

**Faculty Senate Minutes
Special Meeting
Friday, Sept. 24, 2004
3 p.m., SC 214**

Senators Present: Berry, Cartwright, Doughty, Doyle, Grau, Hicks, Kidd, Knipp (left 4 p.m.), Purtle, Schwarze, Underwood, Vachris (arrived 4:15), Wheeler, Whiting, Wymer (arrived 3:20).

President Purtle called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

I. Approval of 9-3 minutes. Minutes unanimously approved as corrected.

Old Business

II. Consideration of the role of department chairs at CNU. Senator Doyle moved that the Senate formally consider a draft letter to Provost Summerville regarding the proposed reorganization in the School of Business. Senator Knipp seconded the motion.

Discussion commenced regarding the text of the letter, and Senators amended the final paragraph of the draft to better reflect the Senate's concerns regarding the overall School of Business plan to remove department chair duties. Senators decided the letter would be addressed to Provost Summerville, with copies to both Dean Mottilla and Dean Gordon, as this is an issue of university governance. The final text of the letter will also be included in the Senate minutes.

President Purtle called the question with no objection.

Vote in favor of sending the amended letter to Provost Summerville: 13-1. In favor: Berry, Cartwright, Doughty, Doyle, Grau, Hicks, Kidd, Knipp, Purtle, Schwarze, Underwood, Wheeler, Whiting. Opposed: Wymer.

New Business

III. Selection of Nominations to Budget Advisory Committee

One faculty vacancy on this committee exists, and President Tribble will make the final selection. He may or may not choose from among the names the Senate provides.

Senator Knipp suggested that since the four remaining members on the Budget Advisory Committee each come from one of the university's four divisions (School of Business, SSPS, LA, S&T), that the Senate should nominate one person from each of those four divisions, holding four separate votes, one for each division. Discussion of this proposal and the nominees followed, including whether nominees had been asked about their willingness to serve (not necessarily), the wisdom of having untenured faculty members on the committee, and the timeframe for service (4-5 years on average, though the Handbook does not specify).

President Purtle stated that the Senate's nominees should be able to look at the university as a whole rather than just their own units, and be able to make tough decisions. It takes about a year for members to learn terminology, etc.

Motion to proceed with the vote in this manner (Senator Knipp) and seconded.

Vote 8-4 to proceed. (In favor: Doughty, Doyle, Hicks, Knipp, Schwarze, Underwood, Wheeler, Whiting. Opposed: Berry, Grau, Cartwright, and Kidd)

Voting commenced. The following faculty members will be the Senate's nominees for the vacant Budget Advisory Committee seat.

Business: Prof. Ronnie Cohen

Liberal Arts: Prof. Steven Breese

Science and Technology: Prof. Ron Mollick

SSPS: Prof. Shelia Greenlee

IV. President Purtle announced that there would be no meeting Oct. 1, as the only pressing business was affirmation of the Faculty Development Grant recommendations from the subcommittee. The Senate agreed the Executive Committee could approve the recommendations at its Sept. 30 meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Tracey Schwarze
Faculty Senate Secretary

September 24, 2004

Dr. Richard Summerville, Provost
Christopher Newport University

Dear Provost Summerville:

The Christopher Newport University Faculty Senate writes to express its concerns about the proposed reorganization in the School of Business, specifically with regard to diminishment of the duties of the School of Business chairs.

Dean Mottilla presented the rudiments of this proposal for reorganization to the Faculty Senate on Friday, September 3, and took questions from the Senators. The Senate appreciates that Dean Mottilla has forgone her plan to eliminate departments and chairs altogether from the School of Business. We also appreciate that the School of Business is distinctive as regards (a) the size of the departments (relatively smaller than departments elsewhere in the University) and (b) the fact that these departments share a common core curriculum. However, the Senate also has serious hesitations regarding the diminished role of both School of Business chairs and their departments under the new model.

According to the organizational chart we were provided, departments in the School of Business will, in essence, hold the same rank as its two committees (the existing Curriculum Committee and the proposed Professional Development Committee). Although Dean Mottilla did not discuss with us the draft list of specific duties that will be eliminated from the purview of the department chairs, her presentation, our subsequent conversation, and the examples she provided lead us to express the following reservations regarding the content of the proposed changes.

- 1) The current School of Business proposal will create a divergent department chair model at the University, with CLAS chairs being fully enfranchised according to the duties listed in the University Handbook, with responsibilities for faculty advocacy, faculty development, and curriculum oversight. School of Business chairs and their departments will, by contrast, lose entirely the important responsibility of curriculum management, and the chairs will have much of their roles in faculty development and faculty advocacy annulled.
- 2) The dean indicated that giving all curriculum responsibility to the School's curriculum committee will make curriculum management more efficient and cause it to be guided by a single vision. However, the Senate believes that multiple visions that cohere in consensus are not only beneficial, but also critical, to a well-designed and well-managed curriculum. Fully enfranchised departments play a critical role in curriculum deliberations: witness their individual contributions to the University's massive curriculum reform effort of the last two years. Further, efficiency, while important, should not necessarily be the University's highest value: faculty ownership of and participation in the curriculum at a variety of levels are also paramount. Again, consider the recent University-wide curriculum reform effort: efficiency did not dictate two years of Task Force deliberations and nearly forty hours of careful debate by university faculty

at all levels—faculty ownership and oversight necessitated this engagement, which ultimately produced a stronger curriculum. Indeed, the Task Force model represents significant strides for Christopher Newport in terms of one of the preeminent values of a true liberal arts university: shared governance. The Senate feels the School of Business reorganization plan, as presented to us, is inconsistent with the strivings of the rest of the University and is incompatible with such initiatives.

3) While the Senate recognizes that managing a common core might require a broader-based faculty group than conventional department structures might provide, we feel strongly that management of concentrations/majors should be conducted by those within the respective disciplines. It seems reasonable that the School of Business Curriculum Committee would approve curriculum recommendations by departments as well as manage a core curriculum.

4) In her remarks, Dean Mottilla described the evolution in chair responsibilities over the six years of her tenure as dean. In each instance, she described circumstances where departments were not functioning as expected or required with the department chair not performing necessary duties. Instead of requiring the chair to perform up to professional standards, or replacing the chair, Dean Mottilla indicated that she had removed duties from the chair's purview, bringing them into the dean's office. The Senate believes that this approach is counterproductive to assuring a university structure that functions robustly at all administrative levels. The Senate believes that chairs or other faculty who are not performing as specified in their job descriptions should be required to bring their performance into compliance. Removing duties from chairs' job descriptions is not a long-term solution.

5) The list of department chairs' duties that appears in the University Handbook is a recent addition to that document. It was created last year upon the initiative of the College of Arts and Sciences chairs, with input and approval of their School of Business colleagues. Approved by the Faculty Senate and the Provost, this description of duties was created for the express purpose of ensuring the robust administrative structure described above that is necessary to the health of the University. To nullify this description immediately upon enactment seems to discount the concerns of those who so recently designed the list for insertion into the University's primary governance document.

If the duties of School of Business department chairs are reduced in the ways that have been generally described to us, then the Faculty Senate believes that these positions should no longer bear the title "department chairs." They—and their academic units—should be renamed in acknowledgement of their differentiated, diminished status. The Senate believes, however, that such annulment would be detrimental to shared governance and strongly affirms keeping the department chair model as outlined by the University Handbook in place in the School of Business. The duties outlined in the University Handbook are appropriate to all department chairs and the University as a whole will be better served by maintaining consistency in these responsibilities.

The Faculty Senate appreciates the dean's candor and her willingness to meet with us to discuss her reorganization plans, and trusts that this response will be received as it is given: in the spirit of mutual enterprise and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Dr. Virginia Purtle, President
Reporting for the Faculty Senate
Christopher Newport University

Cc: Dean Donna Mottilla, School of Business
Dean Douglas Gordon, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences