

**University of Denver  
Faculty Senate  
Minutes  
April 10, 2009  
Renaissance Room South**

**Senators (or proxies) present:** Bill Anderson, Don Bacon, Rodney Buxton, Victor Castellani, Frederique Chevillot, Bonnie Clark, Sandy Dixon, Judith Fox, Katherine Freeman, Michele Hanna, John Hill (Executive Secretary), Jennifer Hoffman, Peggy Keeran, Ray Kireilis, Brian Kiteley, Richard Leaman, Scott Leutenegger, Michael Levine-Clark (President), Mario Lopez, Don McCubbrey, Keith Miller, Sarah Morelli, Mia Mulvey, Rahul Nair, Ved Nanda, Kim Newman, Paul Novak, Linda Olson, Tom Quinn, Charles Reichardt, Dean Saitta, Nancy Sampson, George Straface, Paul Sutton, Linda Tate, David Thomson, Matt Taylor, Gordon von Stroh, Nancy Wadsworth, Kate Willink, and Wilfred Wilms.

### **Call to Order**

Michael Levine-Clark, Faculty Senate President, called the meeting to order at 11:45 am, welcomed everyone present and introduced Chancellor Robert Coombe.

After Chancellor Coombe's presentation, a motion to approve the minutes from March 6, 2009 was seconded and approved.

### **Tobacco-Free DU Initiative (Chancellor Robert Coombe)**

Chancellor Robert Coombe provided a status report on his thinking about the Tobacco-Free DU initiative. In his presentation Chancellor Coombe noted the following:

- He knows of the considerable effort that has gone into the initiative and the Senate's strong vote against it. He wanted to share his thinking about it with the Senate, and some of the points raised in discussions with proponents.
- He is concerned that the proposal as written eliminates free choice.
- The university has taken stands on issues such as sustainability, investments in Sudan, and free trade coffee. We took an institutional stand on these, but we did not take a position that eliminates individual free choice.
- We have a policy regarding smoking (the 25-foot ban), but it is not very well enforced. We've had many complaints about this at public events.
- The Chancellor asked Craig Woody, Sam Alexander, and others about better enforcement of the current policy. They view the current policy as unenforceable and recommend a campus wide non-smoking policy.
- The 25-foot ban leaves very little space available for smoking out there in the middle of the green areas.

- The Chancellor is contemplating a policy along the following lines: Ban smoking on campus, but have a flexible perimeter definition. Permit smoking at public events at the Ritchie and Newman Centers, but have well defined designated smoking areas.
- These are the Chancellor's current views. He will try to resolve the matter by the end of this quarter.
- In response to questions he added:
  - The impact on neighbors should be small, especially with a flexible perimeter. Our survey shows that we have a small number of smokers. It is difficult to know in advance where the congregation areas would be.
  - We are looking into providing help to those who wish to quit smoking. Our survey shows that two thirds of smokers would like to quit. This is not inexpensive; the cost would be \$200K to \$300K per year.
  - This is fundamentally a public health issue, hence the central campus smoking ban.
  - This potential solution advances public health, but does not ban free choice.
  - None of our policies are set in stone, and this policy could be revisited after some period of time.

### **Provost's Report**

- The sustainability report has been completed. It represents a lot of hard work by many people. This comprehensive 93 page plan will be submitted to the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment organization. It includes a commitment that our campus will be carbon neutral by 2050. The plan is based on the best available current information. Comments should be sent to Fred Cheever. There was a lot of student involvement and drive behind the preparation of this plan. The plan will be submitted to the Board of Trustees prior to its submission to the Presidents Climate Commitment organization.
- Undergraduate deposits are 351 versus 294 at this time last year. However, a larger number of students have been admitted than at this time last year. We still appear to be on course to fill our fall class. Transfer applications are about the same as last year.
- Graduate applications are basically on track, although a few units have some concerns.
- The letter will be sent from the Chancellor informing students that some additional financial aid may be available for existing students whose circumstances have changed.
- The Provost could not comment on the parameters of the budget since it will not be reviewed and approved by the Board until mid May.
- There have been no apprehensions from the recent crime spree in the neighborhood. There has been no activity for about 3½ weeks.

### **Office of Internationalization--Eric Gould**

The Office of Internationalization includes not only Study Abroad, but also the English Language Center, and support for international students.

We are forming an advisory board composed of the Cherrington Global Scholars Board, and individuals suggested by the Deans. We will also add undergraduate and graduate student representatives.

We are offering \$75,000 in internationalization grants. These can be individual, cooperative, or innovative awards. Successful awards will be based on internationalization, not just Study Abroad.

The Office of Internationalization is also responsible for assessment of the study abroad experience, and the on-campus experience of international students. We also provide assistance to faculty who are leading overseas experiences.

### **General Education Review Committee--Luc Beaudoin, Rod Buxton, and Linda Tate**

Senate President Michael Levine-Clark described the voting process for the General Education proposal. Department representatives should pick up ballots today at the Senate meeting. Ballots should be returned in envelopes with the vote tally written on the outside. These will be counted and results reported at the next Senate meeting. A General Education proposal discussion is scheduled for Friday April 24<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 to 3:00 pm at Olin Hall; Luc Beaudoin will attend this meeting.

In response to questions, Luc Beaudoin provided additional information:

- The General Education documents are available on the Senate website.
- Deans and Associate Deans are permitted to vote if they are also faculty.
- The turnout at the March 27 meeting was low.
- All units are encouraged to have internal discussions about the General Education proposal.
- Two-thirds of the core courses are taught overseas, but the writing must be on campus. Staffing remains an issue because the writing-intensive courses are limited to 15 students. Taking two core courses abroad is a relatively recent development.
- Staffing for core is an issue, and the Marsico Initiative led to more faculty for writing.

Linda Tate noted the writing program was carried forward as is because it was recently approved.

Dean Saitta said it is a shame we are giving up on properly staffing core, particularly since it seems driven by departments' concerns about retention of funds and graduate assistants. There have not been adequate conversations about this change, and the Senate seems one place where such conversations could occur. It is not the fault of the committee that there have not been adequate conversations, rather it is the fault of the faculty and the administration.

Bonnie Clark stated that students have told her they like the core courses and that the courses have caused them to see the world in a different way.

Luc Beaudoin stated the changes lead to a strengthened and distinctive education. The advanced seminar will provide opportunities for students to see the world in a different way. Interdisciplinary topics can be taught in major departments. Many questioned whether a single advanced seminar was enough to address their concerns. Luc further noted the approach is intended to be flexible and use the strengths we have.

The Provost noted the writing program was added as result of the Marsico Initiative which created 23 tenure-track positions and added 19 lecturers. This was approved by 75 percent of faculty in a campus-wide vote. We should be teaching as the world is organized. The deans are responsible for managing the curriculum and addressing concerns about staffing and resources.

Dean Saitta noted that most of the students he sees show no signs of understanding inter-connectedness or interdisciplinary issues; they lack models for addressing such matters.

Luc reiterated there will be a central committee to assist planning, scheduling and allocation of work load. Departments should have more flexibility to fill courses and establish their curricula.

President Michael Levine-Clark closed the discussion and reminded everyone about the timing and process for the vote.

### **Writing Program--Doug Hesse**

The Writing Program is in its third year. The Conference on College Composition and Communication, the major professional association of university writing professors, awarded the program its Certificate of Excellence. Only 26 programs have been so recognized in the past five years, including Duke, Swarthmore, Carlton, University of Massachusetts, University of Washington, and the University of Toronto.

In essence we teach epistemology and research. Feedback on students' writing is somewhat dependent on the type of research they are performing. The Writing Program's website shows many examples of student writing, and about 250 students have established writing portfolios.

The writing center has been extraordinarily successful. Visits have increased 25 percent over last year. About 40 percent of visitors are graduate students, and freshmen are the second largest single cohort. We work with students at any stage of their writing projects. The program intends to assess results for first year students, and perform a longitudinal study.

Several Senators expressed thanks for efforts and support of the Writing Program.

Doug distributed several documents about the Writing Program.

### **Grade Inflation (Academic Planning)—Brian Kiteley**

DU's grade inflation experience is typical. GPAs are rising about 1/10 of a grade per decade at virtually all universities.

The committee asks that the Senate endorse the following:

1. Provide faculty with data about how they are grading and how their grades compare with other sections of the same course and similar courses.
2. Refine and clarify grading policies and revise the undergraduate bulletin to reflect any such changes.
3. Provide assistance and guidance on how to describe grading process in course syllabi.

The committee intends to provide further information in May, and this topic will be discussed at the May Senate meeting.

### **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was introduced, seconded, and passed. President Levine-Clark adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

### **Respectfully submitted by**

John Hill  
Faculty Senate Executive Secretary