

Minutes
Faculty Senate
October 4th, 2006

1) The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm; Seth Brown chaired.

The senators introduced themselves.

Kelly Jordan gave the opening prayer.

2) The minutes from the September 6th, 2005 meeting were approved. Robert Norton questioned why some academic departments (*viz.*, Political Science, Theology, Psychology, Computer Science and Engineering, and Electrical Engineering) are without Faculty Senate representation. The chair responded that these departments simply have not elected a representative and that the reasons for this have not been voiced by the individual departments.

3) Chair's Report:

The chair stressed the importance of salaries and benefits in recruiting and retaining faculty. Denise Murphy and Bob McQuade were invited to highlight recent changes in benefits and to address concerns about the perceived erosion of some aspects of the faculty benefits package.

The floor was given to Denise Murphy who gave an overview of changes to the benefits package, effective 2007. Regarding medical and prescription plans, total and individual costs continue to rise. A program entitled "Healthy Campus Strategy" is being initiated in an attempt to control long-term health care costs by promoting healthy lifestyle choices. Meritain will administer all three medical plans (PPO, Select HMO, and CHA HMO). New ID cards will be issued to all subscribers. These will also function as ID cards for the prescription plan. For all plans, the \$20 co-payment for yearly preventative office visits has been eliminated. For the HMOs, the emergency room co-payment has been increased by \$20 to \$120. This increase was initiated to steer patients into an urgent care facility (\$40 co-payment) rather than an emergency room in an effort to keep insurer costs down. Tim Ovaert asked if urgent care versus emergency room visits have been examined by case, not just volume insofar as ER visits may very well be warranted in many situations. Denise responded that both case and volume were taken into consideration. Gail Bederman asked if services exist to aid in directing patients to either the ER or urgent care. Denise indicated that written guidelines are in place and added that calling the urgent care facility and describing the situation can aid in the decision-making process.

Another change in the 2007 HMO plans is that the inpatient hospitalization deductible will be \$350. The subscriber will co-pay 15% of costs up to \$800.

For the prescription drug plans, the co-payment has been reduced. A 4th tier has been initiated for expensive specialty drugs.

Regarding medical plan premiums, the university is eliminating the \$400 payment to those ND employees who opt out of medical plan coverage and who are covered through their ND-employed spouse. Premiums have increased across all three tiers (individual, individual +1, family).

Preventative incentives are being continually implemented by the University in an effort to keep health care costs down, since 50-60% of costs are driven by lifestyle. Noreen Deane-Moran pointed

out that many of the offered programs are scheduled during “traditional” lunch hours, but that many faculty teach through these time slots. Gail Bederman asked if there was evidence of lower-income staff opting out of health-care coverage due to the expense and inquired as to the percentage of their salary that is deducted for health care. Denise indicated that approximately 8% of the salary of lower-tier income earners would need to be directed to premiums (family coverage). Seth Brown pointed out that while the 8% figure is sizable, lower-income staff benefit in a disproportionate manner to higher-income earners, particularly in instances requiring surgery, hospitalization, etc. A question was raised as to whether some thought had been given to a United Way program to subsidize health-care costs for lower-income staff, perhaps through a payroll deduction. Bob McQuade said the current program was designed to assist families in catastrophic situations. Judy Fox commented that subsidizing premiums through United Way would be a poor public relations move, raising questions in the community, and beyond, as to why the United Way would help pay for what the University will not.

In dental coverage, the HRI plan has been dropped. Delta is now the provider on both plans offered (Premier and Preferred). The decision to drop the HRI plan was prompted by the rate break offered by Delta as single provider. Current HRI subscribers must actively elect for another plan for the coming year otherwise their coverage will default to no coverage. Many local dentists who are in the HRI network are negotiating to become part of Delta’s network.

For the EyeMed Vision plan, the co-payment for the annual eye exam has been dropped. More providers have been added. Frame and contact lens allowances have been increased.

A summary of the 2007 benefits options, including important points regarding life insurance and flexible spending accounts, were summarized in a sheet circulated at the end of Denise’s presentation and overview.

5) Recess to committees.

6) Committee Reports

Academic Affairs: Colin Jessop reported. The committee has been focusing on a proposed “code of standards” for the review of Special Professional Faculty (SPF’s). Chris Maziar has agreed to meet with Colin to discuss issues related to SPFs. These include whether members of the SPF should be designated by category (lecturer, demonstrator, etc.), and whether each department should generate its own independent code of SPF standards and practices or if such a code should be university-wide.

The committee also discussed ways to make Faculty Senate a more effective body. Committee members agreed, as did the Faculty Senate, that increased publicity is necessary. Colin mentioned the possibility of initiating a Faculty Senate web newsletter and having the minutes published in the ND Report on a regular basis.

The Academic Affairs committee discussed President Jenkin’s recent address to the faculty and identified several aspects of the address that needed clarification. These include the President’s mention of “the distribution of resources” towards initiatives in which the University has the greatest potential for impact. Will faculty input be sought in identifying areas for allocation of funds? The committee also desires a clarification of what the President referred to as “active” Catholicism on the part of faculty. Lastly, given the President’s emphasis on developing a great

research university, the committee would like the President to expand on his vision for engineering and sciences in this regard.

The committee also discussed how TCEs are currently being used to factor into tenure decisions. Philippe Colon mentioned that there has been limited circulation of a new document that specifies the use of TCEs in promotion and tenure. How to make best use of TCEs is an issue of ongoing concern. The value of a multi-item scale was emphasized by John Gaski. Several senators voiced concern over the seemingly undue emphasis placed on student response to “question 17” (i.e., “please evaluate only the quality of the instructor’s teaching”).

Administrative Affairs: Charlie Barber reported. Associate Provost Jean Ann Linney attended the committee meeting and addressed two issues at the committee’s behest; revision of the academic articles and the role of the Provost’s office in tracking the hiring and retention of minorities and women at the faculty level. Concerning the first issue, the 10 year review of the University’s academic articles is due in 2007. As a first step in revising the academic articles, Provost Linney will issue a call to submit specific suggestions. The individuals and bodies to be solicited will be the deans, the Faculty Senate, the Academic Council, the Provost’s Advisory Committee, and General Counsel. The tentative timetable for completion of this phase is November, 2006. A small working group, the composition of which will be later decided upon, will then be assembled to draft the new articles. These will then be submitted to the Board of Trustees for consideration at their May, 2007 meeting. One concern voiced in committee was the question of who actually polices adherence to the academic articles since it is perceived that some practices are out of sync with the letter of the articles.

Regarding the hiring and retention of minorities and women, Jean Ann Linney indicated that Notre Dame’s record was commendable and based this conclusion on data stemming from 10 public universities and Northwestern University pertaining to 1996-97 faculty hires. At these institutions, women and minorities were retained at slightly higher than 50%. For 1996-97 hires at Notre Dame, 60% of women hired at the Assistant Professor level were retained, while 67% of minorities hired at the Assistant Professor level were retained. She also pointed out that at the level of department chair, mechanisms are in place to ensure consideration of women and minority candidates from the applicant pool. Chairs are also directed to state why a minority/woman candidate was not selected for a position. Jean Ann Linney has also begun to conduct exit interviews on faculty.

Benefits: Nasir Ghiaseddin reported. The consensus in committee is that the route to guaranteeing reasonable salaries and benefits for faculty must go through the Provost and Vice-President, not Human Resources. Hence, the Benefits committee is planning to discuss their concerns with Tom Burish and John Affleck-Graves. A specific issue includes the erosion of ND faculty salaries in comparison with those at peer institutions. Seth Brown mentioned that Chris Maziar has acknowledged that a salary problem does exist.

The Benefits committee will also look at a recent report on campus air quality. A comment was made that air and water quality on campus ultimately tie into the Human Resources initiatives for enacting preventative health care measures.

Student Affairs: Kelly Jordan reported. Student concerns over technological deficiencies (cable wi-fi, wireless service) in dorms were duly noted. The committee discussed “honor training” for

freshman, namely the on-line honor training and test, and agreed that this should be addressed from the faculty standpoint. This would involve reviewing the tutorial and taking the test.

Campus security is a major issue with students. Currently, 30 full-time NDSP officers are employed, with extra traffic and security personnel hired for football weekends. Concerns about dormitory safety have been raised by the students. It was acknowledged that some of the onus for compromised dorm security must rest with the students themselves, e.g., unlocking doors for non-residents. Students living off-campus also desire more security, but must be mindful that the local police are poised to enforce all laws, including those related to noise and under-age drinking, and not just those that just those that pertain to student security.

The committee has also agreed to disseminate awareness of the conference on eating disorders to be held on campus this February.

A new graduate student health insurance plan is needed. The graduate student representative in attendance said that minimal graduate input has been solicited. This is a possible agenda item for the Academic Council.

Kevin Misiewicz raised a question about security measures in place for faculty and staff. Noreen Deane-Moran asked about procedures for assisting handicapped staff and faculty in case of emergency. It is not clear whether a firm plan exists regarding campus emergency preparedness.

7) Old Business. None

8) New Business. Philippe Colon voiced a concern over the frequent power outages that occur on campus. These are especially problematic for experimental scientists and can result in damage to instrumentation and ruined experiments. Deficiencies in the quality and level of services provided by OIT was also mentioned.

Vaughn McKim asked if any actionable outcomes might result from the current meeting. Colin Jessop volunteered to begin looking into a Faculty Senate web newsletter. It was asked why the FS minutes fail to appear in the ND Report. Seth Brown replied that the minutes are being submitted to the ND Report, but are not being published. Possibly linking to the minutes through Inside ND will be examined.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 pm