

Chair's Report -- December 7, 2010

Because this is our last regularly-scheduled meeting of the year, I will open my report with a warm Christmas greeting to all of you. We all work much harder than we should, and I hope that each of you finds some time during the next few weeks to take some time to relax and to enjoy the company of your family and friends. I hope too that each of you experiences the blessings of this holy season.

As you may recall from my chair's reports of earlier this semester, my primary objective this semester has been coordinating the work of the Senate with the work of the Academic Council. A necessary condition of the Senate's meaningful participation in the formulation of University policy is that the Senate have adequate time to consider proposals that are on their way from one body or another to the Academic Council for debate and vote. Currently two major proposals are not quite ready for distribution to several different University bodies—college councils, the Deans Group, and the like. The Senate is included among those groups.

Perhaps before the Christmas break, perhaps shortly after we return from it, I will be able to tell you what the subject matter of those proposals is and to distribute to you the proposals themselves. The essential thing, at that point, will be the length of the interval between my distributing those proposals to you and the Academic Council's scheduled vote on them. Because of my respect for the individuals who will decide on the length of that interval, I am confident that it will not be, as it has been twice in the recent past, a mere couple of weeks, but that it will be sufficiently long for us to address those proposals intelligently. How much time that will be will be determined by the number, the complexity, the novelty, and the seriousness of the issues that those proposals raise for us. What we expect in that regard is good faith on the part of the individuals who control the relevant time-lines.

In response to concerns that have been voiced by several of you, I have invited both Father Thomas Doyle, the Vice President for Student Affairs, and Ronald Kraemer, the Chief Information Officer of the University, to come to the

Senate. Both of them have accepted my invitation, and both will visit us early in the spring semester. Prior to their visits, I will meet with each of them, in part to let them know the sort of questions that they should expect when they appear here. In that regard, I would appreciate your sending me the topics on which you would like to hear each of them speak while they are here. My goal, as you can easily imagine, is that their visits be amicable and productive.

I am keenly aware that our committee chairs are anxious to convene their committee meetings; so I will stop here except to note that we have Heather Rhoda, our secretary, to thank for the seasonal fare and appurtenances that we see on our snack table. I hope that the few of you who have not partaken of that fare already will do so before you leave here tonight.