

COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES
FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
February 24, 2009 - 2:30pm
Hill Hall Room 300

ATTENDEES: Collins, Dorgan, Ganesh, Jesudason, Martins, McKinnon, Voorhees

APOLOGIES: Davis, Drewes, Hitzman, Petr, Sacks, Steele

GUESTS: Kevin Duffy – President, ASCSM (and several other students)
Wendy Harrison – Associate Provost
Lara Medley - Registrar

McKinnon, Senate President, called the meeting to order and welcomed the guests.

COMMENTS FROM GUESTS:

- A. Duffy and several other students discussed the proposed implementation of a plus/minus grading system at the undergraduate level (See Old Business, Section A)
- B. Harrison reported that a new student housing project would break ground early this summer. The new project will be capable of housing up to 250 students. It was noted that even with the new project additional student housing would be needed in the future. Harrison reported that currently Academic Affairs spends \$20,000 annually on bulletins. It has been decided to reduce the number of paper bulletins produced and replace them with digital copies. Paper copies will still be available if requested. Department heads have been informed that hiring targets have been reduced. Targets may change again depending on the state major budget announcement on March 20th. There have been issues with filling the Readmissions Committee each semester as well as issues involved with the timing of student hearings. The possibility of making committee members semi-permanent and changing the dates of the hearings will be discussed at the next topic meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the October 21, 2008, October 28, 2008, November 25, 2008, January 27, 2009, and February 10, 2009 meetings were approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

- A. Plus/minus Grading System – The Undergraduate Council has worked for some time to create a plus/minus grading system to be implemented for undergraduates. The Senate was prepared to approve this proposal at the November meeting, but many undergraduate students attended the meeting and expressed their displeasure at not feeling as though they were properly informed or consulted regarding this major policy change. Therefore, the proposal was tabled and an ad-hoc committee was formed consisting of students, the registrar, and faculty members to resolve the issue. A system will likely be put into place soon, but compromises ensuring that the policy is grandfathered in and the possibility of including an A+ grade are still being discussed. (The original arguments can be found in the minutes of the November 25, 2008, the January 27, 2009, and the February 10, 2009 meetings)

Duffy expressed that students' main concerns were that they arrived on campus with certain expectations and that many students care deeply about their GPA and that a sudden and important change in policy is unfair. Students are also concerned that the

change will result in an overall decrease in GPA, especially for those students striving for a 4.0 GPA. It was also reported that the change could affect grade point averages by as much as 0.08. The students proposed that any change should be postponed until 2012 and would prefer a system with no A- grade or with an A+ with overall GPA being capped at 4.0. The Senate recognizes the students' concerns, but feel that implementing the same plus and minus system that the graduate level uses would be most ideal. Martins moved to end discussion regarding this topic and to call for a final vote. The motion passed 6 to 1. A motion to implement the new plus minus system which includes the grades A, A-, ...D, D-, F at the undergraduate level starting in 2012 passed 6 to 1. The decision will be included in future bulletins.

It was noted that faculty are not required to use the plus minus system, but that it will be up to individual faculty members to decide their own grading policy with the option of using plus minus.

- B. Energy Minor – It was reported that the Undergraduate Council will be voting on the Energy Minor at their next meeting. They have requested that any concerns be brought to their attention. If it passes the Senate will be able to vote on it at the March meeting.
- C. Faculty Forum – A Forum will take place tomorrow, February 25 with Robert Repetto of the UN Foundation speaking.
- D. Health Care Coverage – Transitional retirees will now have full coverage. Currently benefits are only received while teaching, whereas now they will be provided full-time coverage.
- E. IP Provisions in the Handbook – Currently CSM owns the patents to products invented at the school, but companies can negotiate for intellectual property rights. This topic will be discussed in more depth at the next topic meeting.
- F. Research Council – There has been increased interest in increasing oversight regarding the campus budget. There have also been discussions involving considering faculty charge-out as cost share for the campus. Some faculty members feel that it should be counted as faculty cost share, not campus cost share. The subject of faculty overtime pay was also noted.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Capital Planning and Construction – Due to many new construction projects being considered or implemented on campus Chris Cocallas, Director of Capital Planning and Construction, will be asked to attend the March 24 meeting to give an overview of the various projects. The projects include a parking garage, Marques Hall, new dormitories, the Hall of Justice, and the Earth Energy Institute.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- A. The next Senate meeting will tentatively take place on March 17, 2009 in Hill Hall room 300.

The meeting adjourned at 3:48 pm.