

Report on the Faculty Senate Executive Committee meeting with President Minks 11-21-2011

Meeting in the President's Conference Room at 2:00

Members Present: Blythe Duell, William Fridley, Dennis Brewster, Hal Poovey, Chris Moretti, Diane Dixon, Larry Minks

### **1. Tuition Waivers for Southeastern Faculty and Staff Dependents:**

Based on his consultations with VP Walkup, President Minks felt the best way to address the Faculty Senate's request to extend tuition waivers to the dependents of SE employees was to modify section 5.8.2 of the APPM to include *dependents*. President Minks provided us with a "Review of Policy" document that included section 5.8 of the APPM. There was general agreement with President Minks' position that simply modifying 5.8.2 would be preferable to writing a separate policy on tuition waivers for dependents. Other points on the issue include:

- President Minks indicated a survey of the policies of our sister institutions varied widely
- For budgeting purposes, a fixed dollar amount/limit (e.g. \$500 a semester) for waivers is preferred to a waiver tied to credit hours
- With this approach, it was acknowledged that while both in-state and out-of-state residents would qualify for the same amount of funds, the waivers for in-state students would "go further" toward covering tuition costs
- Some type of "level adjustment" could be incorporated in the policy in order to keep pace with rising tuition costs
- The proposed tuition waivers would be for both Fall and Spring semesters, with the possibility that "unused" tuition waiver funds could be applied to the Summer semester. This is a practice used by some of our sister institutions.
- Tax implications are also a consideration. Typically, such benefits are considered taxable benefits for the employee. A definitive word on the tax implications is pending
- President Minks indicated that he hopes to have VP Walkup crunch the numbers this spring, with an eye toward implementing the practice in the fall of 2012.
- The FS Executive Committee will continue our discussion with President Minks at our next meeting in January (date to be determined).

## 2. Shared Governance Policy Proposal

President Minks reviewed his comments on the *shared governance* policy recommendation that was drafted by the Personnel Policies Committee and approved by the Faculty Senate (11-9-2011). He indicated that he was very pleased with the document and felt that its implementation will mark a major step forward for shared governance at Southeastern. Toward implementation, several issues need to be taken care of, including:

- The policy proposal needs to be vetted by the RUSO legal counsel. This includes making sure the policy complies with RUSO policy and policy language. President Minks stated that the turn-around time for such vetting is usually prompt and timely.
- President Minks had questions about the breadth and scope of the policy proposal. Specifically, whether we intended this proposal to replace all the current policy on shared governance (APPM 3.7), or only to replace those sections that referred to the *faculty forum on shared governance*? We acknowledged a lack of clarity about the scope of our proposal and its relation to other policies, and promised to clear this up, present our recommendations to the FS for review and approval, and submit our findings to him before the end of this semester.
- Two segments of the policy proposal include reference to how the “minutes” of the shared governance meetings would be recorded and published. Namely, the Executive Committee planned to collectively construct a brief/report about the meetings’ contents immediately following the meetings. This would enable each of us to fully participate in the meetings without having to concentrate on taking the minutes. President Minks requested that he be able to review these minutes (though not the right to censor) before they were published. There was no disagreement with this request.
- President Minks asked, “once this policy is vetted, then what?” In other words, he was asking, what is the policy for making policy? We then explained that developing a policy on making policy was a major component of the Personnel Policies Committee’s work on the APPM with VP Bryon Clarke, and that such a policy had been developed. This led to a discussion of the “provisional” nature of the work on updating the APPM. It was suggested that we might run a “pilot test” of the shared governance proposal in the spring, acting “as if” it is policy. The importance of trying such an approach was emphasized, given the impending visit by HLC and the fact that little of the existing shared governance policy has been followed the last two to four years.

### **3. Discussion of the FS Budget Committee's Report "Executive Summary Analysis of Operating Comparison" (submitted to the FS 10/25/11 and forwarded to the President)**

The Budget Committee's report included a comparison of data from the 1984-85 and 2011-2012 academic years in regard to the ratio of administrators to faculty and students, as well as salary figures for administrators and faculty. President Minks (tongue in cheek), asked if there was any significance to the Committee's choice of 1984-85 as the point of comparison (given that time roughly coincided with the highly publicized legal problems of a former president). We assured him that the time period was chosen simply because it was the earliest data we had access to. On a more serious note, President Minks opined that a more apt comparative study might have focused on the last 3 years' data. Ensuing discussion touched on such topics as:

- President Minks offered his opinion that there needed to be a serious analysis of the "market value of faculty salaries"—*market value* referring to comparisons of faculty salary at similar institutions, and not in terms of market value for specific disciplines or expertise.
- A suggestion was made to study the possibility of re-structuring the salary card with an eye toward increasing pay for senior faculty (which is currently less in line with market value than is the pay for assistant professors, which is relatively competitive with assistant professor salaries at similar institutions).
- President Minks suggested the need for a closer examination of current faculty salaries (specifically those at the "high end") and their relation to "productivity" (i.e. student credit hours, teaching loads, and graduates produced). In conjunction with this, President Minks proposed a campus-wide, systematic study of course scheduling in an effort to schedule courses according to relevant and appropriate data, rather than simply relying on traditional schedules ("that's the way we've always done it").

### **4. Follow-up to the Harvard Study and General Discussion**

President Minks indicated that a communication plan for the impending change process and re-organization is in place, and while he was not at liberty to share specifics, announcements will be coming soon.

The committee shared its concern with the President that when he is considering the reorganization that not only is the structure important but the people that are in those positions.

The Committee shared its concern with what we viewed as the administration's unresponsiveness to policy recommendations and resolutions put forth by the FS. This concern relates to recommendations to which we received no response. Also mentioned were the administrative responses to three specific FS policy recommendations: (1) on the unilateral decision by administration (without consulting the FS) to discontinue the use of departmental T & P criteria; (2) a resolution supporting the right of faculty to establish classroom policies as long as those policies are consistent with university policy (this was construed by one administrator as an argument for academic freedom—it wasn't—and we were asked to write a "report", which we did, and to which we received no response); (3) a resolution requesting a moratorium on any **new** post-tenure review policy (this was misinterpreted as being a request to place a moratorium on post-tenure review).

The FS is of the opinion that the administrative "responses" to these three items involved a misreading or misinterpretation of what we were proposing. At the least, these instances mark a failure to communicate that needs to be addressed and remedied. President Minks agreed to look into it.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30.