

COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
February 26, 2008 - 2:00 PM
Hill Hall Room 300

ATTENDEES:

Andersen, Davis, Eberhart, Ganesh, Jesudason, Mishra, Vincent, and Wu

APOLOGIES:

Daglelen, Figueroa, Mishra, and Petr

GUESTS: Dan Baker – Representative, GSA
Lara Medley – Registrar, CSM
Wendy Harrison – Associate Provost

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

COMMENTS FROM GUESTS:

A. Dan Baker – Baker reported that as Justin Chichester is now the President of the GSA and that Elizabeth Haynes is no longer on campus, other undergraduate and graduate students may be needed to serve on the new Faculty Evaluation form committee chaired by Davis. Davis will look for other students to serve on the committee.

Baker also reported that graduate students approve the separating of graduate and undergraduate commencements. It was noted, however, that the department heads and Graduate Council both rejected it and so the separation of the commencements is unlikely. There still is a desire to shorten the length of the commencements, however, so some change in the proceedings is likely to occur.

B. Lara Medley – Medley was invited to the February Faculty Senate meeting to discuss the possible detrimental consequences of the new policy change of using only the latest grade in GPA calculations. (See Item C in the Old Business Section below)

C. Wendy Harrison – Harrison reported to the Senate that she intends to make it to as many Senate meetings as possible to keep them updated on administration policies and activities. Harrison stated that the Proctor search is going well and that she has been meeting with a variety of candidates. The first offer is already out and there are three more offers pending.

Admissions data for the incoming freshman and transfers for fall 2008 showed that as of February 15th there were 732 acceptances out of a target of 900. As they will continue to accept students until May 1st it is expected that the target will be met with a possible waitlist being enacted for the first time ever at CSM.

Harrison has also been working on a proposal with John Moore to set up a Dean of Undergraduate Studies as well as an Office of Undergraduate Studies. This would be to add more scrutiny to undergraduate affairs.

The proposal for the postponement of dispersal of metal diplomas has made it through the President's Office and it will go into effect starting at this May's commencement. Faculty members will be informed shortly that they will no longer be required to report lowest possible grades. Students will get an embossed blue folder with a personalized achievement certificate inside but will not receive the metal diploma until after final grades have been calculated.

Starting this fall a New Faculty Orientation will be given to all new faculty hires on the Friday before the semester begins. New hires have already been informed. All new faculty members will be required to attend the morning session, which will be focused on issues specific to CSM. New hires with little or no teaching experience will be asked to attend an afternoon session, which will focus more on teaching in general.

Recently, the issue of faculty members not properly or completely understanding the laws regarding disabled students has come up. We need to ensure that all faculty members comply with Federal Laws on this issue. The faculty will be informed of the issue soon and educated on how to comply with the law.

Harrison also added a discussion of the placement of the Admission's Office to the next meeting's agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: The Minutes from the January 22, 2008 Faculty Senate Meeting were approved with two minor corrections.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Statutory Amendment Recommendation – Mishra informed the Senate that the Statutory Amendment was sent to a legislative language center and that one change was made. The line **“THE SCHOOL'S FACULTY SENATE WILL FACILITATE THE ELECTION DURING THE SPRING SEMESTER IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF THE TERM.”** was omitted, as the procedural language for the election is unnecessary in the amendment. The Faculty Senate will still facilitate the election so the omission will not change the intent of the amendment. It was also noted that with the new duty of electing a faculty member to the Board of Trustees, it might be necessary to add this task to the Senate's by-laws. It was decided to add it and the new text will be voted on by the faculty at May's Commencement.

B. Faculty Evaluation - Davis informed the Senate that he is currently searching for an undergraduate and a graduate representative for the committee. He also stated that he will report on the Committee's status in March as they are meeting for the first time in the third week of March.

C. GPA Calculations Re-evaluation – Medley was invited to the February Faculty Senate meeting to discuss the possible detrimental consequences of the new policy change of using only the latest grade in GPA calculations. The policy was changed to prevent students repeating classes to get multiple 'A' grades and thus inflating their GPA. It was decided to only use the latest grade for any class when calculating GPA; however, this may lead to students erasing multiple low grades by retaking a course and scoring a higher grade. There was concern that this might lead to a lack of effort by students as they can just retake any course and previous grades do not affect GPA.

To address the concern of an increase in students dropping courses Medley compared the percentage of students receiving a 'W' or 'F' for both the fall 2006 and fall 2007 semesters. She also compared both incoming freshmen and senior students and found that there was no change in the percentage of students failing or withdrawing from courses at the freshman or senior level between the two terms.

Medley then distributed a handout outlining 6 examples of students affected by the change in policy and what the outcome was in each example. Overall it was noted that students that are on probation or suspension are able to recover (increase GPA to acceptable levels) much more quickly as compared to the old system. The main

points were that it is possible to replace an 'F' with an 'F' with no change in GPA and thus they might not get put onto probation at all. The Readmissions Office will still be informed of the repeated failing grade so they will still be able to take action if needed. Another student replaced 9 credit hours of 'F' with 3 credit hours of 'D', significantly improving the GPA. Other students repeated courses in which they previously had non-failing (passable) grades but replaced them with higher grades. It was generally agreed that these occurrences are not necessarily detrimental as the students are apparently learning the material on the second time through. Another student had been on probation and would have been terminated, but is now scheduled to graduate in May. These situations may lead to grade inflation eventually, but class GPA averages this year are roughly the same as last year. Because class standards stay the same, students that retake courses must learn the material to achieve a better grade and therefore the policy should lead to increased comprehension and retention. The Senate feels that most of these unintentional consequences are not necessarily detrimental and the current policy will stand with Medley monitoring its effects in the future.

D. Alumni Membership on the Board of Trustees – Wu will prepare a white paper on the number of alumni to serve on the Board and will also discuss it with the Administration and Alumni Association.

E. Faculty Forum & Senate Distinguished Lecture – Mishra reported that tomorrow's, February 27th, Faculty Forum will have Molly Williams speaking about Strategies for Institutional Advancement. The Forum on March 19th will have Tom Boyd and John Poate speaking on Graduate Studies and Research. The Faculty Senate Distinguished Lecture will take place on March 26th and Dennis Ready will be speaking. It was also noted that Arthur Sacks has expressed interest in speaking at a Forum and he will be kept in mind as a potential speaker.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Senate Get-together: March 18th – Mishra stated that he would reserve a room at either the Old Capitol Grill or at Table Mountain Inn for Senators and their spouses to have a social 6:30PM. The Senators will also be invited to the President's dinner on April 10th.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Senate Committees

1. Committee on Committees – Andersen reported that four senators' terms would be up this year. Nomination forms will be sent out to find replacements for Senators Mishra, Vincent, Dagdelen, and Andersen.
2. Sports and Athletics Committee – Mishra submitted the Faculty Oversight Committee on Sports and Athletics 17th Semi-Annual Report containing information obtained during student-athlete exit interviews. The report addressed the possible lack of knowledge of faculty on athletic policies and practices as well as a lack of participation. Quality of life issues for the Volleyball and Men's Soccer teams, academic oversight issues regarding make up of missed academic work due to authorized athlete absences, and the lack of abatement in the scheduling of classes during 4-6 PM were the main topics of the report. Wu has a scheduling conflict with the Committee's meeting time and Davis agreed to attend the Sports and Athletics Committee meetings in his stead.
3. Academic Standards & Faculty Affairs Committee – Vincent reported that the Committee met in January and discussed the performance of freshmen chemistry students lacking a background in chemistry. They will start by verifying a trend between students performing poorly in the class and students lacking a background in chemistry. The committee will meet again on Thursday, February 28.

B. Senate Councils

1. Graduate Council – It was reported that the Council wrote to the President to protest the separation of the graduate and undergraduate commencements.
2. Research Council – Eberhart reported that the Council met and discussed the research award, but it is has not been finalized. The Council did approve the Colorado Center for Biorefining and Biofuels (C2B2) as a research center. The Center is a joint project between CSM, CU at Boulder, CSU, NREL, and industry partners.

3. Undergraduate Council – Jesudason reported that several departments are using independent study registration forms and that there is now a desire to standardize them across all departments. It was decided that department heads will approve submitted forms with additional approval required as appropriate.

Jesudason also reported that the issue of using the “plus and minus” system for grading has come up for undergraduates. It has been noted that although faculty approve of the idea, students are against it. He will update the Senate of any further developments.

C. University Committees

1. Budget Committee – Mooney reported that the template is out detailing next year’s projects.
2. Handbook Committee – Davis reported that the handbook amendments have been finalized and approved. From now on all faculty need professional growth plans, not just those on track for tenure.
3. Ad-hoc Compensation – Mishra reported that they are comparing salaries at CSM with those at roughly twenty other schools. Although it is true that many salaries at peer institutes and other universities are higher than at CSM, CSM has better benefits than most. Therefore it was decided that overall conditions are similar at CSM and other universities. They are still waiting on Human Resources to set policy on how to reward raises. Davis expressed concern that although the salaries of the majority of faculty at CSM may be comparable to those at peer universities, there is a definite perceived disparity in the salaries of faculty in the LAIS and EBGN departments. It was decided to investigate this issue more closely.
4. Ad-hoc Strategic Planning – Mishra reported that a recent report stated that by taking classroom space alone, CSM can support 5500+ students with proper organization. There are the issues of some of the classrooms will require renovation for use and that some faculty members are stubborn about their class times and rooms. It was also noted that there is only one classroom on campus with a capacity greater than 150 at that CSM is about average compared to the classroom space of other Colorado universities. It was also noted that CSM is very short on laboratory and office space and that additional funding is needed to address all of these issues.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A. The next Senate meeting will take place on March 25, 2008 in Hill Hall room 300.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.

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