

Catawba College Faculty Senate
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 06, 2008

Senators Present: Barnes, Boulter, Chamberlain, Dougherty, Eastis, Osterhus, Roberts, Stringfield, Sullivan, Zink

The Senate convened at 11:00 a.m. in the Rendleman Conference Room. Senate Chair Chris Zink called the meeting to order and presided.

Zink reminded the new Secretary that the minutes from the September meeting need to be sent to the College Webmaster.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the October 16 meeting. The document needs a slight revision (the date of the meeting was incorrect), but the Senate voted to approve with the revision.

The first item of business was the issue of endowed professorships. Zink reported that Dr Bolick and President Turner plan to attend the Senate's regularly scheduled November 20 meeting to discuss this topic. Senators then discussed some of the issues and questions that need to be addressed. First, is it the case that since these are endowments, they should not be affected by budget shortfalls? Second, should the disbursements for each professorship be equal in the interest of fairness, even if the original donations were very different in size? Stringfield said that the principle of equal disbursement seems fair, but that the College should also be true to the donors' original wishes. Roberts responded that it can be hard to discern clearly the intent of some donors from the available information and records.

A third question is about the current provision that part of the award must go into the program in which the recipient is housed; is it reasonable to require that the award supplement the departmental budget for the direct benefit of students only, or may some types of faculty development be considered "program" spending?

The second agenda item was a report on the faculty "vision" meetings, which were recently completed. Sullivan reported that the sessions seemed to run very well and that participants' response was very positive. The subcommittee is still compiling the data from those sessions and will proceed with analysis once all notes have been collected (including those from the Oct 23 breakfast and dinner). Senators who had attended more than one session reported on some of the themes that seemed to be widespread. These include: an emphasis on students' need to develop critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills; a desire to incorporate more educational experiences outside the classroom (internships, service learning, co-curricular) and to tie course content more directly to applied experiences; support for more interdisciplinary courses; and desire for more professional development related to teaching and relating to students.

All senators had seen the notes from the first lunch meeting. Roberts asked for clarification regarding the plans for analysis and report writing. Zink reported on his conversation with Fish (who could not attend this meeting) to the effect that the report should be written by more than one person, but not by the whole Senate. Zink suggested the following procedure: The Executive Committee will create an initial draft and circulate it to the full Senate for suggested revisions and changes. After the report is revised, we would then have an open meeting of the faculty to share the report's findings. Then, the report could go on to the president.

Sullivan reported that the staff council and the student government were also asked to collect information for the visioning process. The SGA had a student session scheduled recently, but only two students attended. (No one had information on the status of the staff process.)

Zink noted that the fourth provost candidate to be interviewed reported that the students he met with wanted to improve the College's marketing so that the public would be aware of the great things that happen at Catawba.

That observation led quite smoothly to **the third item** before the Senate, an update on the Provost Search process. Stringfield (the only Senator on the Search Committee) reported that the committee would meet on Friday, November 7. He noted that there was still time to submit comments through the listserv before that meeting, and encouraged Senators to provide input and to encourage others to do so. He expects that the committee will decide at that meeting whether to make a specific recommendation to the President and if so, what that recommendation would be. Stringfield affirmed that the president will be the one to make the final choice.

Zink said that he would like to go on the record with congratulations for the entire Committee, declaring that they did a great job; Eastis and Roberts concurred. Zink also said that he wished we had seen more women candidates (other Senators agreed), but the applicant pool is what it is; the Committee did well with it.

The fourth item before the Senate was a discussion of the committee rotation schedule proposal drafted by Roberts. Sullivan outlined two specific concerns. First, while the principle of going by seniority sounds fair, it does not address the possibility that all the faculty members in one department may go "off" in one year, leaving that department with no representation on governance committees. Secondly, the original motivation behind making the year off *mandatory* was to protect junior faculty members from the possibility that they would go before the FTPC and have the absence of one year of service be a black mark against them. Sullivan asks that we find a way to continue to protect junior faculty members, and made the following proposal:

To amend the policy to state that tenured faculty members may choose to refuse their "year off," but that non-tenured tenure track faculty **must** take it.

Osterhus asked if there might not be the same problem after tenure, for those seeking promotion from associate to full professor. Roberts opined that service probably isn't quite as important at that point as for tenure. He also offered his opinion that the case for tenure and/or promotion is one that is built out of a pattern of contributions, and that one thing at a time would not be held against a candidate. He allowed as to how his perceptions might be related to his faculty "generation," and the more junior Senators at the table indicated that they believe that is indeed the case. Sullivan reiterated her opinion that junior faculty need to be protected.

Chamberlain suggested an alternative to Sullivan's proposal: to modify the faculty handbook's directions about application for tenure and promotion to say that a faculty member's decision to accept or decline their year off should be specifically addressed in his/her personal statement. Chamberlain noted that some people do not want to rotate off a committee because they want the experience itself.

In response to Sullivan's first concern, Zink said that we might consider a revision to the proposal to say that the Faculty Senate has the option of modifying the rotation schedule if necessary to ensure representation of all departments and programs.

Zink also suggested that the FTPC's instructions could be amended to say explicitly that a faculty member's choice to accept their rotational year off, or not to accept it, should be in itself neither a positive nor a negative effect on the committee's decision. The Senate might also create a "year off" document that a candidate could put in his/her tenure file in place of the committee chair's evaluation.

Since time was short, Zink asked all Senators to send additional comments to him via e-mail, and tabled the issue until the November meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carla M. Eastis