

Senate Steering Committee Minutes
June 2, 2011
Noon – 2:00 p.m.
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Attendees:	Cynthia Morton	Sue Alvers
Scott Nygren	Deanna Pelfrey	Barbara Wingo
Marc Heft	Debra Murie	Robert Cook

The meeting was called to order at 12:04 p.m.

Chair Nygren welcomed the new steering committee. Introductions were made and the May minutes were approved.

Chair's Report

Scott Nygren, Chair

Chair Nygren noted that he's added a discussion item on the Faculty Blog about the FY2011-12 budget. He's asked faculty to view Dr. Machen's May 2011 presentation on the Faculty Senate website and invited comments. Major decisions will have to be made before July 1, so comments will need to be posted within two weeks to be considered. President Machen said that he will try to defer some items for further discussion in the fall. Any preliminary comments from council chairs should also be posted on the blog.

In the past, the Steering Committee usually doesn't meet in July; however, with the budget situation, a meeting on July 7, 2011 may be necessary.

Budget Discussion

A long discussion ensued about the severe cuts to the university's allocation now that the state budget has been finalized. Questions arose about the restoration of the 3% retirement contribution that the state is requiring employees to pay. How will this affect indirect costs in research and soft money? What about RCM? Concern was also raised about using vacation days for Christmas break when the university is closed. It's important to note that there seems to be transparency on the university level, but not yet in the colleges.

Website Redesign

The Senate office is in the process of redesigning the Faculty Senate website. If you have any ideas about enhancing the site, please contact Sue.

Miscellaneous

Chair Nygren brought several issues before the committee and asked for their suggestions.

- Lobbyists - Jane Adams office is in contact with the University's lobbyists in Tallahassee and Washington DC. Even though the Faculty Senate acts in an advisory capacity, the legislature does pay attention to what the Senate recommends. Faculty should be more public by making contact with our legislators or writing op-ed pieces. It was suggested that Jane Adams report to the Senate about how lobbying works and how faculty can help.
- Constitution and Bylaws – Currently we use Robert's Rules of Order to handle debates in the Senate which restricts speakers to 10 minutes. Should we amend the bylaws to limit debate to five minutes? The committee thought that continuing to follow Robert's Rules of Order is sufficient.
- Many areas of the university have a connection to one or more of the councils. However, we do not have a council that's connected to the police department. Chief Stump gives an annual report to the Faculty Senate. Chair Nygren asked if the Welfare Council would be an appropriate site for a police liaison.

Council Reports

Budget Council

Mark Heft, Chair

Budget Council worked on RCM last year. James Klausner presented the final report to the Board of Trustees at its last meeting. The council recommended that the Provost should be the champion of RCM and requested that the Provost give an annual report to the Senate.

Research and Scholarship Council

Robert Cook & Debra Murie, Co-Chairs

An annual report has been submitted. SCORS worked on effort reporting, certification, interdisciplinary research, online tenure and promotion and training grants. The council resolved some roadblocks after meeting with Jim Ferrer, Assistant Vice President of Finance and Planning and Lee Catledge from Enterprise Reporting.

Academic Policy Council

Cynthia Morton, Co-Chair

Academic Policy Council had problems with attendance and trying to figure out its role. Some visitors think that it should be an appellate body. There should be a review of the bylaws and add more clarification on its role. It was noted that committees "decide" issues while councils "consider policy".

Welfare Council

Deanna Pelfrey, Chair

Welfare Council has been somewhat inactive. However it did look at online student evaluations and faculty parking areas. Dr. Machen asked for input from the Welfare Council about the legislative benefit cutbacks. There was also some question about the parameters and role of the Welfare Council.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.