

Minutes for CNU Faculty Senate Meeting
Friday, February 7, 2014
Board Room of the David Student Union

Senators present: Redick, Martin, Keeling, Connell, Selim; Barnello, Busch, Hasbrouck, Holland, Hunter, Puaca, Thompson, Winder.

Guests: Sally Grace Holtgrieve, Marie Albiges, Holtgrieve and Albiges, Joyce Anne.

1. Call to Order at 3:02

2. President's Report

President Redick welcomed the newly elected senator from the College of Social Sciences, Dr. Nathan Busch. He added his welcome to Ms. Holtgrieve and Ms. Albiges as representatives of the *Captain's Log*, and Joyce Anne Koubaroulis, the Athletic Academic Support Coordinator. He updated the Senate on the Provost search: the search committee had just interviewed first candidate by phone and was planning to spend Saturday, February 8 on phone interview with the rest of the short list candidates. He noted the Handbook changes timeline and that proposed changes have to be submitted to Roark Mulligan by February 28, come to the Senate on March 3 for discussion and votes at the March 14 meeting, and be forwarded from the Senate by April 4. He reminded the Senate of the P&P meeting at 3:00 on Friday, February 14 in the DSU Washington Room. He also noted that Vice Provost Deiulio had sent the EVAL 1D to the Senate for consideration and passed it around for Senators to look at, with a reminder that it would need a Senate vote. He asked senators to consider names for the faculty teaching award committee.

Senator Grau arrived at 3:12.

3. Joyce Anne Koubaroulis, Athletic Academic Support Coordinator 3:10

President Redick introduced Ms. Koubaroulis, who oversees the convergence of athletics and academics. Ms. Koubaroulis thanked him and the Senate for inviting her. She reminded the Senate of the upcoming faculty appreciation reception to recognize student athletes and pep band member who achieved a certain level of academic achievement, noting that half the students would be honored during the women's basketball game and the other half during the men's basketball game, that the honor society induction would be held then too, and that there would be a reception between the two games, around 6:45/7:00 p.m. She introduced a new project to create a faculty representative for each athletic team, which could help bridge gaps and create good faculty/student relationships. She said that it would require no extra meetings, that the faculty members would just be superfans and cheer their team on.

Ms. Koubaroulis noted that attendance for student athletes is an issue that has come up in other venues, and she wanted to update the Senate on the current Athletics Department policy. She stated that the official position is that student athletes will be in class except when competition conflicts, even if they are sick. She noted that of course all students are subject to family emergencies, but stressed that while her office teaches student athletes how to communicate with faculty in such situations they do not do it for them. She said that student athletes can get paper documentation from the medical staff that they were sick, but that it is their responsibility to communicate with their faculty and observe class attendance requirements.

In response to questions, she informed the senators that her office works with the Riverside medical staff, and student who are ill or injured can obtain care and a doctor's note from those medical personnel.

A senator asked her about faculty who have an attendance policy that doesn't discriminate on causes: if student athletes miss two competition days, the students often want those not to count so that they get the other two as well. Ms. Koubaroulis responded that her office's stance is that competition should be those misses, but that athletes shouldn't be penalized for missing for competition if a real problem such as significant illness or family emergency comes up that results in missing additional classes. She stressed that the decision is ultimately up to faculty member, consulting with dean, to find what is right for the student involved. She noted that she understood the problem was especially acute for classes that meet once a week, and that her office will continue to discuss it with faculty, but that it is hard to make a single clear cut policy because teams are so different and require different kinds of travel. She stressed that her office encourages student athletes to communicate with their faculty far in advance and get to know their faculty to develop a personal relationship so that they're known. Ms. Koubaroulis said she was especially working with the baseball team, because not all team members will travel for a given game. She is trying to define who is essential for the team on travel days, and she has asked the coach to define them so that they can work to minimize conflicts at registration. She admitted that at times upper classmen don't always seek advisors (as with non-athletes), but that her office encourages them to do so every term. She informed the Senate about the constraints on scheduling games and practices: the baseball field has no lights, so they have to have afternoon games before daylight savings. Another senator inquired about whether coaches decide when to leave for away games, and Ms. Koubaroulis responded that they do, but that the coaches have to clear the departure time through herself. The senator noted that a student athlete had told her that the coach had suddenly decided to leave early and would therefore have to miss class. Ms. Koubaroulis answered that she is trying to get all the coaches on board, and in such a situation the coach should let her know so that she can update the schedule. She urged faculty to check with her if a student request sounds odd, particularly because students don't always communicate accurately. The senator asked if coaches could be required to give hard copy or electronic message rather than have faculty required to check up on whether students are telling the truth. Another senator noted that when one of his students had games rescheduled because of snow, he had asked the coach to send email about it and the coach did. Ms. Koubaroulis emphasized that her office is taking steps to get student and coaches both on board, to create the right kind of culture, and that if faculty members ever have questions they can contact her: she is the proper point of reference and faculty don't have to track down other personnel.

President Redick noted that it is important that faculty understand what the practice window means: that if coaches choose to practice at times outside the window, they can't insist that students miss class to come to practice. Ms. Koubaroulis agreed, but observed that coaches are not always simply "choosing" alternate times because they face significant constraints, such as available lights on practice fields, limited courts for both the men's and women's tennis teams, etc. She said that often the coaches look at the class schedules of the students on the team and choose a different practice time if too many students have class during the practice window. She noted that this is especially an issue for juniors and seniors. Another senator inquired about choosing an early morning window, and Ms. Koubaroulis answered that some do, such as cross

country, but that it's not a mandatory time, it's not the primary practice time, and student athletes should get to their 8:00 a.m. classes on time.

Ms. Koubaroulis noted that faculty should have gotten emails on student athletes from her that disclosed all student athletes in their classes so that faculty will know who can get extra support. She asked if the senators had questions, comments, or concerns. One senator noted that the old paper forms were more faculty friendly—the online forms had so many fields to choose from and the paper had been easier to just circle the answer. Ms. Koubaroulis responded that she understood that point but that she's trying to balance competing concerns: easiness of forms vs. more quickly using the information gathered. Unfortunately Google is not sophisticated enough for what her office would like to do. She emphasized that she is grateful for those participating through the Google form, because it gets live information live to the coaches quickly who need it vs. the time it used to take to collect, sort, find the student concerned, etc. The new system allows her office to use faculty information more efficiently, and she hoped that would be an acceptable compromise. She stressed that she's working on making the whole system of managing student athletes a better system. One senator asked about the practicality of combining the athlete system with Captain's Care for the midterm grade check. Ms. Koubaroulis responded that this term she had sent 300 emails in two days, so imagine getting them back—without a spread sheet. Their current system is more economical and efficient. But she did add that for the rest of term, faculty can communicate that way if they wish. One senator inquired if her office is getting the same level of response in the new electronic form vs. the old paper form, and Ms. Koubaroulis answered that she wasn't here when the paper form was used but that she has heard from her staff that they are now getting better responses with more information and that the new system seems much more efficient. The Senate thanked Ms. Koubaroulis for her time and the information she had shared with them.

Old Business

4. Approval of the January Senate meeting minutes

3:38

Motion 2/7/14.1 Brian: move to approve the minutes from the January 17, 2014 meeting of the Senate electronically. Bill second. Pass unanimously.

5. FMLA/Childcare subcommittee report

3:40

Senator Hunter reminded the Senate that the subcommittee had made its report for the provost in regard to other schools that require an affidavit policy. Federal law requires six weeks of unpaid leave to a parent. Senators noted that the six week rule doesn't fit well within the academic semester system. The senators discussed how to handle the legal implications of faculty signing such a document, including whether it might make sense for faculty to seek legal counsel beyond the university counsel, whose primary duty is to the institution rather than its employees in such a situation. The Senate decided to wait for Provost Doughty to provide the requested list of institutions that require such an affidavit, and that its strong preference is for the university not to require it. Another senator noted that the U.S. Congress is updating FMLA. Senators also discussed the possibility of checking with the Faculty Senate of Virginia to see if other state schools have faced this issue, and perhaps with the AAUP.

6. Equity of annual evaluations

3:49

President Redick referred the Senate to the minutes of the January 17, 2014 Senate meeting on AR evaluations and inquired about the results of the subcommittee's discussion of the issue. Senator Puaca submitted a memo, which the Senate looked through:

Senate Memo for SEC Meeting
Submitted by L. Manning and B. Puaca
Re: Annual Review Criteria

The annual review of faculty at CNU is a process that seeks to recognize the strengths of faculty, reward those most deserving, and identify areas that might be improved. Performed every year by department chairs, deans, and the provost, these annual reviews are scored on a 4.0 scale that uses the terminology "Truly Outstanding," "Very Good," "Good," and "Fair." It is a stated goal of the provost that the annual review scores for the university average out to a 3.0.

While Senators raised many concerns at the most recent Senate meeting regarding the norming of scores and the evaluation percentages for differing types of faculty, we are particularly concerned with the criteria upon which faculty are evaluated. Simply stated, the basis for annual reviews is wholly unclear. Fortunately, the University has established very clear criteria for the 2-4-6 year reviews (including conversion and promotion) in the form of the University EVAL-4. This document, a year-long project that saw a large number of faculty collaborate with the provost and other administrators, provides a detailed listing of items related to teaching, service, and professional development, as well as their value to the university.

Currently, there is no such document for the annual reviews. Despite the fact that there are more than 250 of these reviews done each year (every faculty member is evaluated every year), there is no clear set of criteria. While it has been sometimes assumed by faculty that the University EVAL-4 is the basis for this evaluation, there is clear evidence that this is not, in fact, the case. It seems only right and proper that the specific criteria for review be shared with faculty at the start of the year for which they will be evaluated. Thus, a faculty member should know in August what the basis of that year's review will be when it takes place the following August.

A related issue has to do with concerns that the University EVAL-4 has greatly shaped the annual review, even if it is not the sole criterion for evaluation. Some faculty at the university – especially instructors and lecturers – were hired with job descriptions that did not specify the need for an active research agenda. Most searches for restricted faculty do not include a required research presentation. And yet the University EVAL-4 does not address this topic and does not include language that would correlate to the expectations for these faculty members. (This is understandable, of course, since the document was not written as a means to evaluate non-tenure-track faculty.) Thus, even if the weightings are different for restricted faculty, they may well be going through evaluations that judge them on criteria that they were not informed they would encounter. No amount of juggling evaluation percentages solves this problem.

The Faculty Senate respectfully requests a clear explanation of the annual review criteria and asks that this information be shared with faculty in written form as soon as possible. This is a time-sensitive matter in the sense that faculty may not realize the basis of their annual evaluation and may decide to reorganize their time in response to what they learn.

The Senate discussed its concerns over problems in norming, the lack of evaluation criteria for 250 reviews done each year. The Senate debated how much the EVAL4 shapes ARs, but felt that it is not clear how, and more importantly that that document is not appropriate for ARs, particularly for restricted faculty who should not be evaluated on criteria that calls for scholarly production when they were hired for their expertise rather than for scholarly work. The Senate generally agreed that no amount of weight proportion works to sufficiently discount that segment of evaluation since lack of production would always inherently lower the score when such faculty should not be penalized at all for not doing what they were not hired to do. Criteria need to be made clear a year in advance, because faculty might make different choices if they knew the criteria ahead of time.

Senator Manning arrived at 3:56.

The Senate took a break at 3:57. The Senate came back into session at 4:11. Dr. Andrew Kirkpatrick joined the Senate as a guest.

When the Senate returned to session, President Redick noted that the BAC has been given the Senate's updated priorities.

7. Supersections

4:15

The Senate took up the issue of the uses and purposes of supersections. Senator Connell started the discussion because he had become concerned when he noticed that supersections filled faster than non-supersections of same course, possibly because students perceived that large classes would have less writing than large ones, though faculty generally believe that it is preferable to teach courses that are smaller, because pedagogically they can require more writing, be more rigorous, and create better student outcomes. He noted that supersections were started to help with move the tenure-stream faculty to a 3/3 teaching load and cope with some of the effects of the economic downturn, but that CNU has a larger faculty now than when the supersections were started so that it seemed like a good time to examine the issue of where and when they are necessary. Senators discussed the relationship between the assignment of tenure lines and class size: some had been told that departments with larger class sizes were more likely to be given more faculty lines to reduce average class size, so that choosing to teach fewer supersections might put a department at a disadvantage in trying to get more faculty lines. Senators noted that some departments have a large number of small classes that affects their numbers (such as the size for English composition), whereas others such as Biology need the supersections to cover the demand for their classes, and that the recent shift to lower the caps on supersections to 95 may adversely affect their ability to meet the demand. The Senate discussed a number of concerns: 1) The university is gradually plateauing its expansion of the faculty, so that the number of lines available in the future will be limited and the number of faculty within a department more stable. 2) Pedagogy may differ by discipline, particularly between the sciences

and the humanities, and the degree of critical thinking required by a course is adversely affected by large class sizes. While large classes are common in the sciences, several senators pointed out that faculty opinions on their effectiveness and desirability vary considerably within science departments, with some faculty liking them and others not—even for the same course. The science faculty also teach critical thinking in a number of their courses, and smaller classes are generally seen as helpful for that. 3) Senators discussed whether a supersection of 95 was better pedagogically than two sections of 48. 4) Senators recognized that the success of the 3/3 teaching load was partly due to the supersections. 5) Senators discussed the impact of architecture on the need for supersections: the presence of large lecture classrooms and scarcer classroom space if sections were divided, and the likelihood of teaching at less popular times if the number of sections had to increase by dividing supersections. 6) Senators discussed the need for research on the impact of class size on effective teaching, wondering if data would support the general assumption that smaller is better. 6) Senators discussed the students' need for access to needed classes. 7) Senators mentioned their gratitude for the administration's belief that small classes are generally better and concluded that reviewing which classes are made supersections should be done in a thoughtful and deliberate manner consistent with pedagogical aims of the courses.

8. Provost's proposal to move dossier reviews to spring term

4:50

The Senate addressed the provost's proposal to move the dossier reviews of probationary faculty and tenured faculty up for promotion to spring term. One senator observed that the major issue is that candidates who do not get renewed should have two job cycles to find a job because we do them a significant disservice if we force them into a single cycle. The senator took issue with the administration claim that since most unrenewed candidates stay for the year after the unsatisfactory review, they aren't moving in the spring of the year they receive the bad news so a later date for the decision won't impact them greatly. The senator argued that the statistics may mean just the opposite: that they stay for the second year because many faculty need more than one year to successfully find a second position. So knowing before spring term is useful so that they do have the spring to begin their hunt. The senator also argued against the assumption that 18 months is an unusually long period to have to hunt for a job, when in fact the academic cycle of hiring is so compressed that only four to five months of that 18-month period is a true hiring season. The senator also argued that giving the faculty who have bad review a summer away to psychologically recover may be a problem, since the presence of their faculty colleagues may be their best support system, and the summer leaves a great deal of time for stewing rather than getting on with the job. The senator noted that there is no good time to learn the bad news, and just before the Christmas holiday is indeed a bad time, but that shifting the dossier due date puts a different weight on the holiday because the faculty member has to spend that time putting the dossier together; breaks keep getting shorter, so there's even less time to put it together, and it's difficult to get feedback from a chair or mentors who are gone over the holiday. Further, having another term of data could create a creep in expectations of what is required for tenure. Senators debated the issue of shortening the time of discomfort of having an unsuccessful candidate within the department. President Redick conducted a straw vote to get the will of the Senate; it was clear that there was no support for moving the dossiers. Ultimately, the Senators concluded that the chance for probationary colleagues to have two hiring cycles to hunt for jobs outweighed any discomfort to colleagues who remain here. The Senate agreed to vote officially on the issue at the March meeting.

New Business

9. Environmental Studies Major

5:09

President Redick invited Dr. Andrew Kirkpatrick, Assistant Professor of Government to speak about the proposed Environmental Studies major. He noted that the proposal during the last academic year had not been successful, and that a new committee was appointed in the fall of this year to oversee the proposal for the first intercollege major at CNU. One major concern last year had been the UCC's worry about the lack of a director for the program; Dr. Kirkpatrick was hired to oversee it. Dr. Kirkpatrick noted that the new version of the proposal attempted to streamline the program in terms of the number of courses per college and interdisciplinary courses. The new proposal has no more than six credits per discipline. Senators asked Dr. Kirkpatrick to tell them about the IDST course within the major, and Dr. Kirkpatrick noted that this is a "taster" course, that he teaches, covering thinkers like Thoreau and Emerson, environmental philosophy, history, problems, and proposed solutions. He has students take the U.N. report and each student reports on a particular chapter. Dr. Kirkpatrick said that plans for ENVS 490 are still being formulated, since the course will not be offered until 2017. Senators inquired about the science requirements of the CNU Environmental Studies major vs. other schools, and Dr. Kirkpatrick answered that other B.A. programs have about the same amount CNU will have, though B.S. programs have more. The Senate discussed the choice of biology classes in the proposed major and decided that BIOL 212 and its lab would be more appropriate than BIOL 115, because students who will be working on environmental policy need a stronger biology background than the nonmajors course provides. BIOL 212 offers the background in evolution, selection pressures, and ecology that they need. The Senate understood the UCC's concern with the amount of paperwork required for substitutions for prerequisites for BIOL 212, but decided that the concern over prerequisites for BIOL 212 could be better handled if they were shifted to allow IDST 220 as a prerequisite option.

Motion 2/7/14.2 That the Senate approve proposal 97 with the amendment that BIOL 115 be replaced with BIOL 212 and BIOL 109L with BIOL 212L, and we recommend that IDST 220 be a prereq option for BIOL 212. Moved Linda Manning. Seconded Jessica Thompson. Passed unanimously.

10. Handbook change: proposed IDEA changes

5:33

The Senate discussed the proposal to move IDEA to later in the term and to administer over a single week rather than two. The Senate noted the difficulty of getting students to respond online, wondering if a shorter period would work better or not. Some noted that colleagues take class time to have students fill it out online, so that they get a high percentage responding, although this option is not available to faculty teaching in Ferguson because of poor wi-fi reception there. Senators agreed that the method of administration should be the one that provides the best data, and that a recommendation should be based on an evaluation of the research available on best practices for administering student evaluations. The Senate debated what role the proposed Center for Effective Teaching might have as a place to do and disseminate such research, noting that the Center should be developmental, not evaluative and that it's the Senate's responsibility to decide what to do with such research.

President Redick noted one other handbook issue. He reminded the Senate that he had emailed the Senate on changes in the evaluation of curriculum and asked for volunteers to work on this issue, and he thanked Senators Busch, Grau, and Manning for joining him to work on the issue. There are problems with college curriculum committees and deans making recommendations at university levels when they shouldn't: college curriculum committees and deans can only vote on the aspects of interdisciplinary programs that affect their college, not those that affect other colleges.

11. Notice about campus closings

5:55

President Redick told the Senate he had received some complaints about notification of the university's closing, particularly on the day when CNU was initially scheduled to open at 11:00 a.m., then decided at 9:00 a.m. to remain closed for the day. Some faculty had already left home by 9:00 in anticipation of teaching at 11:00. The Senate recognized that the administration had realized that the initial choice of an 11:00 delay was insufficient given the severity of weather and road conditions, so that the change was necessary, and the administration was doing their best to both keep to the set schedule yet keep employees safe. President Redick reminded the faculty to check the amended exam schedule.

12. Liaison Reports

6:05

Senator Selim reported that the Physics Department is concerned that assessment will impact courses and curriculum, particularly in having to schedule tests in class for assessment purposes, and that the assessment process asks to put course learning objectives in syllabi. When one senator observe that it is hard to argue against having learning objectives listed, Senator Selim responded that the problem is the proliferation of objectives that must be listed: IDEA objectives, course assessment objectives, program objectives, Area of Inquiry objectives. Senators discussed how various concerns: 1) how much overlap there might be among all these groups of objectives, 2) how some objectives (like for Areas of Inquiry) don't necessarily fit the courses, 3) whether students can pick out all the different types of objectives that are supposed to lead to coherent programs, 5) how IDEA objectives and course objectives should ideally match, but that IDEA objectives are poorly worded for our assessment program, 6) the problems if most of a syllabus page is taken up with multiple sets of objectives that neither the students nor the faculty can keep up with.

Senator Thompson left during discussion at 6:15.

13. Motion to Adjourn. Moved Brian Puaca. Seconded Bill Connell. Passed unanimously. The Senate adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

Addendum: Approval of the minutes for the January 17, 2014 Faculty Senate meeting was conducted electronically on February 11-13, 2014. Passed unanimously.