Minutes of the CSBS Senate Meeting on 12/5/11

Present: Otto MacLin (Chair, Psychology), Tim Strauss (Geography), Carol Weisenberger (History), Taifa Yu (Political Science), Cyndi Dunn (SAC), Elaine Eshbaugh (SAHS), Jim McCullagh (Social Work), Philip Mauceri (Dean)

I. Approval of the minutes from 11/7/11

The minutes from 11/7/11 were approved with no changes.

II. Awards

Dr. Gayle Rhineberger-Dunn was nominated for the Ross A. Nielson Professional Service Award. Motion passed with one abstention.

Dr. Anne Woodrick and Dr. Helen Harton were nominated for the Class of 1943 Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching. Vote was unanimous to send both names forward.

Chair MacLin commended department heads Richard Featherstone (SAC) and Caroline Hildebrandt (Psychology) for being proactive in nominating faculty for these awards.

No individuals were nominated for the Regents Award or the new CSBS Tenure-Track Faculty Award for Scholarship and Creative Activity.

Nominations for the James F. Lubker Research Award must be made from the department head to the dean by Friday, January 13, 2012.

III. Provost’s Committee on 4-4 Teaching Load Policy

The provost recently convened a faculty committee to consider revisions to the new 4-4 teaching policy. The committee consists of: Chair of the Faculty Senate, Chairs of the College Faculty Senates, Chair of the Council of Department Heads, a representative from United Faculty (who was not present), and Associate Provost Arthur.

The committee was convened December 1, and were asked to have their recommendations ready on January 20. The committee’s charge is to:

1) Examine current criteria developed to identify an “active scholar”
2) Make recommendations regarding changes to current criteria
3) Develop a procedure (possible form) for requesting an exception
4) Develop criteria/process for returning to 3/3 load

The new policy is based on the premise that the standard faculty work assignment is four courses per semester with a one-course release each semester for scholarship. Therefore, faculty who are not productive scholars should be expected to teach the full 4-4 load. However, this policy makes no acknowledgement of time spent on service. If faculty are expected to spend 75% of
time teaching and 25% of time on scholarship, then how do we account for the substantive amount of service that faculty perform?

The clear message of the current policy is that no faculty member should waste time on service that they could be spending on scholarship. Unless the administration’s goal is to reduce the time that faculty devote to service activities, the policy must be modified to recognize individuals who are performing greater than normal service duties.

It was also noted that a number of faculty devote considerable time to community engagement activities in which they use their professional expertise in ways that make a real, substantive difference in the lives of people in Iowa or elsewhere. Because such activities do not typically result in scholarly publication, they receive no recognition in the current policy. Such activities need to be recognized either as service or as a type of “applied” scholarship.

The time frame of the current criteria may be inappropriate in some cases, particularly with respect to books. Given the amount of research involved in producing a scholarly manuscript together with the time involved in review and publication, it is unreasonable to expect individuals to produce a book every five years. Someone who published a book six or seven years previous, has a second book contract in hand, and has already written several chapters is clearly an “active scholar” and should be recognized as such.

The criterion of “two grants or contracts, each worth at least $50,000” is problematic. Grants in the social sciences and humanities are often awarded for less than $50,000. It is not clear that the value of scholarship depends on the monetary amount of the grant. An individual doing research supported by a $15,000 grant is just as much an “active scholar” as someone doing research on a $500,000 grant. This criterion should be adjusted unless the intent is to discourage faculty from applying for smaller grants.

It should not be assumed that all individuals desire to return to a 3-3 teaching load. Given UNI’s traditional focus on undergraduate education, if we have faculty members who prefer a 4-4 teaching load with no expectation of research, they should be respected and supported in that choice. They should still be eligible for merit pay, promotion, etc., based on adjusted criteria.

A number of universities have systems of “alternative portfolios” which allow individuals to make a voluntary choice as to their balance of teaching, scholarship, and service. UNI should consider moving towards such a system. This would accomplish many of the goals of the current policy with much less detriment to morale. Because the Master Agreement bases promotion to full professor on “accomplishment in teaching, scholarship and/or creative achievement, and professional service,” the university would need to work with United Faculty to make appropriate adjustments to the Master Agreement.

Representatives from United Faculty and the administration are currently meeting to determine a mutually-acceptable procedure for post-tenure review. That policy and the policy on 4-4 teaching need to be coordinated. For example, if the workload assignment of a faculty member is four classes per semester, then the post-tenure review process must not penalize that individual for lack of scholarship which is not part of their work assignment.
There are concerns the about the fact that the administration chose to delay the creation of this committee until late November but is insisting on their report by January 20. There is a strong sense that the committee is being stampeded into suggesting only minor changes to existing policy rather than being allowed sufficient time to develop a meaningful alternative.

The committee is currently focusing on assessing and revising the definition of “active scholar.” To that end, each CSBS Senator has been asked to consult with his or her departmental colleagues about the types of activities which constitute evidence of “active scholarship” in their discipline. Senators will send a summary of their discussion to Chair MacLin no later than 9:00 A.M. on Monday, December 12. Chair MacLin will compile this information to share with other members of the committee.

IV. Other business

There was brief discussion of recent scandals at other universities involving sexual abuse of minors. The Iowa Board of Regents and the UNI Center for Violence Prevention have spent the past several years developing new policies on sexual misconduct. The Center is actively engaged in training and outreach activities including a focus on the issue of “bystander engagement.” Further information is available at http://www.uni.edu/cvp/

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cyndi Dunn

Appendix A: Charge 44 Committee
Appendix B: 44 teaching load info request letter
Appendix A: Charge 44 Committee

December 1, 2011

The Academic Affairs Council discussed and developed criteria in June 2011 to determine whether or not a person was fulfilling their work responsibilities with regard to scholarly and/or creative activity in order to determine the appropriate work assignment for the current academic year. Implementation occurred this fall. The provost assured deans and department heads criteria would be further reviewed.

Faculty are deemed “active scholars” and thus fulfilling their work responsibilities with regard to scholarly and/or creative activity if, during the past five years, they have:

- Published two peer reviewed articles or book chapters
- Published one peer reviewed book
- Performed or developed two peer reviewed creative activities
- Won two grants or contracts, each worth at least $50,000
- Achieved some combination of the above

Some faculty voiced concerns including: disagreement with criteria, unequal application of exceptions to criteria, and questions about returning to 3/3 load. In order to better address these issues in a collaborative manner, a small committee has been identified composed of:

- Chair, Faculty Senate
- Chairs or designee, College Faculty Senates
- Chair, Council of Department Heads
- Selected member, United Faculty
- Associate Provost, Faculty Affairs

**CHARGE TO COMMITTEE**

5) Examine current criteria developed to identify an “active scholar”
6) Make recommendations regarding changes to current criteria
7) Develop a procedure (possible form) for requesting an exception
8) Develop criteria/process for returning to 3/3 load

The committee should submit report/recommendations to the Provost by January 20, 2012. They will be vetted at Academic Affairs Council. Several iterations of the criteria may be necessary.

Thank you for your work on this most serious issue.
Appendix B: Letter from the Committee

Dear Colleague: December 5, 2011

As you know, last spring, the Provost instituted a process by which faculty who were not deemed as “active scholars” were required to teach a fourth course. On December 1, 2011, she convened a committee, made up primarily of the chairs of the various faculty Senates, to provide input and recommendations for improving the criteria and the process by which such assignments will be made. The document we were given, providing both the current criteria and our charge, is attached. We are seeking faculty input on the criteria

At this time, our primary concern is to assess and possibly widen the definition of an “active scholar”. In some disciplines the assessment of scholarship does not coincide with the criteria. We need to know what sorts of activities constitute scholarship in your discipline.

While the opportunity to provide a faculty voice in the process is welcome, unfortunately, we have also been given a very tight time line as our recommendations need to be made in time for scheduling fall classes. We were assured that this is only the second round of the process; there will be further opportunities for refining the process after this round. However, the tight time line for this round of the process forces us to move very quickly. Though it is a busy time for us all, it is very important that the criteria for active scholarship are correct and inclusive. Thus we are asking for the various college Senators (or a designated substitute) to play a crucial role. The process will start as follows:

1. On Monday, December 5th, each College Senator (and the Chair of the University Senate) will receive this letter and the charge document for distribution to their department or other appropriate faculty.

2. Faculty should respond to the faculty senator(s) who represent their department. The faculty Senator(s) to whom the responses are sent is asked to produce a synopsis of the main points of the various emails (not simply copies of all the emails) and submit it to their college senate chair (or other designated faculty member) by Monday, December 12th, at 9 AM.

3. The College Senate Chairs are then charged with collating and summarizing the information from the various departments in their college and distributing it to the rest of the committee by Wednesday, December 14th, at noon, for a meeting to be held the following day.

Again, it is a busy time for all of us. The various members of this committee will use this information to produce a draft over the winter break; we hope to circulate it for additional input during the first week of classes.