

ULM Faculty Senate
Minutes of the Meeting
September 20, 2007

Present: Brett Bennett, Monica Bontty, Sally Davidson, Joseph Feldhaus, Stephen Fox, David Hare, Cecil Hutto, Kitty Kervin, Megan Lowe, Mona Oliver, Shirlee Owens, Linda Reid, Donna Rhorer, Dorothy Schween, C. Turner Steckline, John Sutherlin, Bruce Walker, and Holly Wilson

Absent: Lance Nickelson

Excused: Jeff Rush, Pamela Saulsberry

I. The meeting was called to order by President Steckline at 12:30 P.M. Secretary Rhorer called the roll.

II. Approval of Minutes of September 6, 2007 Senator Walker moved to accept. Senator Davidson provided the second.

III. Appointments/Handouts

A. Handouts from Deans? M

IV. Committee Reports (Standard A-G with report expectations on this date from those with the asterisk):

A. Executive Board--no report

B. Academic Standards*

Senator Oliver reported that Senator Rush will serve as chair; there are a number of items for study.

C. Constitution & By-Laws

Senator Sutherlin reported that the committee had considered 3 topics:

1. Term Limits
2. Proxy Votes
3. Position of Vice-President

Faculty members are so busy now that it's difficult for many people to find time in their schedules to serve on FS; this makes the topic of term limits moot. Regarding proxy votes, since an original motion is often amended on the floor of the Senate once debate begins, it would be best for senators to send a letter about the original motion which could be read to the body on the day the item is to be considered. In looking at the role of a vice-president, the group will first have to look at eligibility rules of Senate. Other concerns include how to fill the slot of vice-president and how to define "budget unit head."

D. Elections--no report

E. Faculty Welfare*

Questions were posed about the composition and purpose of this committee. Steckline noted that because all Senators are concerned with faculty welfare, she had divided the committee into 5 or 6 small groups this year so we could operate more efficiently. Senator Hill expressed her opinion that the committee should be a single unit. If the committee goes back to being one large body, Holly Wilson would be the chair by default. President Steckline also recognized the success of a second Faculty Friends? social this semester.

F. Fiscal Affairs*

Members have not met.

G. Committee on Committees*

Senator Nickelson was absent.

V. New Business

Shared Governance Document

Members of Shared Governance Committee: Paxton Oliver, Chair; Bob Cage, Lisa Colvin, Jose Cordova, Skeet Creekmore, Dorothy Schween, John Sutherlin, and C. Turner Steckline

Dr. Paxton Oliver, Chair of the Shared Governance Committee, discussed the work of the committee with the Senate. He explained that the committee has a two year history, and that he was coming before the FS to alert us as to the workings of the committee since the body has been and is currently looking at ways to reconfigure representation of various groups on campus. He noted that John Rettenmayer headed the committee last year and under his leadership the group developed the "Principles and Practices" document.

Dr. Oliver distributed pages 1 through 5 (with tentative terms highlighted) of a 20-page draft document for our consideration. He will share the remainder and conclusion of the document with us at a later meeting.

In his presentation, Dr. Oliver noted that shared governance gives parameters to all parties on the university campus. His example was that if the President says he wants to participate and he does not live up to the parameters set; then, it is indeed good to have rules to which we can refer.

Next, he noted that the function of shared governance is to work with committees, councils, and senates. He added that at ULM the President is the decision maker to whom recommendations are made. Those recommendations should be considered carefully, and feedback should be forthcoming.

Presently, the committee is working on developing the processes and procedures of shared governance for ULM, and it should have these out before Thanksgiving. He is actually hoping for October 1, 2007. Once the document is finished, the committee will form faculty and departmental focus groups to discuss and eventually approve the document. The ULM Senate, he said, is yet another focus group. He wants to give the document to the full faculty so that they have the chance to review it. In fact, he'd like to give the completed document to the faculty by next fall.

Discussion followed his presentation:

Senator Rhorer asked Dr. Oliver who appoints the members to the Shared Governance Committee. The President of the University appoints them, he responded. Questions about who constituted classified, unclassified, and staff followed, and it was noted that staff members are covered by Civil Service and the Administrative Assistants have an association. Dr. Oliver noted that several constituencies around campus are disenfranchised, specifically department heads, associate deans, and deans. No one represents them. He suggested that a senate of two houses would combine faculty and staff. Currently, he noted, the problem is we have a Faculty Senate with some disenfranchised people outside of Faculty Senate, the university's primary representative body. Therefore, he added it is the job of the Shared Governance Committee to come up with several models for consideration so no one is disenfranchised. The committee will

not make a decision, just a recommendation to the President. Senator Owens noted that the department heads meet with Deans every two weeks, and in that meeting have the opportunity to express opinions and to make recommendations. She also added that the Deans meet as a Council of Deans. Dr. Oliver answered that the problem really is that they cannot get feedback in a timely manner. There was a question about whether or not they still attended a Deans' Council. But he added the deans do not have shared governance.

Senator Fox wanted to know if eventually a draft with official status would appear somewhere. Dr. Oliver noted that an approved draft by the Shared Governance Committee will appear.

A question was directed to both Dr. Oliver and Senator Sutherlin regarding the 6th item and the phrase "separation of powers" on the first page of the incomplete document. Dr. Oliver noted that the committee would like to have separation of powers included to make certain we don't have unilateral decisions all the time. Senator Sutherlin noted that as power becomes decentralized, there will be less coming from the top down and decisions would then be horizontal.

Senator Fox presented the following for consideration: "If faculty, staff, or students got together and had an idea for implementation, this document does not highlight the conduits available to ad hoc groups for doing something out of the ordinary."

Senator Davidson asked if students would be affected and represented in the new design. Senator Sutherlin noted that they are in the process, certainly CAB and SGA.

Regarding the committee's plan, Senator Sutherlin reiterated its importance when he noted the President Cofer would not always be President, and when he is not it would be good to have a document in place so that someone could not come in and change everything. It should be a document which can grow and change. And, he added that he wants the document from Shared Governance to go before the full faculty. Senator Fox asked for the location of the document. He added that it had to be somewhere official. Currently the document is in draft form within the committee.

Regarding Senator Sutherlin's comment that we needed a document (something in writing) to protect ourselves if someone new came in as President, Senator Rhorer said she agreed with Senator Sutherlin in theory, but opined that in any given situation written policies can be changed, and if a new President came in he could initiate the changes he thought necessary with or without a document produced by a Shared Governance Committee. She reminded senators of Dr. Oliver's earlier comment that the President is the decision maker, and this would apply to any new President as well.

Dr. Oliver noted that if we had such a document in place, we could use it in the interview process when hiring a new President. Senator Wilson expressed her appreciation of the draft document's expression of the desire for accountability on the part of all parties in the university. She noted that the Shared Governance Committee had not come into existence until after the Faculty Senate had completed its last survey. After the survey,

the administration worked in a direction that would give us voice. Senator Owens spoke for a system of checks and balances. She objected to a watering down of the Faculty Senate in any way. Dr. Oliver completed his presentation. President Steckline thanked him for appearing before us.

VI. Informal Discussion

A . Senator Feldhaus asked that all handouts be dated.

B. Sick Leave Policy Statement

Previously, Steckline asked Senators Walker, Schween, and Oliver to meet with Dave Nicklas to discuss and clarify the Sick Leave Policy Statement. Senator Walker and his committee offered a resolution that we accept the policy as stated. Motion carried.

C. Faculty Lunch in Faculty Dining Room, September 27, 2007, from 11 to 1.

D. Senator Reid noted the traffic issues by the Nursing Building and wondered if there was anything we could do to alleviate the problem.

Senator Feldhaus noted that the city would have to make the street along side the Nursing Building a one way street. We can make th

Secretary, Faculty Senate

Faculty mailing list
Faculty@ulm.edu
<http://www.ulm.edu/mailman/listinfo/faculty>

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