

Faculty Senate Annual Report 2006-2007

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The Faculty Senate is empowered by its Constitution to be the primary body through which the faculty participate in the shared governance of the University of Denver. The Senate is composed of approximately 50 faculty members who are elected to represent the academic units of the University. The Senate's meetings are held monthly throughout the academic year. The minutes of Senate meetings during the 2006-07 academic year are available on the [Faculty Senate](#) website.

This report briefly summarizes the work of the Faculty Senate during the 2006-2007 academic year. It covers the usual Senate business, Senate initiatives, and tasks for the 2007-08 academic year.

Usual Business

Each year the Senate evaluates [sabbatical](#) applications, PROF (Professional Research Opportunities for Faculty) and Faculty Research Fund (FRF) grant proposals, and nominations for Faculty Awards. We help coordinate the John Evans Professorship selection process and the Administrator Evaluation process. We schedule [Chancellor Roundtables](#) that provide an opportunity for the entire faculty to ask questions of the Chancellor.

PROF and FRF: We had \$300,000 to award in the [PROF](#) grant line. The Senate PROF Committee chose to recommend funding above this limit rather than risk eliminating meritorious proposals or reducing awards across the board to stay on budget. The Senate agreed to increase the funding pool by adding \$10,000 out of its gainshare account, and Vice Provost of Graduate Studies and Research Jim Moran contributed another \$10,000 from his office for a total pool of \$320,000. The inability to limit spending to \$300,000 caused concern both in the Provost's Office and in the Senate. We'll be taking a close look at the PROF process before proceeding this year (more about this below). The amount of money allocated through the [FRF](#) small grant process was \$60,000.

Faculty Awards:

We recommended the following colleagues for their outstanding contributions to the research and teaching mission of the university. They will be honored at the 2007 Convocation on September 28:

University Lecturer: [Jeff Jenson](#), Graduate School of Social Work.

Distinguished Scholar: [Howard Markman](#), Department of Psychology,

Distinguished Teacher: [Scott Leutenegger](#), Department of Computer Science.

United Methodist Church Scholar-Teacher of Year: [Cindy McRae](#), College of Education and [Margaret Whitt](#), Department of English.

Adjunct Faculty Teaching Award: None given (more about this below).

The **John Evans Professorship** was awarded to [Bin Ramke](#), Department of English.

New Administrator Emeritus Policy: In collaboration with the Board of Trustees Faculty and Educational Affairs Committee (FEAC) we established an official policy for granting Administrator Emeritus status. The policy is attached as Appendix I. Once the policy was approved we were pleased to unanimously support the nominations of former deans [Catherine Alter](#) (Graduate School of Social Work), Mike Bloom (The Women's College), and [Elinor Katz](#) (College of Education) as Dean Emerita. We were likewise pleased to unanimously support the nomination of former Provost [William Zaranka](#) (Department of English) for Provost Emeritus.

Program Proposals and Reports: We reviewed and endorsed, through a "sense of the senate" vote, the proposal for a new [Honors Program](#). We also held some preliminary discussion of the [Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work Task Force Report](#) (log in to Portfolio Community is required to view documents). Discussion of this report will continue in the academic units this fall.

Administrator Evaluations: The response rate for the 2006-07 evaluation cycle was 19% for both the Provost and the Chancellor. The response rate varied from 21-45% for the academic deans, with an average response of 35% across the 9 major divisions/colleges. The average response rate for department chairs was 48% in Natural Sciences and Mathematics, 45% in the Daniels College of Business, and 29% in Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. Tenured faculty responded at a rate of around 58%, and untenured faculty at a rate of around 14%. As usual, the Senate president discussed the results with the Provost. We're concerned about the low response rate of untenured faculty. We know there are continuing concerns about the confidentiality of the evaluation process. We will look to address these concerns for the next evaluation cycle.

Election of a Senate President-Elect: In May 2007 [Michael Levine-Clark](#) (Penrose Library) was elected President-Elect of the Senate for 2007-08. He will become President in May, 2008. We are grateful to Michael for his dedication to the Senate's cause.

Senate Initiatives

Given faculty concerns about the [Core Curriculum](#) and a specific proposal from faculty in the sciences for an alternative way to satisfy the Core requirement, the Senate voted to convene a task force from our Academic Planning Committee to talk about issues surrounding Core. After several meetings in winter and spring the group offered the following recommendations:

- Provide more flexibility in allowing study abroad courses to be used for Core credit.
- Establish prerequisites for Core courses that warrant them, since it is sometimes difficult to teach a 200-level course without assuming some degree of common disciplinary knowledge.
- Count existing departmental courses as Core courses.

- Consider revising the Core course themes in order to make them more interesting and/or relevant.

The full task force document is attached as Appendix II. These recommendations were presented to the Senate for a vote on April 6. A large majority of senators (28) voted in favor of passing these recommendations on to the Core Curriculum Committee. Two senators were opposed, and five abstained.

We re-opened discussion of **Tuition Exchange** as a new faculty and staff benefit that would also serve as a faculty recruitment/retention tool. In April 2007 Director of Human Resources Dick Gartrell reported on the costs of the program, and the Senate discussed the pros and cons. A sense of the senate vote on a motion to proceed in researching cost and implementation of a Tuition Exchange program produced 20 votes in favor, 5 against, and 2 abstentions. A task force was subsequently convened to continue with the research. This group—comprised of faculty senators and non-senators—worked hard over the summer of 2007 to investigate tuition exchange at peer institutions, make consulting contacts, and develop a faculty/staff survey for determining the level of campus interest in such a benefit. Additional discussion with the Provost’s Office and Human Resources produced an administrative commitment to conduct a cost analysis using an outside consulting company that has worked with DU before. We will continue these discussions this fall.

We transformed our paper [*Faculty Forum*](#) from a print publication to an online weblog, in hopes of facilitating more and better discussion of issues between senate meetings. Over the course of the year we posted articles relating to Core Curriculum, the ethics of faculty searches, the Honors Program, the Public Good vision of the university, tuition exchange, and the Research and Scholarship report. Although the postings may have been read, we did not get much commentary from the faculty. This fall we will think about ways of making the weblog more accessible to faculty (perhaps by disembedding it from Portfolio Community) and more conducive to the sharing of reader views.

In 2006-07 we decided to dedicate Senate funds to some **co-sponsored academic programming**. We partnered with the Center of Multicultural Excellence to support the Diversity Summit, and with Judaic Studies, The Honors Program, Center for Civic Engagement, and Writing Program to bring speakers to campus. A particular highlight was the March visit of Michael Berube, Professor of Literature at Penn State and well-known public intellectual. Professor Berube led a lunchtime faculty seminar about the liberal arts, gave a public lecture on academic freedom, breakfasted with Honors students, and conducted an informal “actors studio”-style conversation with our Writing Program instructors.

We partnered with the Provost’s Office and the Office of Graduate Studies and Research to establish a quarterly **Faculty Club**. The purpose is both business and pleasure: a one hour Q&A with the Provost, followed by a happy hour. Attendees found these events to be very informative and pleasant. We are grateful to Provost Kvistad and Vice Provost Moran and their staffs for making them happen.

Tasks for 2007-08

In addition to business-as-usual we'll have the following tasks for the 2007-08 academic year. The first will be to sponsor a discussion of the new **University Mission and Goals** document produced by last year's **UPAC** (University Planning Advisory Council) process. This will happen at the September and October Senate meetings, with a vote on the document occurring at the October meeting.

As noted above, there are concerns about the **PROF** grant review process. The Senate has recommended a group of faculty to work with Vice Provost Jim Moran to examine the current process and discuss whether we need to make some changes. This group will soon be meeting to consider alternative models for evaluating proposals.

The Senate Personnel Committee has received a draft **Faculty Grievance Policy** that was produced over the summer by our campus **AAUP** (American Association of University Professors) chapter. The Committee will discuss and revise this document, and then forward to other relevant bodies for their consideration. We hope to have an explicit policy on the books by year's end if not sooner.

A proposal is also on the table for renaming the **Adjunct Faculty Teaching Award**. This title does not do justice to the variety of part-time teaching that occurs on campus. Part-time faculty contribute much to the academic mission, and we need an appropriately titled award that will honor their contributions.

Last year the Senate engaged in a few discussions about **grade inflation**. This is a national issue but there is also debate about how much we should be concerned about it. Our academic planning committee will continue to discuss how we might frame an inquiry into grade inflation at DU and, if we discover that there's a serious problem, what can be done about it.

If there are other issues or concerns that you would like to see the Senate address, please contact me at dsaitta@du.edu.

Appendix I

Administrator Emeritus Series

Passed by vote of the Faculty Senate on 3 – 9 – 07

Passed by vote of the Faculty and Educational Affairs Committee on 4 – 4 - 07

Emeritus/Emerita status for academic administrative leaders may be awarded in recognition of distinguished and exceptional service to the University under the following guidelines:

- Nomination and award can be approved at the time of career retirement from the University or after resignation from a position of academic leadership after an extended period of continuous service at the divisional level or above.
- Recommendations for Deans, Provosts and Chancellors may originate from any constituency at the University, and must be approved by the Faculty Senate, the Provost, the Chancellor, the Faculty and Educational Affairs Committee and the Board of Trustees.
- Recommendations for Vice Provosts, Associate/Assistant Provosts, Vice Chancellors, etc. originate from the Provost and/or the Chancellor, and must be approved by the Provost, the Chancellor, the Faculty and Educational Affairs Committee and the Board of Trustees.

Upon retirement from the University of Denver, the honorary distinction of [Administrator] Emeritus will carry the same benefits and privileges as those afforded to retired academic faculty in the Professor Emeritus Series (University of Denver (Colorado Seminary) Policy Manual Section 4.10.020).

Appendix II

Thematic Concentration Task Force Recommendations – March 9, 2007

The goal of 2000-level Core courses should be to bring together real expertise from at least two disciplines. In order to do this well, the level of study needs to be appropriate to 2000-level courses.

The university needs to embrace interdisciplinarity. Currently there is a tendency to think of Core as the primary place where we teach across disciplines. Instead, we should strive to do interdisciplinary studies at a higher level. Rather than thinking of interdisciplinary studies as a way of tearing down the disciplinary silos, we should be strengthening those silos and building strong bridges between them. There are many examples of interdisciplinary work that require too much disciplinary knowledge (in two or more disciplines) to be feasible in a single course. Sequences of courses are required. Computer Science and Geography, for instance, are working to build an interdisciplinary program in geographic information science and systems. This program requires grounding in both disciplines. More interdisciplinary courses within units would provide exciting options for majors and minors and for students seeking options to satisfy Core requirements.

There should be enough flexibility within Core that students can fit interesting and relevant courses into their schedules. There is much anecdotal evidence that students have difficulty finding classes of interest at the times they have available in their schedules.

With these thoughts in mind, the task force makes several recommendations aimed at strengthening Core, and making it a more meaningful experience for the students who take the classes and the faculty who teach them.

- We commend the recent decision by the Core Committee to allow an additional study abroad course to be transferred in for Core credit. This allows much greater flexibility for many students and may allow students to build knowledge about the specific culture in which they choose to study abroad.
- Prerequisites should be established when necessary. In many areas, it is impossible to teach a challenging 2000-level course without assuming some degree of common disciplinary knowledge for all students in the class. It should be possible to establish prerequisites that allow sufficient numbers of students the option to take a class but still ensure some degree of basic disciplinary knowledge upon which to build. For example, it would be reasonable to have AP or IB calculus or a college-level calculus course as a prerequisite for a Core course. It should also be possible to have a specific Foundations class as a prerequisite.
- To allow greater flexibility for departments and students, it should be possible to count existing departmental courses that fit with the definitions of the Core courses as Core. Conversely, some existing Core courses could be cross listed within the department. This would allow for a greater number of Core courses overall, and would be especially beneficial to departments with limited resources that can not currently teach Core courses. Cross-listing should be encouraged in Departments that are developing inter-

disciplinary programs. This cross-listing could also help to develop more interdisciplinary initiatives.

- There is anecdotal evidence that the current Core themes do not engage all students. The Core Committee should revisit the existing themes and consider developing new themes and/or allowing students to take multiple courses within a single theme.