

Catawba College Faculty Senate
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 29, 2009

Senators present: Barnes, Chamberlain, Daugherty, Eastis, Fish, Hood, Roberts, Stringfield, Sullivan, Zink

Guests: President Craig Turner, Provost Rick Stephens

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

Item 1: Plans for Academic Restructuring

Dr. Turner described the plan to organize academic departments and programs into five schools. These are the School of Evening and Graduate Studies plus the 4 named schools that we have already. At the moment, the proposed schools in the day program are roughly equal with regard to number of declared majors.

[NOTE: Some minor name changes are involved; Dr. Turner has gotten approval for this from representatives of the families involved. Also, communication arts will move to the school of business, honoring the request of faculty in both departments.]

Dr. Turner explained that deans of all schools except business will come from current faculty, and that no new staff positions would be added. The compensation for these positions will be small at first.

Both Dr. Stephens and Dr. Turner have worked with this kind of structure before, and believe that there will be great benefits with regard to assessment, scheduling, and communication.

Dr. Sullivan noted that the School of Arts & Sciences will include many different departments, and asked how the new structure would improve communication in that setting. Dr. Turner replied that the provost will have regular meetings with the group of deans, and that the deans will have regular meetings with department heads. Only the School of Arts & Sciences will have more than 2 or 3 distinct departments.

Dr. Roberts expressed his opinion that this structure will not be workable, citing past experience. In the cognate area structure, he said, communication was actually undermined. He also expressed concern that “bottom up” communication—as from the provost-department heads meetings, for example—would be undercut.

Dr. Turner responded that he does not think communication would be impaired. Furthermore, accountability for assessment, consistency with regard to assessment, and

coordination of course scheduling are big issues and the best way to address these is through a dean's office in each school.

Dr. Stephens responded that he does not expect that this structure would disrupt the culture of the college, and that formal and informal bottom-up communication would continue. Prof. Zink noted that our small size will support that.

Prof. Zink asked Dr. Turner to discuss what implications the school structure might have for development and fundraising. Dr. Turner confirmed that deans will be directly involved in fundraising, and that might include naming other relevant faculty members to be involved in specific opportunities.

Dr. Turner said that dean appointments will be at the pleasure of the institution (probably with a 5-year maximum), made by the provost with the approval of the president. An individual will not do double duty as dean and department chair. Job descriptions will vary by school, but in all cases Dr. Turner and Dr. Stephens are looking for deans who have the respect of the faculty, an appreciation for details, creativity and vision, and administrative capability. At the outset, each appointed dean will need to be flexible and will work with the provost to write the job description. Dr. Turner and Dr. Stephens also stated that appointment of deans is not a popularity contest.

Prof. Zink asked how this structure would affect course loads and coverage. Dr. Turner said that only three current faculty positions' loads would be affected (Dr. Bolick will be dean of EGS and continue with her present schedule, and the dean of business will be hired from outside). He believes the college can handle it with adjuncts, or potentially with new faculty lines. Dr. Stephens added that other efficiencies may be found, through smarter scheduling, for example.

Dr. Hood noted that we currently have some difficulties with general education assessment, and to the extent that the new schools align with gen ed cognate areas the dean structure may help pull that together. Dr. Stringfield wondered if in the future, we might be looking at submitting one SOAR for each school, moving more towards program assessment rather than unit-by-unit assessment. Dr. Turner said that those issues would be discussed by the provost and deans in the future.

Dr. Stephens said that he expects to have weekly meetings with the group of deans. Those meetings might involve admissions, athletics, and/or registrar, too. He expects this to run much more smoothly than the current unit heads structure.

As Drs. Stephens and Turner prepared to leave, Dr. Roberts amended his previous mood, saying "I'm now pessimistically optimistic."

Item 2: other business

Time was running short, but Prof. Zink reminded the Senate that we need to take up the issues of the Trustee Award and the Swink Award very soon.

Respectfully submitted,

Carla M. Eastis