

President's Report
2-16-07

A) On behalf of the Senate, President Schwarze extends “thanks” to CNU’s president and provost for their pledge to shift the faculty to a “3-4” teaching load.

B) Grade distributions: The SEC discussed this issue with the President and Provost on 1-25-07 as requested by the Senate, in order to better understand their concerns, share ours, and to open a dialogue on this complex issue. The President and Provost want to ensure that our students are being challenged, and they find grade distributions in certain classes troublesome (80-90% A’s, for instance)—suggesting that in these cases, distinctions are not being made between completing work and completing work with distinction. The SEC suggested that grade distributions may not in fact accurately measure how much students are being challenged, and that there may be other reasons for apparently disproportionately high grades in some courses. It was suggested that the Senate might profitably look into this matter in order to identify

- a) areas in which in fact there may be problems with disproportionately high grade distributions;
- b) areas in which problems may appear to exist but in fact do not;
- c) constructive recommendations to help ameliorate problems and rationales to support higher distributions which are warranted by special circumstances.

The Senate will identify this committee today; it will work closely with department chairs as the committee completes its study. The committee will make a preliminary report March 16 and a final report at the April meeting so that findings and recommendations can be shared with the President and Provost by the end of this term.

C) Ws policy and other items: The provost has [accepted](#) our recommendation on this policy: "co-requisite courses will not be counted in the total number of withdrawals allowed during a student's academic career at CNU." Additionally, he has approved the American Studies Major, accepted our recommendations on the Alumni Faculty Award administration, and responded to our graduation schedule questions: faculty will need to attend the Saturday honor's convocation (3-5 p.m.); the baccalaureate service will be held in the Ferguson Concert Hall; commencement time is fixed for noon on Sunday.

D) COMM 201: After receiving a written copy of Prof. Von Berg's rationale offered to the Faculty Senate regarding the placement of COMM 201 in the FIR A/I, the Provost has [declined](#) to accept this recommendation at this time. He shares the concerns of the UCC regarding inclusion of the course in the FIR A/I, though not its reasoning. The Provost feels that the promised revisions need to be made to the course before it is approved; that COMM 201 may in fact be too similar in content to COMM 239 (already an FIR A/I course); and that COMM 201 may suffer in what appears to be a reduction in its emphasis on extemporaneous

speaking. Part of the difficulty with this course's review may have been that it was caught between the old curriculum review system and the new.

- E) Personnel files/Handbook change. The provost [requested](#) context on this item, and had concerns about what he perceived as a certain rigidity in the requirements, while noting that nowhere does the present Handbook articulate what is current practice, that faculty members do have access to their files at any time they wish to see them, during regular business hours. The SEC and the Provost discussed this matter on 2-15-07, and arrived at the following, as the Provost indicated his disinclination to approve our recommendation in its current form: "Every faculty member has the right to access and review his or her permanent personnel file during normal business hours. If any document is placed in this file that has the potential to do harm to the faculty member, the faculty member will be notified in writing. The faculty member has the right to respond in writing and have the response placed in the personnel file." The SEC will offer this amendment to the proposed Handbook change later in the meeting.
- F) Letter to Delegate Hamilton: The President shared with the SEC yesterday that both the House and Senate GA budgets include approximately \$3.6 million to cover library cost overruns (due to the increased cost of steel), \$25 million for authority to raise funds to expand the Freeman Center (to add a health facility there, among other things); \$25-30 million for a new residential complex to be built on the parking lot side of the Wise Woods (thus allowing us to house approximately 4,000, or 80% of our students on campus). However, the \$4.1 million requested for planning the science building has fallen out of both budgets. The SEC offered assistance, and the President has asked the Senate sign a letter to Delegate Hamilton that he will have delivered.
- G) BAC faculty priorities briefing—Michelle Vachris shared Senate priorities with the BAC on Wed. Feb. 14. We need to include our cost figures; it may also be possible to include a modified chairs' compensation proposal in this round (no guarantee of funding) if we can work through a compromise acceptable to Provost and President on this matter.
- H) BOV liaisons: Friday, Feb. 23
- i. 9:30-11 Finance/Audit: DSU 244
 - ii. 10-11 Aca Affairs DSU 245
 - iii. 11-12 Dev Comm DSU 244
 - iv. 11-12 Stud Life DSU 245
 - v. noon—full board: ballroom