison: Many may have valid excuses. In large courses, there may be up to 10 students who miss each test. This requires finding a proctor for a make up session.

-----: In physics or other technical courses, make up exams may be punitive if the student has missed the lectures.

McGee: I think we'll have complaints regardless. PS 48 takes care of it. The way PS 48 is written and PS 22 is fine.

Fletcher: I want more than "it occasionally happens." What is the extent of the problem?

Cope: I will relay these points to Dydia and have her prepare to answer questions at the next meeting.

First Reading

Faculty Senate Resolution 10-06

“Faculty Authority over Course Transfer Credit”

Sponsored by Kevin L. Cope

Whereas authority over the curriculum and the conferring of degrees is among the most ancient and venerated of academic traditions;

Whereas SACS (The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) and all other major higher- education accrediting organizations stress the importance not only of faculty governance of colleges and universities but also of faculty authority over the granting of course credit and other credentials;

Whereas the need, in Louisiana, for “workforce development” and for an educated citizenry implies the need for scrupulous monitoring of the programs leading to degrees and other certificates (so as to ensure that LSU graduates may compete, dialogue with, and otherwise achieve alongside national and international colleagues and competitors);

Whereas the accrediting of institutions by SACS and other organizations occurs at an institution- appropriate level, with research universities being accredited as such and likewise regional and community colleges being accredited by appropriate standards;

Whereas earning accreditation in one of the aforementioned categories need not imply the universal accrediting of all courses from a given institution for credit in every university under every circumstance;

Whereas LSU seeks to improve its programs and, in pursuit of Flagship Agenda, to maintain the highest standards of quality control over its classroom offerings;

Whereas the speedy expansion of online, off-campus, and distance learning and the lack of a rigorous statewide review board or comprehensive review procedure both make it difficult if not impossible to evaluate the content of some college-level

courses offered across the state;

Therefore be it resolved that the LSU Faculty Senate reiterates, affirms, and intends to enforce the authority of the faculty over the granting of transfer credit; and

Therefore be it further resolved that the LSU Faculty Senate reiterates, affirms, and intends specifically to enforce its authority over the full range of curricular concerns: course content; course curriculum; the specific courses and types of courses comprising the bachelor, masters, doctoral, and professional degrees; the awarding of academic credit for native and transfer students; and (per Senate Resolution 09–10), admissions standards; and

Therefore be it further resolved that, although the LSU Faculty Senate anticipates many favorable results from Act 356 of the Louisiana legislature, which establishes a statewide two-year portable credential, the LSU faculty also retains its authority to deny transfer credit for courses that have not been adequately evaluated either by LSU Faculty Senate Committees or by a statewide review board on which LSU has substantial representation.

Cope: Some background - This is related to the Nevers bill (Act 356) regarding creation of a portable 60 hour two-year degree (a block of credit to be accepted as meeting the general education requirements at four year institutions) so that transfer students enter as juniors. This would require admission to the university, but not to specific colleges or programs. The Statewide Articulation and Transfer Council, a group comprised of two representatives with faculty standing from each system, has been meeting to address this legislation. Agreement on 39 hours has been achieved, with requirements largely modeled on LSU's general education component. Efforts to achieve agreement on the remaining 21 hours are underway. This resolution, supported by Stacia Haynie and system representatives, is intended to head off a potential problem: that there is no mechanism for "monitoring" addition and deletion of courses over time. This resolution would create a body of faculty to review courses for credentialing. We need to head off a statewide mandate to control our curriculum by providing for review by faculty on a rolling basis. The Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) is taking the position that SACS accreditation for their institutions means that all of their courses count for anything. This is a potential problem - and contravention of faculty authority over curriculum - especially with "off-site" (high school?) offerings.

Discussion:

Allen: Don't state that these hours are always "general education." Some are lower level courses required in majors.

Cope: Right. It would be courses for block transfer.

Delzell: It should say "faculty authority."

Parker: Right now, faculty evaluate every course individually.

Cope: Yes. This is not an imperial move by LSU. LCTCS is using this as a wedge issue.

-----: There is too much emphasis on content and syllabus. Problem is that the teaching is at a high school level.

Cope: The last paragraph is meant to address that. This is especially a problem with off-site courses. What you say is true, but we've tried to avoid that issue. Communication about levels of teaching is critical, but there is lots of resistance to "correction from the big university."

Kurtz: There is an issue of representation. There should be representation from academic areas.

Cope: This group is set up by fiat. This just ensures disproportional representation. We won't get anywhere with a proposal for content representation.

Ajmera: Can we ever have control over accepting courses? Are we giving up that right for the 60 hours?

Cope: This pertains only to a specific class of students - those transporting a full 60 hours. The old matrix comes into play for everyone else. But for these, we are required by law to accept credit. College can impose other requirements or exams for admission to programs.

Parker: Yes. These students will still have to meet admission requirements for colleges and programs.

Cope: Right. That may be a looming problem....

Wilson: Maybe we can create a dual degree process - an LSU degree, sort of.

Cope: UL and LCTCS want degree specific tracks (in the two year colleges) that will be imposed on us. LSU reps and the LSU system are set against that. We will try to hash this out. If necessary, we will issue a minority report.

Allen: If they don't receive credit toward majors, the hours only count as "not toward major."

Cope: Right. They will come as juniors. But they may not be ready for a major.

Rouse: If they say they want organic chemistry, do we have to accept them?

Cope: No. That acceptance will be at the discretion of the college.

Wilson: It will be a real fiasco if they come unprepared and we are expected to graduate them in 4 or 6 years.

Cope: Nevers believes if students complete 60 hrs. they are more likely to complete a four-year degree.

Christie: They will come and fail in droves - problem solved.

-----: Couldn't LSU address this by setting different standards for juniors than for freshmen?

Cope: There is pressure to keep standards coherent and consistent.

Rouse: We could have students test into every program.

Parker: Courses taught at LSU have courses with prerequisites that aren't taught elsewhere. Has that been discussed?

Cope: The 21 hours can't be specific preparation for any one major, but should be prerequisites for multiple majors within a broader domain (humanities, sciences, etc.). Accepting credits toward a major is still the prerogative of faculty, although there is pressure to take this away as well.

Meeting adjourned at 5:35