

## Minutes

Ohlone College Faculty Senate  
February 4, 2009  
3:30 – 5:00 PM  
Room 1407

### Members Present:

Bob Bradshaw, Sharon Briggs, Claire Ellis, Anu Ganguly, Kay Harrison, Alan Kirshner, Victoria Loukianoff, Jim McManus, Bob Mitchell, Susan Myers, Alyce Reynolds, Jeff Roberts, JoRainie Rodgers, Terry Taskey, Barbara Tull, Wayne Yuen

### Members Absent: ??

Others: Jim Wright, Ron Travenick, Brenda Ahntholtz, Joanne Schultz

### **Start meeting: 3.30 pm**

### **1. Announcements**

a. Jim Wright gave us an update on summer school enrollments. Typically summer school enrollments are about 450-500 FTES. Last summer the enrollments shot up to 1100 FTES. Over the past 10 years the numbers have grown. In order to protect enrollment targets of the upcoming Fall and Spring semesters, the summer semester of 2009 will be reduced to about 900 FTES. This will be done by:

- (i) The earlier decision to eliminate K - 9 enrollment will help by allowing us to reduce sections whose main audience was K - 9.
- (ii) Cancel low enrolled classes which are not required for a particular degree completion.
- (iii) Reduce multiple sections of classes.

These reductions will be spread out so that no particular area is substantially affected . Gen Ed courses will be protected as much as possible.

b. Bob Bradshaw announced that May 5th is set for the retirement party in the Best House. There are at least three faculty retiring.

c. Bob Bradshaw announced that all nominations for the Jonah Laroche scholarships must come from the Faculty Senate.

### **2. Approval of minutes from Dec 3, 2008 (Action Item)**

Minutes were approved unanimously.

### **3. Proposal for Department Chairs - Brenda Ahntholz (Information)**

a. Brenda Ahntholz and Joanne Schultz made a proposal to Faculty Senate about having department chairs at Ohlone college.

- b. Brenda went to a recent accreditation meeting where they identified two common weaknesses in California Community Colleges: a) governance and b) weak link at most institutions from programs to planning to budgeting. Budget planning and access should not be the responsibility of one person alone. It would be more appropriate to plan budgets at the department level with the help of department chairs. It is found that institutions that have strong academic leadership also have better accreditation and stronger curriculum. Faculty leaders are much more suited to developing curriculums than individual Deans.
- c. Brenda pointed out that Ohlone has 5 Academic Deans and little department leadership outside of a few Coordinators. At the accreditation conference the general assumption is that all schools had department chairs. There were schools with as little as 40 faculty that reported having department chairs.
- d. Dr. Wright said that he had an open mind about this. He supports faculty leadership.
- e. Brenda pointed out that how a department chair is defined is unique to individual institutions. The way chairs are instituted also depends on the individual colleges with some favoring appointments and while others prefer an election. Some schools have rotation in chairs. Some colleges do not compensate monetarily for such a position while others may pay a stipend or award release time.
- f. Motion: Alan Kirshner made a motion that the Faculty Senate set up a committee to develop a procedure for instituting department chairs at Ohlone College. This motion does make a preconception that this will eventually lead to chairs at Ohlone. Susan Myers seconded the motion. This motion was passed with one senator abstaining.
- g. Some senators felt that this process would add an additional unwanted layer of bureaucracy. Perhaps a committee should be set up to address individual department needs.
- h. Bradshaw stated he believes President Browning is in favor of the concept of department chairs, but also has said that there is no funding to be allocated for such a process.
- i. Jim Wright agreed that perhaps we need to do an assessment of what currently exists (for instance, there are coordinators in some departments who are doing an excellent job) and then come up with a recommendation.
- j. Bob Bradshaw asked Brenda if she would be willing to Chair a sub-committee of the Faculty Senate that would look into research on department chairs. Sharon and Barbara agreed to join. The committee would report its findings to the Senate in about 6 weeks which would be the first Senate meeting after Spring Break.

#### **4. Grade Change Form - Ron Travenick (Information)**

- a. Ron Travenick mentioned that although the Ohlone College grade appeals policy has been in accordance with the Ed Code since 2006, last semester Jim Wright found out that there were still some weaknesses in the system.
- b. A new form has been created where a student could appeal a grade by putting down in writing his/her concerns on why a grade was inaccurate. The Grade Change Request Form may be filled out if a student charges fraud, bad faith or incompetence against a Faculty member in awarding a final overall grade.
- c. An Academic Appeals Committee comprising of faculty considers the case. However the final decision lies in the hands of the Vice President of Academic Affairs.
- d. This procedure makes a student accountable since they have made their complain in writing after reviewing the Ed code. At the same time it gives a fair chance to the student and protects faculty members.
- e. Ron Travenick pointed out that all Faculty members should keep records of grades, final exams etc. at least for a year as the form clearly mentions that the grade change appeal must be done within a year.
- f. Jim Wright mentioned that perhaps it would be a good idea for the Faculty Senate to work with Deb Parziale to hold a Flex workshop on how to write a sound syllabus that explains clear grading schemes.
- g. When this form is adopted fully, appropriate websites and faculty handbooks will have the complete information needed to handle such appeals.

**Adjourn meeting: 4.46 pm**