

University of Denver Faculty Senate

President's Report

Academic Year July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011

Introduction

The following report summarizes the activities of the Faculty Senate for the academic year ending on June 30, 2011. Overall, it was a good year. In addition to dealing with routine and one-time issues, the Senate adopted four stretch goals. There were no simmering issues left at the end of the year, although as detailed below, there is still work ahead of us. With respect to our four stretch goals, it can be said that we reached “the end of the beginning”. Further work will be accomplished under the Provost’s Academic Strategic Positioning Initiative as it unfolds. Thanks to all who participated in Senate activities in the past year: Senators, committee members and chairs, faculty at large, students, administrators, staff, and members of the Board of Trustees. We look forward to collaborating with all of you in a shared governance environment as DU engages with the “interesting times” that lie ahead for colleges and universities in the US and around the world.

Four Stretch Goals

In September, the Senate agreed to focus on four “stretch goals”:

- Developing a faculty-led continuous improvement process in teaching and learning. We want to be sure we have high expectations for our students, challenge them, emphasize analytical skills, critical thinking, and communication skills, and have a level of rigor in our classrooms that matches the ever-increasing capabilities of our students to learn. We made it clear that this is no way intended to imply that we do not have many excellent teachers now, but simply to say that even the best can get better. Departments focused on collectively achieving higher levels of performance are more likely to take advantage of the knowledge possessed by high-performing peers, of resources available in other campus units and the Center for Teaching and Learning, of the increasing options offered by educational technology, and of state-of-the-art initiatives at other universities.

The Academic Planning Committee worked on this initiative throughout the year and presented their “Teaching Excellence Initiative” (TEI) report to the Senate on May 27, 2011. It was moved and seconded that the Senate “commend the Academic Planning Committee for its outstanding work in producing the Teaching Excellence Initiative report identifying several possible avenues for enriching the culture of teaching and consequent student learning on our campus; and that the Academic Planning Committee

present the Teaching Excellence Initiative to the Deans Council at their September meeting to initiate collaboration and support for implementation.” The report is posted on the Senate website. Support for the TEI was given in the final report of the Academic Strategic Positioning Committee on Faculty Hiring and Development.

We must continue to make progress in the coming year as this is one of the most important strategic challenges facing the University in the current environment. The Faculty Senate will support action initiatives that, in turn, support a culture of continuous improvement in teaching and learning, as well as appropriate recognition and rewards for high-performing individuals along the lines of what is currently done for research achievements.

- Creating a more cosmopolitan campus was the second goal. Good progress was made. On March 4th the Senate received a report from the Vice Provost for Internationalization that his office had established an Internationalization Council, which will function similarly to the Undergraduate and Graduate Councils. Deans have been notified and are choosing faculty and administration representation from each school/division. One of the responsibilities of the Council will be to nurture the development of a more cosmopolitan campus. The cosmopolitan campus was also one of the goals reported out of the Academic Strategic Positioning Committee on Internationalization. There is, of course, a key role for faculty to play in supporting progress towards this goal.
- Increased adoption of Open Access (OA) and Open Educational Resources (OER) was the third goal. The fall 2010 Provost’s Conference focused on this topic. The conference was a success and succeeded in raising the consciousness of the value of a more widespread acceptance of OA and OER at DU. At the March 4, 2011 Senate meeting, Senators gave informal support to a suggestion that the Executive Committee draft statements on OA and OER for consideration by the full Senate. (This action was postponed pending the outcome of recommendations by the Academic Strategic Positioning Committee on Technology.) The Senate will move forward in the fall with ideas on how faculty can support increased adoption of OA and OER.
- Increased support for Interdisciplinary Scholarship was the fourth goal. Considerable progress was made last year on this goal, in particular the awarding of three interdisciplinary research grants of \$60,000 each. We expect that continuing progress will be made on the research side, but faculty must take the lead in encouraging and implementing more interdisciplinary classroom initiatives.

Other Issues

- The Senate gave formal support to reopening the process by which the final configuration of the Academic Commons would be determined. The process was reopened and a solution subsequently reached that effectively balanced the library access needs of a sub-set of the faculty with a general desire to accommodate more students in the new space.
- The Senate adopted a motion to re-examine the University's tuition reimbursement policy to give consideration to providing tuition waivers to children of faculty who die before their children are old enough to enroll.
- General Education Review. The Academic Planning Committee reviewed the process followed for the recent General Education revisions. A verbal report was given to the Senate and the report is posted on the Senate website.
- A revision to the Faculty Grievance Policy was adopted by the Senate and subsequently approved by the University's administration and Board of Trustees.
- Many important recurring tasks accomplished, such as:
 - Review of sabbatical applications
 - Review of nominations for faculty awards
 - Oversight of the administrator evaluation process
 - Participation in the selection of recipients for research awards
 - Participation on various university-wide committees
 - Communication with administration and the Board of Trustees

Reports to the Senate

Throughout the year, the Senate heard reports from others on ongoing activities across the campus. In some cases, they are periodic reports mandated by the Senate Constitution (e.g. Faculty review Committee, Athletic Director) and in other cases they are one-time reports on current issues as they arose. The Provost reports to the Senate at every meeting. Summaries of all reports are routinely incorporated in the Senate minutes. For example, reports were presented by:

AAUP Chapter President
Associate Provost for Academic Programs
Associate Provost for Research
Athletic Director
Chairs, Academic Strategic Positioning Committees
Chair, Career Services Task Force
Chair, Distance Learning Council
Chair, Faculty Review Committee

Director, Bookstore
Director, Center for Teaching and Learning
Director, Human Resources
Director, Office of Assessment
Interim Associate Provost, Center for Multicultural Excellence
Vice Provost for Internationalization

Pending issues for the coming year:

Revision of the APT document
Support for implementation of high-priority Academic Strategic Positioning Initiatives
Support for faculty action on adoption of OA and OER
Support for modification of the tuition waiver policy
Support for adoption of a "Supplier Code of Conduct"

Also, the Senate sponsors separate quarterly open forums with the Chancellor and Provost. These events have not been well-attended. The format needs to be evaluated to determine if there are better ways of assuring faculty access to senior administrators.

Respectively submitted,

Donald J. McCubbrey
Faculty Senate President 2010-2012

