Minutes of the Faculty Executive Committee Meeting of 04 NOV 2009

The meeting was called to order at 1510 in Room 2-5 of the Science and Engineering Building.

- The minutes of the Faculty Executive Committee Meeting of 23 Sept 2009 were approved without amendment.
- Present: Dick Burke, Cathy Olszewski, Peter Vecchio, Joe Hoffman, Bill Massano, John Mathieson, Alison Romain, Chris McMillan, Maryellen Keefe.

President’s Report

Vice Admiral Craine

The Admiral is not present but Dr. Hoffman indicates that time should be allowed for him to speak at the faculty meeting. He will need a few minutes to make an updated report on the budget. (The committee was notified, subsequent to this meeting, that the Admiral would not be present at the faculty meeting.)

Vice-President for Academic Affairs (VPAA)/ Provost Report

Prof. Hoffman

Dr. Hoffman will discuss the upcoming Faculty Assessment Day and Middle States. Dr. Hoffman notes that discretionary payment is done, but is waiting on administrative clearance. The announcement of the awards should be done tomorrow (05 Nov 2009), as the Admiral has given permission to go ahead. Dr. Olszewski asks if the Provost will discuss the Convocation of Industry Advisory Boards - Dr. Hoffman says that he will.

Presiding Officer

Prof. Burke

The Presiding Officer will make a few brief remarks concerning the Chancellor’s strategic planning process and also concerning some of the governance issues that surfaced at the Faculty Senate Meeting. The remainder of the Faculty Senate Meeting will be reported by Prof. Keefe.

Standing Committees:

- CAP - Committee on Appointments and Promotions: Prof. Mathieson

Prof. Mathieson will ask that all members of the faculty who are interested in promotions or tenure should get that information to their Department Advisory Committee (DAC). That information is expected to be brought before CAP in Jan 2010. The CAP, in turn, expects to be able to forward their recommendations to the Admiral by 01 March 2010.

Additionally Prof. Mathieson will mention that discretionary awards have been made, but have not yet been published. The Prof. Mathieson indicated that the Admiral said he wanted to check with the financial officer to make sure that the numbers were right before he published the information. Prof. Mathieson and CAP were satisfied that the list was what they were looking for, as were the respective department chairs.

- CONE - Committee on Nominations and Elections: Christopher McMillan

Prof. McMillan will make a reminder regarding the chancellor’s awards, some of which have already come in. Hopefully at the time of this faculty meeting the new guidelines will be out – they are not as of this moment.

Prof. Massano asks if a special election is needed for the position of Faculty Athletic Representative
(FAR) to the Athletic Academic Board for a term of three years. This representative will also serve as the College FAR to the NCAA. This position was approved and added to the By-Laws at the faculty meeting of 07 October 2009. Prof McMillan will try to solicit interest and conduct a floor election at the faculty meeting if a potential candidate can be found.

- **CC – Curriculum Committee:** Prof. Levy

Professor Levy is not present at the meeting. He has forwarded via email his agenda items for the faculty meeting which include:

- A course substitution in the Marine Technology/Small Vessel Operations curriculum
- Eight (8) new courses
- Revisions to the Electrical Engineering curricula
- Three (3) courses to be deleted
- One (1) appended course description

Dr. Hoffman indicates that the CC would be meeting tomorrow (05 Nov 2009). Dr. Hoffman indicates that there is nothing controversial in these proposals - the item most likely to create comment might be the ENGL 103 proposal. Dr. Burke remarks that since the Engineering and Humanities Departments have agreed to it, there should be no issue.

- **FAC – Faculty Assessment Committee:** Prof. Sturges

Prof. Sturges was not present at the meeting. Via email she indicated that she would have no business for the faculty meeting. Dr. Hoffman says she will be doing a pre Faculty Assessment Day workshop for the Chairs.

- **FPC – Faculty Policy Committee:** Prof. Massano

Prof. Massano indicates that they would be meeting next week but does not imagine there will be any business to come forward. We will check with him at the meeting to see if there is any business he needs to present. There is nothing pending, and at best, it would be a “first reading”.

- **SPC – Student Policy Committee:** Prof. Romain

Prof. Romain would like a short amount of time to remind faculty members who have been selected to do the student opinion surveys to get them in. Dr. Hoffman indicates he has not received his copies of the survey. Dr. Burke asks if Prof. Romain intends mention anything on the progress of course evaluations. Prof. Romain declines, indicating they are still in the process of developing the questions. The time-table on this topic may be pushed back as well. Dr. Burke indicates that at a recent ABET meeting, it is expected that those systems (of evaluation) are in place everywhere they go and that the data are available to the institution to be used as an assessment tool. He continues that both ABET and Middle States are in agreement on this issue. The faculty has in the past, voted down any attempt to do course evaluations which generate any public data. Prof. Romain states that in conversations with Erik Kneubuehl, one idea would be to move forward and develop an on-line evaluation by next fall. If there is pressure to have something better in place by the spring, then they will continue with the work of revising the paper evaluation. Prof Olszewski asks if it is essentially the same work, whether it is on paper or online. Prof. Mathieson remarks that one of the problems with electronic evaluations is
guaranteeing that the people who are responding are, in fact allowed to respond. Prof. Mathieson states that he prefers that the survey be electronic, as he believes the faculty does not like to be involved in this process. He believes that students campus-wide should create the questions, and the faculty only reviews them, so they know what the questions are. This way the survey process really out of the faculty’s hands, and cannot complain about it. Prof. Mathieson would demand that only the people in the course be allowed to respond, that being the only fair way to evaluate a course. Someone else might still be able use another student’s ID and fill out the form – however Prof. Mathieson believes you would not be able to beat that form of deception. Dr. Hoffman remarks, wondering if a survey can be done through ANGEL - that would guarantee that only the student registered in the class could respond.

Prof. Vecchio asks if the question of whether the data can be accessible to everybody has to go before the faculty or can that be an executive decision. Prof Mathieson says that depends on whose survey is it – if it is a faculty survey, we would determine where we want the data to go. If it is between the students and the administration, they would make that determination. This is the main reason Prof Mathieson prefers a student generated survey, leaving the faculty out of the sensitivity of the information and its results.

Dr. Burke remarks that he gets a sense from the ABET meeting and talking to other faculty that most institutions have a two-part evaluation. One part is a numeric categorical ranking of the course and how it is administered, the teaching etc. and those data become either public or are shared with the administration. The other part is usually essay, and that is private to the instructor. Dr. Mathieson states that we are there – our essays do go back to the instructor. Dr. Burke remarks that he likes reading the essays and has become a better teacher as a result of reading them. Dr. Massano remarks that the numeric format does not fit all, especially comparing small class size to lecture-hall classes. Dr. Burke responds that this is the fundamental flaw with survey methodology; the question is in the eye of the respondent, not the question-maker. Prof. Romain states that the survey itself could indicate the class size. Prof. Mathieson and Prof. Massano both remark that students in that major for that particular class respond differently than non-major students. Prof. Mathieson continues on his support for a student generated and administered survey, indicating that the faculty might try to sanitize the questions to such an extent that approved questions might never be agreed on.

Prof. Keefe remarks that on a survey she put out in class the students incorrectly answered questions by not placing them on the scantron answer form. Dr. Hoffman states that there is now in existence, a set of faculty approved questions which can be used. Prof. Massano counters that those approved questions were only approved for the faculty to see. Dr. Hoffman would like to see the questions generated by the SPC, with the knowledge that these questions would be viewed by administration and the Chairs. Dr. Burke responds that the bottom line is we need a survey for required assessment – whether it’s used for promotion and tenure, is another issue.

Prof. Mathieson remarks that the history of this question (using survey data for tenure and promotion) dates back to a sentiment held by the faculty that administration could use these surveys in the wrong way. Dr. Burke says that he has seen cases where the surveys, in fact, supported the instructor where the administration did not. Prof. Romain remarks that a big part of the question generation process will be to see that the questions don’t make for a popularity contest. The questions will be more focused on teaching tools, etc. and would like to move towards the electronic survey next fall.

Dr. Burke states the real goal is to be able to compare a faculty member or a course over time – and
this should be part of a holistic set of evaluations, involving not only the survey, but classroom observations, and possible course evaluations by the instructor. Prof. Mathieson states that he would like the faculty to participate in the assessment of student surveys, in order to improve the course. He would like the questions divided up into categories – answering certain questions on how the course material and subject matter can be improved. Prof Mathieson continues that when answer another set of questions you are talking about the faculty member. Prof. McMillan remarks that in a humanities department survey, one of the questions is something to the effect of “how hard did you work in this course”.

- **Faculty Senator:** Prof. Keefe

Dr. Burke remarks that this was a particularly “rich and meaty” university senate meeting, and that Prof. Keefe might want to make a PowerPoint presentation on its highlights. Prof. Keefe remarks that she wonders how many faculty members go to the SUNY website and read postings on the senate. Prof. Keefe says that the faculty does not seem too interested in the university senate, and would copy some highlights of the meeting for distribution at the faculty meeting. Dr. Hoffman agrees with Dr. Burke, suggesting a PowerPoint presentation, containing highlights, and including the website URL link. This way, if the faculty member is interested in a particular point, they could continue on for more information.

Dr. Burke notes that there were two things which struck him at this university senate meeting, one of which is how “unrelentingly bad” the economic news is. Prof Keefe notes that on some SUNY campuses there are protests regarding budget cuts and here at Maritime there is virtually no protest at all from out students. Dr. Burke relates a story of protests on the Maritime Campus in 1972. Dr. Hoffman notes retrenchments and program cuts on several SUNY campuses. Dr. Burke continues that the second item which caught his attention was the chancellor herself, noting what a powerful presence she is. Dr. Burke notes that the chancellor was candid about the University needing to re-negotiate it’s relationship with the NY State Legislature – specifically making SUNY something that the legislature wants to vote for – not seeing the school as one big expense. In his opinion, Dr. Burke sees the strategic plan of the university as essentially done. The plan would be to re-orient SUNY towards three things: Economic development, job creation, and community development. Dr. Burke sees a shift towards re-focusing the State from financial services, back towards manufacturing, using GE as an example.

Prof. Keefe comments that one of the things that the SUNY undergraduate committee is promoting is a poster presentation from all campuses illustrating student research. The posers will be presented in some area where the state legislators walk past every day, in an effort to let them know that good things are happening on SUNY campuses. Dr. Burke remarks that the faculty senate, generally, views the legislature as individuals who do not support public universities, but prefer private education. Dr. Hoffman agrees, noting also that the Chancellor was very open and dynamic.

Dr. Burke again encourages Prof. Keefe to put together a significant presentation to the faculty. Dr. Massano suggests moving Prof. Keefe up in the schedule closer to the beginning. The Executive Committee agrees, and the usual order of the faculty meeting is changed to place the Faculty Senator immediately following the Presiding Officer.
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Old Business:

No old business pending.

New Business:

No new business anticipated at this next faculty meeting, none for the Executive Committee.

Supplemental Conversations

The regular business of the Executive Committee was completed. The conversation continued with a discussion of the new 90-day Summer Sea Term. The question was raised on the eligibility of a student to partake in 2 consecutive cruises, i.e. a student goes directly from one 45 day cruise as a 3rd class to the next 45 day cruise as 2nd class. Prof. Vecchio notes that the MT department informally has agreed that this is acceptable, provided they meet all the prerequisites. Dr. Mathieson states that some students were concerned with the fact that they will have more sea-days than necessary as a result of this change. It is agreed that for the first class, this will be the situation, for one time only during the transition from the 60 day to the 90 day cycle. The discussion continued, commenting on how the students would be selected for the first or second cruises and what exceptions might be made for some situations. Dr. Burke remarks that it would be counter-productive to solicit extra students from other academies to earn extra income, as has been suggested.

The meeting was adjourned at 1603.

Submitted;

Peter Vecchio,
Faculty Secretary 2009-2010