

MINUTES

Faculty Senate Executive Committee

January 14, 2008

Present: Denise Barlow, Stephen Blackwell, Toby Boulet, Marianne Breinig, Ruth Darling, Becky Fields (for R. Ellis), Lou Gross, Joanne Hall, Joan Heminway, Bob Holub, Suzanne Kurth, India Lane, Beauvais Lyons, Kula Misra, John Nolt, David Patterson, Otis Stephens

Guests: Jan Simek, Scott Simmons

I. CALL TO ORDER

D. Patterson called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee meeting of November 5, 2007, were approved.

III. REPORTS

President's Report (D. Patterson)

Patterson appeared on local television on Sunday to present his views on recent events. He also reported that he met with the faculty of the College of Architecture and Design to discuss recent events earlier in the day at their request.

Chancellor's Report (J. Simek)

Interim Chancellor Simek noted he was saddened by the situation. He is committed to the vision former Chancellor Crabtree had for the campus and will be moving toward that end. He expressed hope that the campus will have a broader sense of community now. He indicated he would like advice about how to interact with faculty, e.g., how should he deal with the grieving in the campus community. He stated that he was faced with a steep learning curve, but he was open to questions.

J. Nolt commented that one initiative that Crabtree was engaged with was the creation of an Office of Sustainability and that he would like to know if Simek had given it any thought. Simek indicated that he knew of Crabtree's commitment to the project and involvement with Randy Gentry, as well as Nolt and his committee, and that while he did not know the specifics, he was generally committed to proceeding. L. Gross pointed out that the Chancellor had made commitments to many campus constituents. He indicated it would be useful if Simek let people know if he was not going to be able to honor any of those commitments. Gross specified that Crabtree had indicated he had control of the campus budget. Simek stated that if commitments were not honored, it would not be because the system administration had made the decision. He elaborated that he had been shocked by the rapid turn of events. He talked with President Petersen the week-end following Crabtree's resignation and received no directives from him, that is, Petersen never instructed him to do anything. Simek acknowledged that he does not have the stature that Crabtree had either in the community or politically, so he would not be able to accomplish what Crabtree could have. In the discussion of the President's statement, working groups were put in place to resolve differences and those groups presumably are still in place.

B. Lyons expressed appreciation for Simek's stepping in. He emphasized the importance of open communication, noting that Provost Holub has engaged in open communication with postings, his web site, etc. He opined that it would promote a sense of normalcy. He noted

the reception planned for Crabtree on Thursday and expressed the hope that the campus can become stronger. Simek said his preferred mode of communication is direct, so he will be out in the campus community. He commended Holub for doing a remarkable job. He closed by pointing out that communication is a two-way street.

Patterson indicated he would be sending out an announcement that people can make contributions to support the Crabtree Study Abroad Scholarship (CID) established by Loren and Monica Crabtree. President Petersen asked him to put forward three names of candidates to serve on a search committee for a new Chancellor. Two people have agreed and he is contacting a third. He plans to distribute their names in a public message and he wants all three to serve, not just one.

Provost's Report (R. Holub)

The Provost discussed the strategic planning exercise. He has talked with the Chancellor and the President and a meeting was scheduled for Wednesday. Crabtree had wanted a document by March. With the change in leadership, the schedule that was geared to presenting the document to the spring Board of Trustees meeting will probably change, that is, there will be a longer timeframe.

Lyons asked the Provost to talk about the budget planning process for this year, as he understood there had been some changes in it. Holub replied that last year he did not get the information he needed, so he decided to have hearings with individual Deans, their budget officers, his budget officer, and S. Martin. The focus of those hearing will be on how to "accomplish" programs, i.e., on nuts and bolts. After those hearings are completed, there will be hearings more like those in the past with the Deans giving presentations. A follow-up question focused on whether there had been any change in faculty lines, specifically whether open lines are retreating to the Provost's control or are remaining in colleges or departments. Holub replied that he is looking at faculty lines, but currently no lines are retreating to the Provost's Office. Lyons further stated for the record that he was certain the Provost had noticed through the Program Reviews that open lines salaries are being used to cover operating expenses. He encouraged the Provost to look at units operating budgets in comparison to those of peer units on other campuses. He asked the Provost for his thoughts on operating budgets. Holub replied that budgets should more closely match reality than they do now. In his view positions should not be kept open for years. He will be looking at open lines. He wants to understand what is really going on. K. Misra asked if there was any realistic chance of an increase in operating budgets. Holub replied that he could convert a salary line to operating, if used for years at operating. He pointed out that it is no longer as difficult as it was in the past to create new faculty lines. Gross sought further clarification of the budget process. In the past, the Senate was given budget materials. Would budget materials for requests from colleges still be available? He noted that much planning is based on growth scenarios.

What is the future for strategic planning? Holub said he had talked to the President and some of the current discussion of why the Chancellor's strategic planning efforts were seen as problematic did not exactly parallel with what the President said to him. The Governor was displeased by what was perceived as an attempt to bypass the Board of Trustees and the Governor. Simek agreed with that assessment. The issue was how the strategic planning got into the press and the follow-up that occurred. There apparently was negative reaction from the Board of Regents. Gross stated that he remembered the President stating a goal of having 35,000 students and others agreed. Patterson clarified that the issue was apparently the appearance of circumvention. Simek stated the campus is going to grow. S.

Blackwell asked for someone to define the alleged circumvention. Was it of THEC? He said he was aware of growth in TBR schools. Simek explained the plans were not the problem, but the perception that appropriate steps had not been followed before the plans appeared in a national newspaper. Gross asked about the goal of attaining AAU status. The President said that is was not a goal, although some AAU metrics might be useful. Holub indicated he had said much of the same thing as the President because it was not realistic to attain AAU status in 10 years. Gross replied that Crabtree was clear that attaining AAU status would be difficult, but he perceived that having it as a goal provided a challenge. Gross expressed concern that not having it as a goal is a negative outcome. Holub argued it was a realistic assessment. Blackwell said he remembered Crabtree originally stating we wanted to be like AAU. Simek replied that the campus still has aspirations.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business

V. NEW BUSINESS

Special Faculty Senate Meeting. A special meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, January 22 in the University Center Auditorium that will be web cast. The front section of the room will be cordoned off for Senate members. The ground rules for the meeting are that the meeting is informational—no other business will be addressed. There will be two lecterns on the stage and a table for other officers. Patterson will serve as moderator. Lyons expressed the hope that the meeting would be constructive and civil. He thought it would be good to know how many Senators would be able to attend at a busy time for class meetings, so that the cordoned off area would be of appropriate size. Gross asked whether questions would be solicited in advance or if the meeting would proceed ad hoc.

Faculty Survey. Patterson indicated he was ready to launch the survey intended to take the pulse of the faculty. It will reside on a secure server. Misra asked about the usage of the word “ousting” in the survey. Patterson said he struggled with words such as “removal” and “firing.” Misra said what about using the term “stepping down.” Patterson replied that was a euphemism. Misra noted a typographical error in Question 10. M. Murray indicated he had waffled on the appropriateness of the survey, namely whether it would have negative consequences in Nashville and in the search for a new Chancellor. Simek replied that he was not sure of anything from this point on. His goal is to keep the campus afloat. The faculty needs to make its own decision. The faculty on this question has never acted as a large group in concert. There may be a price to pay. Misra asked what would be done with the survey. Gross replied that he had urged that the results be made public, distributed to the President, and used as a basis for questioning the President at the special Senate meeting. Patterson agreed with Gross. Holub noted that the summary of “no confidence” votes at other institutions showed that less egregious actions had lead to those actions. He noted that he could not imagine any action making the search for a new Chancellor more difficult. Patterson indicated he planned to launch the survey that night and close it Tuesday morning January 22. I. Lane noted that some items addressed issues that emerged in the Executive Committee with the President, e.g., adding ORNL staff to our faculty. Patterson clarified that the addition of ORNL staff has been an issue for some time. The survey items represent directions the President plans to go. Gross said he thought most faculty members did not have a clear idea about the President’s plans. Lane pointed out that those people were not at the meeting. Lyons asked if she thought the survey was not representative. Lane said the President simply talked about the issues. Gross and T. Boulet replied that the survey questions addressed what the President said. M. Breinig thought it was important that the faculty hear that different administrators have different visions and need to

understand those differences. Murray inquired whether the President knew that a survey was planned. Patterson said he did not know.

University Faculty Council (B. Lyons and D. Patterson)

Lyons reported that for some time a January meeting had been scheduled for January in Nashville. Lyons, C. White and Patterson planned to go Friday morning, so they could attend the Thursday reception for Crabtree. A communication was received from K. High directing Chancellors to not reimburse faculty members for travel to the meeting because the President could not attend. He perceived the situation was emblematic of poor communication. Every aspect of the event has been documented. White had been in touch with High, who indicated that the Chancellors had misunderstood. Travel to the meeting will be reimbursed. Lyons noted his appreciation of Simek's responsiveness.

No Confidence Vote (D. Patterson)

Patterson distributed a document reviewing "no confidence" votes at other universities that was prepared by Graduate Assistant S. Simmons. He has received e-mails and phone calls asking about a vote of no confidence. A vote of no confidence does not lead to immediate action by the Board of Trustees or Governor. He encourages Senators to consult with their colleagues, so they are knowledgeable. Holub had an information question for Simmons. Did he skip over the vote at the University of Massachusetts that addressed campus/system relations? Simmons replied that he had not seen it, but he would add it. Lyons expressed the hope that if something happens that the progress made during the last search for a President would not be lost, as he would hate to have another failed Presidency. Patterson concurred. He expressed the hope that it would provide an incentive to look at campus/system relations. Misra asked whether conducting a survey would be an adequate action. Patterson replied that the President has ignored the faculty since he has been here, so the results of a survey probably would not alter his behavior. Gross stated the Senate has already expressed no confidence in one action of the President. It could address other actions. The document prepared by Simmons shows different models for pursuing confidence votes. He argued for letting faculty members' responses guide how the Senate proceeds. A regularly scheduled meeting will be held January 28. Lane asked whether it would be more logical to distribute the survey after the meeting with the President. J. Hall said no assumption should be made about how people will answer. She further commented that it would be in the faculty's interest to move with some speed. B. Fields noted as a junior person she had discussed the situation with other faculty and there had been an assumption that a vote on confidence would occur. Nolt said he thought Lane had a point about people being better able to cast informed votes after hearing the President speak, as he has found people are confused. Hall asked whether there would be enough people at the special meeting to make a difference, as people who lack information might also be those unlikely to attend the meeting. Murray agreed with Lane and Nolt about the President having an opportunity to state his vision before the survey is administered, as that would make it easier to defend the survey and its results. Blackwell asked how long it would take to generate a transcription. O. Stephens said a transcription could be done easily. Breinig suggested that distribution of the survey might pique some faculty members' interest enough that they would attend the special meeting. Boulet mused, could we not indicate the President's position(s). A vote on launching the survey immediately was proposed. Lane asked Simmons what occurred before votes of no confidence occurred in the cases he identified, as it was not always clear, except for the Senate having met and carefully drafted a resolution before a vote was taken. Hall moved and Boulet seconded a motion to conduct the survey before the special meeting with the President. Motion passed.

Research Council (J. Hall)

The Council has proposed holding open forums on topics such as space, IT and shared governance. Faculty would have an opportunity to consider issues with a longer term perspective. The events would be held in concert with the Office of Research. Gross indicated he was not sure that the proposal required any action from the Executive Committee or the Senate. Lane suggested it was the right thing to do. Hall replied to Gross that she hoped that if the proposal were addressed by the body, that awareness of the proposed events would be increased. Patterson said the proposed events could be an information item. Gross said Patterson could send out information to the faculty to publicize the forums. Hall wanted the proposed events to go forward as an information item.

Copies of proposed policies on tangible research property and research data were distributed with the agenda. Hall said the Office of Research would like for the campus to have such policies. Gross pointed out that he had worked on such policies for five years. He said the distributed documents were the same ones that had appeared before. In his view there is inconsistency with Board of Trustees policy on intellectual property, specifically pertaining to revenue sharing. (He noted that he had mentioned that inconsistency to Arlene Garrison.) Also, he pointed out that software appears in two different categories. J. Heminway wanted to hold up action on the documents, so her law school colleague (and Senator) could comment on them, perhaps to the Research Council. Hall noted the documents have been setting for some time. Gross told Hall he would transmit all his information to her.

Teaching Council (I. Lane)

Lane indicated her material was informational. The Council is moving along with the nomination process (updated schedule distributed). She noted the Faculty Senate has oversight for the student assessment of instruction. E. Pemberton would be willing to come to a Senate meeting to explain choices of forms. Gross noted that last year the Provost had suggested the campus might eliminate the online evaluation given the low response rates for it. Breinig said she had been contacted by two faculty members about current forms not being appropriate for courses taught online. Lane indicated that there are multiple forms for faculty to choose among, but in some cases one form (e.g., A) might be selected for a whole department.

Committee on the Campus Environment (J. Nolt)

The Committee passed a resolution recommending the creation of an Office of Sustainability. Nolt noted that Crabtree had been working on getting such an office funded for the next fiscal year at the time of his unexpected departure. Executive Committee support for the resolution was being sought. Lyons indicated that the Office would pay for itself. He went on to ask how much establishing such an office would cost, as the faculty would want to know. Nolt said \$200,000 would be the estimate for a "Cadillac" version of the Office. Gross asked Nolt why materials were not included. Nolt said Crabtree had addressed the items listed. Blackwell moved and Gross seconded endorsement of the resolution from the Committee on the Campus Environment. Motion passed.

Graduate Council (M. Murray)

Discussion of Bylaws drafted for the Graduate Council was postponed to the next meeting, given the late hour.

Meeting adjourned 5:25 p.m.