

University of Virginia General Faculty Council Minutes

Minutes: Tuesday, February 11, 2003, Room 389, Newcomb Hall

Members Present: Elaine Attridge, Jann Balmer, Jennifer Bauerle, Donal Day, Rosie Dunn, Robbie Greenlee, Carol Hunter, Bill Keene, Lotta Lofgren, Barbara Millar, Chris Milner, George Hashisaki, Lynda White, and Ellie Wilson.

Members Absent: Mary Abouzeid, James Freeman, Phil Gates, Greg Strickland

Also Present: Chuck Callaghan, Susan Foard, Penny Kaiserlain, and Ellen Strom

Meeting was chaired by Lynda White.

Chair's Report

Council Meeting with Sandridge

- Lynda emailed Leonard Sandridge about attending one of our meetings. He can meet with us in April. She requested we email her with questions by the middle of March.

Budget Report

- Currently the budget reflects \$1,938. This does not yet include payment to Student Techies for their web work.

Resource Fair

- Lynda asked Council members if we should continue to attend the Resource Fair. The proposed cost would be \$100.00. Elaine A. asked if we could get the number of faculty who attend. Lynda will inquire about attendance by group. [They do not keep track of attendance by employment status.] It was suggested the money would be better spent to upgrade our GFC brochure to send to new General Faculty employees each fall. After further discussion, Council members concluded it would not be beneficial to have a table at the Fair due to the lack of GF members attending.

E-mails to Constituents

- Chris has sent out email addresses for constituents to respective GFC reps. The following GFC reps have sent emails to constituents: Robbie (Administration), Ellie (Education), and Lotta (Arts & Sciences), Barbara (Prof Schools), Jennifer (Student Affairs). Jennifer and Barbara noted that they have received no responses nor a copy of the email they sent; Chris will check to make sure the lists are working correctly. The other Council members were urged to get in contact with their constituents soon.

Executive Committee Meeting

- Lynda announced she had called an Executive Committee Meeting on Wednesday, February 5, 2003 to discuss creating a Council manual for officers and incoming members. Lotta had suggested including a list of responsibilities of Council members; Lynda asked for input on the list. She also stated that Lotta had read Roberts Rules of Order and discovered that minutes do not need to be approved, only corrected. This will shorten the time it takes us to get them posted on the Web.

Early Retirement Incentive Waiver

- Constituents from Lynda's group asked that the Council discuss the early retirement agreement sent from the University. Some constituents did not feel satisfied with the nature of the agreement and waiver requirement. It is apparent that the structure is set-up to protect the University. It is also apparent that the timeline is too quick for the Council to effect change.

Representative Reports

Research: Donal

- The Research Committee met to review the Harrison Award applications. There are approximately 120 applications for the \$120,000; the first round of reviews is due next Monday, February 17, 2003. Final selections will be made after Spring break. Only 40 students will be selected.

CCUG: Barbara

- Have not met. Barbara will request that the previous minutes be corrected.

Benefits: Carol

- Have not met.

Part-time survey instrument – Lotta

Lotta reported that Nancy Rivers has asked for an update on the Council's effort to obtain health insurance for part-time employees. Lotta plans to send the survey to about 230 GF members. This number includes part-time classified personnel who work 50% or more; Lotta will revise it to include requesting their pay band as well as status data for General Faculty. Lotta will send the revised draft to Council for comments.

- *Support for Employee Councils – allergy meds*

Lynda asked how we can best support or not support the endeavor by the Employee Councils to reverse the decision not to cover non-sedating allergy medications. It was decided to draft a letter on behalf of the GFC to outline our concerns.

Academic Affairs

- Phil sent out minutes from meeting. It was agreed to add these to the GFC minutes (see below).

Committee Progress Reports

- *Elections: Ellie*

Ellie thanked Chris for organizing the email groups and arranging for the election Website. Lynda suggested we send out a reminder every week to ask for nominations and that we add the reapportionment chart to the December minutes to help clarify. Lynda also suggested that GFC members recruit nominees. Robbie added that she could send info in the nursing newsletter. Ellie will meet with Chris discuss how to manage the elections on the Web. Council decided to add the reapportionment chart to December's minutes so that General Faculty will know which constituency they are in.

- *Data Mgt: Jim*

Jim was unable to attend the meeting. Lynda stated that the committee could not come up with a sufficient reason to develop a survey. Lynda has contacted George Stovall in order to get other data. i.e. salary, status, gender, etc., to see whether there are other issues we should explore further.

- *Communication: Jann*

Jann is trying to coordinate a date with Gene Block and Leonard Sandridge for the upcoming forum in April 2003. Jann will reserve a room for the forum.

- *By-laws: Phil*

Met last week. Lynda will reserve time on our March agenda to discuss proposed changes. Please send any suggestions for changes to Phil.

- *Policy: Bill*

Bill has not heard from Gene Block about the revised policies.

Report about lawyer: Donal

Donal asked the Council if there were sufficient funds for work requested by the GFC. Lynda and Bill suggested that Donal ask for pro bono work from this particular lawyer, and failing that, find out what his fees are. Donal will try to contact him and follow-up.

New Business

- Chuck C. commented about how helpful Anne Dawson, Health Plan Ombudsman was on a particular health issue. Carol will send the ombudsman contact information to the Council.

Meeting Adjourned at 1:20 p.m.**Recorded by Rosie Dunn, Secretary.****Next GFC meeting will be on March 11, 2003 in Newcomb Hall 389.**

Academic Affairs Report

Date: Mon, 27 Jan 2003 19:53:03 -0500 (EST)
From: Robert O'Connell <rwo@gemini.astro.virginia.edu>
Subject: Academic Affairs Committee Report

This is a report on the Academic Affairs Committee meeting which was held this afternoon:

1) NEW BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING BS DEGREE: the committee endorsed this proposal and is forwarding it to the full Senate for consideration at the upcoming meeting. PDF files giving full details are at my website: <http://www.astro.virginia.edu/~rwo/senate/> (and Frances also has full copies). Tom Skalak or another Biomed Engineering faculty member will be present at the meeting to answer questions. The committee commended the department on the thoroughness of the documentation of its proposal.

2) PROPOSAL TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF READING DAYS: A proposal to increase the number of reading days from 2 to 5 was submitted to us by Micah Schwartz, President of Student Council. Unfortunately, Micah was not available to discuss the proposal, so we will try to schedule a full discussion at our next meeting. The specific idea was to intersperse additional reading days during finals week so that there are never more than 3 days of exams in a row.

3) ON-LINE COURSE EVALUATIONS

The project to provide on-line evaluations for all courses in most schools is moving ahead rapidly. Some details were provided by Chris Husser (ex of Student Council), who is representing the Council in planning the system.

The original impetus was from Student Council, who wanted a computer-based system to replace the series of Council-administered, manually-collated course evaluations and resulted in intermittent publication of a course evaluation booklet. The initial idea was evidently to offer a brief evaluation web form containing perhaps 5-7 questions.

Most departments have operated their own teaching evaluation systems for many years. Most of these are now paper-based but presumably many utilize Scantron-type computer tabulation of objective responses. Several have used on-line, web-based software offered by private contractors. However, when a private contractor who had been running on-line evaluations for several Arts and Sciences departments went out of business, those departments asked that the University provide a substitute on-line system.

The result was a plan to combine the student and department systems into a single on-line entity. Of course, the departmental evaluations systems are presently used to decide on promotion and tenure, academic honors, and other important matters related to faculty careers. This immediately raised the issues, among others, of security/privacy, long-term stability, clear and unambiguous formulation of questionnaires, and ways in which to ensure full responses from all students.

According to Chris, the system will be implemented for this semester with a "rollout" date of 31 March. At that time there will be a call for questions to be submitted for the

evaluations according to a "cascade" schedule in the following order: Student Council, Provost, Deans, Departments, Instructors. Each level in this hierarchy will apparently have 1 week to submit questions. There will evidently be no attempt at consolidation of questions. We do not have a clear picture of the implementation of the questionnaires: e.g. will non-objective (brief essay) answers be allowed and how will those be collated? Departments have not yet been informed of the status of the system or that they will be expected to participate in it this semester.

We were surprised to learn that the system is intended to be used this semester. Given the system's complexity and importance, our impression is that there has been very little consultation or coordination between the people setting up the system and the faculty. In fact, we are not sure who is in charge of the system, as Chris could only tell us that ITC's Advanced Technologies Group (headed by Tim Sigmon) is handling the technical implementation of the system.

The Senate has not had much involvement with the system. You will recall that it was discussed in November 2001 with the Senate Executive Council and then moved to the Research and scholarship committee for further consideration. In February, 2002, Susan Perry, chair of RSC, wrote a memo to Abby Fifer, then Student Council President, laying out a series of reservations and questions about the proposed system. Student Council did not respond to the memo, and, indeed, Chris Husser was unaware of it.

Student Council is eager for the system to move ahead soon, but the impression of our committee is that departments will not be supportive without more careful planning and consultation. The proposed system looks like it will result in a lengthy, patchwork, and redundant questionnaire which will not encourage thoughtful, constructive, and interpretable responses from students.

Therefore, we urge the Senate (1) to ask the administration to appoint an academic leader for the project with experience in evaluation/assessment who can devote sufficient time to see that the project is properly carried out; and (2) to appoint an advisory committee for the project leader with broad representation across the spectrum of schools and departments to help formulate it.

Sincerely

--- Bob
Chair, Academic Affairs Committee

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