

Faculty Senate Meeting
May 5, 2006, 3:00PM

Call to Order: Nancy Whitt, Chair of the Faculty Senate called the meeting to order.

Invocation: The invocation was led by **Don Sandley**.

Approval of Minutes: Nancy Whitt asked if there were any changes to old minutes. None were suggested, so this was an affirmation of the old minutes.

Administration Report: Brad Creed reported on two issues and then received questions from the floor.

1. Moving forward with SACS compliance. Now, we are into a tedious process of entering data. The next meeting will be to review the material thoroughly.
2. Dr. Westmoreland will be in two this weekend visiting. They will be moving soon.
3. The following questions from the floor were addressed to Provost Creed:

Don Sandley asked about faculty contracts for this year. **Brad** responded that they were running late with the budget this year, but contracts will be sent out soon.

David Bains asked for clarification about moving Jan term to May term. **Brad** addressed this issue in depth by saying it's a very complex issue, which involves calendaring, financial aid (federal regulations). We've tried to unify the calendar. Samford has 44 start dates. Only 4% of colleges have a 4-1-4 system like Samford's. Furman has moved their Jan term. We are being pushed to get things ready for banner. The disadvantage of moving Jan term to May term is that air fare will be higher. One advantage is that short term study abroad experience can be extended. Academic affairs works on the calendar. I need to talk with them. If we do move from Jan term to May term, then we will start [the school year] earlier. *See transcript section below for continuation of this discussion.*

Resolutions Passed:

1. **Don Sandley's** motion to keep the faculty handbook committee together with its #1 focus being the academic freedom issue
2. Approved the suggested changes to the faculty handbook with the following amendments and assurances
 - a. Section A.9.5.1 – change the part that says “60 credit hours (or 60 contact hours in the Natural Sciences)” to read simply “**60 credit hours or 60 contact hours**”.
 - b. Section A.1.1 – amendment to include the updated text for Samford's motto.
 - c. Section A.7.7.2 (and related) – amendment to include the phrase “to the school and the department” to the conjunctive list that appears in bullet (c).
 - d. Assurance: in the discussion of the changes to the faculty rank and appointment sections, **Brad Creed** stated that any current part time / adjunct faculty members would be “grandfathered” in (i.e., keep their current title and not be given the new title of lecturer or senior lecturer).
3. **Paul Blanchard's** motion to make a statement thanking the [handbook] committee and Sheila Thomas for their hard work.
4. The new mission statement created by the athletic committee and distributed by **Ralph Gold** at the April senate meeting.
5. **Jennings Marshall's** motion that the business and faculty welfare committee elect a representative and that the faculty senate have a representative at a planned summer meeting to address retirement issue.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Announcements: **Doug Clapp** announced that they are looking for volunteer faculty to participate in the Samford Outdoor Adventure program.

Don Sandley expressed appreciation for all of Nancy's hard work on behalf of the rest of the executive committee.

Transcript continuing from Provost remarks

After David Bains asked about Jan term, and Brad gave his answer. Paul asked the following question:

Paul Blanchard: From the faculty perspective, there are lots of changes going on. I feel disconnected from the process.

Brad Creed: There are lots of things we all don't know about the future. Transition time brings this out.

Nancy Whitt: Mark and Brad do meet with the executive committee. If anything comes up, we'd let you know. I had lunch with Andy Westmoreland, and he has indicated two ways that faculty will have representation at regular communication meetings:

1. Monday morning "goals for the week" meeting will have a faculty rep
2. Monthly quality council meeting will also have a faculty rep

Steve Donaldson: This is the first time I've heard of this [the moving of Jan term to May]. I heard Paul asking "should faculty be brought into the process?" Does the rest of the faculty hear about this as a done deal, or is there a place for faculty input?

Nancy Whitt: We need better internal communication system among faculty.

Committee Reports and more transcript

FACULTY HANDBOOK COMMITTEE

Nancy Whitt called for a report from the faculty handbook committee.

Mike Floyd: All of you received a draft of the current revisions to the handbook. It says what it says. I would encourage people to read it. There are several significant items of unfinished business. One section that needs addressing is the section on academic freedom. Dr. Cort's advice: with the transition coming, revisions ought to wait for input from the new president. Very significant issue to address. Good progress has been made. This will always be a work in progress.

Nancy Whitt: Is the process now to vote on what has been done?

Mike Floyd: I think it's worth considering.

Mark Baggett: Our charge was to look at academic freedom; we've had very rigorous discussion

Brad Creed: Dr. Cort indicated that the changes suggested to the academic freedom were not substantial. Why should I bring it to the trustees? Keep in mind that the trustees will have to approve any changes.

Robin Snyder: I don't feel like I could vote on it today. I have lots of questions. The full faculty needs to look over it. Y'all have worked hard and I appreciate it.

David Bains: I'd be ready to vote.

Brad Creed: We spent a lot of time on this. Many changes are editorial. Some are more substantive. One substantive area relates to part-time faculty members. The mission statement change, including working on academic freedom is another.

Mark Baggett: I'd look at A.5.1. Part-time faculty changes generated by Dean Chapman from the school of arts & sciences.

Jennifer Beall: The Pharmacy School may have one or two adjuncts. Do we specifically need to include pharmacy?

Mike Floyd: Changes are being driven by arts & sciences. The Cumberland Law School uses adjuncts.

Brad Creed: We have long term faculty who will be "grandfathered" in. Any current part time / adjunct faculty members would keep their current title (assistant professor, associate professor, etc...) and not be given the new title of lecturer or senior lecturer.

Don Sandley – Regarding the discussion of academic freedom. The implied threat from the trustees is a serious direction we don't want to go. All we are asking for is a statement that parallels those given by universities we model ourselves after. We may have a showdown over this issue.

Brad Creed: I don't believe there was an implied threat, and we do not want one coming from the faculty either. I don't think the trustees would have a problem. The changes are minor.

Paul Blanchard: I wholeheartedly agree with Don. We started this discussion / process years ago. It's important for the faculty to have solid footing on this issue (academic freedom). In terms of academic safety, this should be item #1. This should be the top issue for the fall.

Nancy Whitt: It's up to the senate to make this #1 issue in the fall. The committee is in agreement.

Don Sandley: Would the [committee] be willing to commit to another term?

I make a motion to keep the faculty handbook committee together for next year with the #1 focus being the academic freedom issue.

Paul Blanchard: I would recommend disconnecting this issue from the handbook committee.

Max Baber seconded Don's motion.

[The motion was then approved by oral vote with no further discussion.]

Mike Floyd: Share your concerns about the revisions with us. When looking at this, we could have something much worse. The tectonic shift was the adoption of the 1963 statement of faith, but this has been addressed.

Brad Creed: Two things:

1. We are not eviscerating, but clarifying and improving what we had
2. We do have wording that specifically addresses the 1963 statement and includes safeguards for academic freedom.

Nancy Whitt: Should we vote on this today? I don't think there would be any significant changes. Would you vote this up or down?

Robin Snyder: One change to consider: A.9.5.1 regarding part-time faculty ... why is it not "60 contact hours for art" in addition to being for the natural sciences.

Brad Creed: Maybe we'd strike out the parentheses so that it reads "60 credit hours or 60 contact hours".

Steve Donaldson: The motto is not current. The seal has been changed. Amend this section (A.1.1) to include updated seal text.

Janice Lasseter: Why are "school and department" elided in Section A.7.1.2 (page 61)?

Mike Floyd: The omission of school and department may have been an oversight. We were asked to make consistent the standards for tenure and promotion. I think there was no substantive decision to eliminate "school and department".

Paul Blanchard: I would suggest putting that back in. These things are very important for promotion.

Nancy Whitt: We could move "school and department" from (d) to the conjunctive list in part (c).

Steve Donaldson: It appears in other places as well.

Brad Creed: We would need to make this consistent everywhere.

[**Nancy Whitt** then moved to vote to approve the handbook changes recommended by the committee. I did not catch the name of the person who seconded (if there was someone). The vote was approved unanimously.]

Paul Blanchard: I motion that the faculty senate make a statement thanking the committee and thanking Sheila Thomas by name for her hard work.

Don Sandley: Seconded

[This motion was approved by oral vote].

ATHLETIC COMMITTEE

Ralph Gold reminded us that at the last meeting he asked us to review the new mission statement proposed by the athletic committee and then come back today with questions regarding the statement and then vote to approve the new mission statement.

Nancy Whitt: are there any changes or questions?

[The mission statement was then approved by oral vote.]

BUSINESS AND FACULTY WELFARE

Les Ennis mentioned the benefits changes and indicated that these changes were developed as a quick response to a carrier dropping Samford.

Jennings Marshall: The committee has been informed about the intention to have a meeting over the summer to discuss potential retirement changes. I am concerned about having the meeting over the summer and when the business and faculty welfare committee may not be around.

Nancy Whitt: Are you proposing a resolution to make sure that there is a faculty rep at the summer meeting?

Jennings Marshall: I make a motion that the business and faculty welfare committee elect a representative and that the faculty senate have a representative at a planned summer meeting to address retirement issue.

Don Sandley: Seconded.

[The motion was then approved by oral vote.]

LEARNING RESOURCES

Larron Harper: We've had our last meeting. One new issue is that students are complaining of very poor network response in the residence halls. We might need to enforce students to use netware and have virus protection.

WRITING COMMITTEE

Charlotte Brammer: We'd like to eliminate the writing proficiency exam for transfer students who want credit for UCCA 102. Charlotte then summarized the proposal distributed (and available on the writing committee faculty senate web page).

Nancy Whitt: Discussion?

Jennings Marshall: I would speak against this proposal because in business we have a W class that seniors take where writing is only 20% of the grade. [I am against them having to get a C- in that course in order to graduate.]

Charlotte Brammer: If the course has a grading component for writing that is only 20% of the final grade, then the course isn't writing intensive.

Jennings: Why does writing have an elevated status? Why don't we have a computation requirement?

Paul Blanchard: Jennings' point is much deeper ... Where is the writing program in the context of the curriculum?

Steve Donaldson: I agree with Jennings. I have students whose writing is fine, but who get a D because of a lack of technical proficiency. I can't teach basic writing proficiency in the upper level.

Charlotte Brammer: We need to have a process that assesses student writing skills. The exam is not a valid assessment.

Don Sandley: I agree with Charlotte's point. Perhaps we could have a compromise?

Mark Baggett: Add a professor's writing recommendation to the grade for a W course.

Jennings: Why not slot transfer students into a course based on their abilities?

David Bains: It seems that the comments are related to the C- requirement.

Don Sandley: Would your [Charlotte's] committee consider revisiting the issue with a compromise alternative to the C- requirement?

Charlotte: If there is a friendly recommendation from the senate, yes.

Jonathan Davis: This discussion is related to our overall assessment of writing.

David Bains: The problem really is just the C-.

Nancy: Email your suggestions to the writing committee for the compromise.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:30pm.