Minutes of the CSBS Senate Meeting on 1/30/12

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 12/5/11

The minutes from 12/5/11 were approved with minor clarifications.

II. Current status of University Faculty Senate Budget Committee

Senator Yu, who serves on the Faculty Budget Committee, stated that the committee met last year and drafted a new charge which was sent to the University Senate for approval. It is not clear why the University Faculty Senate has not acted on the matter.

The CSBS Faculty Senate had previously recommended to the University Faculty Senate that the Faculty Budget Committee be charged to “review all pro-forma, operating and continuing budgets including quarterly income statements and balance sheets of all segments of the university,” and report annually to the University Faculty Senate on “the transparency, sustainability and adequacy of the UNI budgets and the current budget process.”

Scott Peters, the CSBS representative to the University Faculty Senate, is currently serving on a committee which is charged with reorganizing the structure of committees that report to the University Faculty Senate. There have been proposals in that committee to eliminate the Faculty Budget Committee. Senator Peters is aware that the CSBS Faculty Senate opposes the elimination of the Faculty Budget Committee and would prefer to see the committee revitalized with an appropriate charge. According to Senator Peters, President Allen has expressed a willingness to meet periodically with a Faculty Budget Committee.

CSBS Faculty Senate Chair MacLin will meet with University Faculty Senate Chair Jeff Funderburk to discuss whether the University Faculty Senate can get this process moving forward again so that we will have an active Faculty Budget Committee making regular reports to the University Faculty Senate on the status of the budget.

III. Report on Active Scholar Committee on 4-4 Teaching Policy

Provost Gibson has made it clear that she will not consider rescinding the new 4-4 teaching policy. Rather than oppose the policy, the Active Scholar Committee has focused on trying to make it more functional and minimize negative consequences for the university.

Departments and colleges already have criteria in place for determining what qualifies as “scholarship” in their respective disciplines as well as mechanisms for reporting faculty members’ scholarly activity (e.g., the annual Faculty Activity Reports). Given disciplinary differences, the committee does not believe it is feasible to develop a single, university-wide set of criteria for
appropriate types and amounts of scholarship. They have therefore proposed that each department be required to create its own list of criteria that will satisfy “active scholar” status, based on the existing A-list and B-list and the circumstances of their own disciplines.

The committee will meet with Provost Gibson on January 31 to present their recommendations.

There are a number of outstanding issues that remain to be addressed by the committee. One is the question of processes for placing people on 4-4 loads, granting exceptions, and helping people move from 4-4 teaching back to 3-3. What does a person currently teaching 4-4 have to do to show progress and be returned to 3-3?

The policy must be sufficiently flexible to accommodate long-term projects such as books and non-traditional forms of scholarship such as “applied research” or “community engagement.” In such cases there should be a procedure whereby the department head and faculty member would jointly negotiate a written memorandum of understanding spelling out what the faculty member will be expected to accomplish in order to maintain active scholar status.

The committee’s charge does not address concerns that the current policy has no recognition of the substantive time that many faculty spend on service activities. This is an area in which both faculty perceptions and research indicate that there are substantive inequities. The current policy actively discourages faculty from spending time on service activities that could otherwise be devoted to research. It may also encourage diminished faculty investment in teaching. It is important that expectations in all three areas of teaching, scholarship, and service be clarified.

IV. Comments from the dean

Dean Mauceri confirmed President Allen’s announcement that academic programs across the university are being evaluated for possible elimination or reorganization. This is a data-driven process and the criteria are being applied uniformly across all programs. The College of Social and Behavioral Sciences is extremely efficient and should be well-positioned for this evaluation process. It is the dean’s understanding that information will be provided to the faculty once final decisions have been made and approved by the Board of Regents. The Board of Regents’ next meeting is in March, just before spring break.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cyndi Dunn