

# **University of Denver Faculty Senate**

## **President's Report**

**Academic Year July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012**

### **Introduction**

The following report summarizes the activities of the Faculty Senate, as of June 8, 2012, for the academic year ending on June 30, 2012. Like last year, this year was also a good year. In addition to dealing with routine and one-time issues, the Senate moved forward on all four of its stretch goals, albeit at different paces. Many Senators participated in Provost's Strategic Positioning Initiative and are participating in the six incubators and oversight committee established as part of the resultant Renew DU initiative.

Considerable effort was put forth this year on revising the Appointment, Tenure, and Promotions (APT) document. Although we were unable to complete it, much progress was made and we expect to have it ready for approval by the Board of Trustees early in the coming academic year. We very much appreciate the efforts of 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 continued collaboration with the entire University community in a shared governance environment as DU engages with the compelling issues that lie ahead for colleges and universities in the US and around the world.

### **Progress on the Four Stretch Goals**

In September 2010, the Senate agreed to focus on four "stretch goals":

- Developing a faculty-led continuous improvement process in teaching and learning.
- Creating a more cosmopolitan campus.
- Increased adoption of Open Access (OA) and Open Educational Resources (OER) was the third goal
- Increased support for Interdisciplinary Teaching and Scholarship

While all four goals were subsumed in the Provost's Strategic Positioning Initiative and, subsequently, in the RenewDu incubators, progress was made in the past year.

### *Teaching and Learning*

The Teaching and Learning Initiative report submitted at the end of the 2010-2011 academic year recommended the initiation of pilot projects for faculty-led projects in teaching and learning, as well as a redesign of the course evaluation instrument to incorporate feedback in addition to student evaluations to instructors.

Working with appropriate Deans, the Senate facilitated the establishment of four pilot projects in faculty-led improvements in teaching and learning which the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) funded. The four participating departments all have large numbers of undergraduate students and all have outstanding reputations for their devotion to teaching and learning. (It was our objective in selecting pilot departments to demonstrate to other units on campus that even the very best recognize that they can get better). The four departments are Accountancy (Daniels), Anthropology (AHSS), Mathematics (NSM), and the Women's College (TWC). Projects were started in January 2012 and are well underway. The four departments meet quarterly along with OTL and Senate representatives to share what is working and what is not.

The redesign of the course evaluation instrument was suggested to the Teaching and Learning Incubator and is being evaluated as of this writing.

### *Creating a more cosmopolitan campus*

Inclusive Excellence and Internationalization are two of the six Renew DU incubators and Senators are members of each. The Senate recognizes, as do the Vice Provosts for Inclusive Excellence and Internationalization, that there is an overlap between the goals of each office but both fully support the notion of creating a more cosmopolitan campus.

One specific Senate-led accomplishment in the 2011-2012 academic years was the establishment of a local chapter of AIESEC. As noted on their website (<http://AIESEC.org>), "Present in over 110 countries and territories and with over 60,000 members, AIESEC is the world's largest student-run organisation. Focused on providing a platform for youth leadership development, AIESEC offers young people the opportunity to be global citizens, to change the world, and to get experience and skills that matter today." AIESEC focuses on providing inbound and outbound international student internship opportunities with corporations, and not for profit organizations. The outgoing Faculty Senate President is the faculty advisor to AIESEC at DU.

### *Open Access (OA) and Open Educational Resources (OER)*

University College volunteered to be a pilot for the adoption of OER for all of their classes wherever practical and feasible. However, progress in moving forward was put on hold because of the resignation of Dean Jim Davis and the subsequent

evaluation of possible synergies between University College and the Women's College. We expect to resurrect this effort in the coming year. Two AIESEC interns are coming to DU from Latin America to work on a pilot translation project of an OER text as well as learning about the OER ecosphere so they can build awareness of OER when they return home.

A proposal to establish a means of facilitating the adoption of OER more widely on the DU campus was submitted to the RenewDU Teaching and Learning incubator by a member of the Senate and is presently under consideration.

Consideration of online and/or open access outlets for scholarly publications is gaining considerable traction in the academic community at large. Encouraging inclusion of such outlets for DU faculty to publish their work is included in the most recent draft of the APT document.

#### *Increased support for interdisciplinary teaching and scholarship*

Funding from the office of the Vice Provost for Research for interdisciplinary research grants was the same as last year, \$180,000. An incubator for interdisciplinary teaching and scholarship was established as a part of RenewDU and Senators are among faculty who have submitted proposals to this incubator.

One of the advantages to faculty of Senate membership is the ability to meet and form personal relationships with faculty from other academic units. Our campus is in many ways highly decentralized, which makes identifying opportunities for interdisciplinary collaborations challenging. One particular proposal submitted with participation of a Senator seeks to address this issue.

#### **Other Matters**

##### *APT document revision*

Led by the Chair of the Personnel Committee, several Senators worked in revising the APT document, which was last revised in 2001.

Matters addressed in the draft document include providing clear written expectations and feedback on performance to all faculty and, in particular, frank and honest feedback to assistant professors (on tenure track appointments) after three years. This should encourage faculty who have a low probability of achieving tenure to leave sooner rather than later. This draft document also encourages public good scholarship and defines academic freedom in a meaningful way.

The increase in the number of full-time contingent faculty over the years has created a compelling need to assure that they are treated equitably. The draft document provides for multi-year appointments for full-time contingent faculty following an initial period in which they meet or exceed performance expectations.

We hope to have the draft document completed and reviewed by the end of the 2012 fall quarter.

*Policies related to sexual harassment, forced academic leave, and academic freedom*

The incident with Professor Arthur Gilbert was well publicized in local and national media outlets. Subsequent discussions in the Senate resulted in a desire to have clarification of sexual harassment policies and forced academic leaves. After encouragement from the Provost, these items were discussed with University Counsel and the Director of Human Resources. After the further discussion and clarification, the Personnel Committee will recommend that policies be made more public and transparent. A clear definition of academic freedom in the classroom will be included in the revised APT document.

A related motion was introduced in the April meeting by Senator Dean Saitta:

“Given that the academic context of Professor Gilbert’s classroom speech was never considered during the investigation that found him guilty of sexual harassment, we urge that the administration vacate the finding of sexual harassment and remove this stain from Professor Gilbert’s official personnel record.”

The motion was discussed at the May meeting with University Counsel present and participating. The motion passed by a vote of 22 to 11. (There were 11 abstentions.)

*Presidential debates*

The Academic Planning Committee is developing proposals for one or two Senate-sponsored events related to the upcoming presidential debates. The Senate expressed its support of the debates at DU by passing the following motion introduced by Senator Sandy Dixon at the January meeting:

“The Senate offers hearty congratulations to the administration and Board of Trustees on their historic accomplishment of bringing the first presidential debate of autumn 2012 to the University. The Senate thanks all members of the University of Denver community who will work to make the debate’s presence on campus a time of learning for the good of the University and the public in the City, State, and Nation.”

*Strategic Positioning Report*

A motion by Senator Leaman that the Senate endorse the University’s Strategic Positioning Report was passed at the November meeting.

### *Supplier Code of Conduct*

Also at the November meeting, it was proposed that DU develop a Supplier Code of Conduct policy. The Office of Business and Financial Affairs subsequently developed one. At the January meeting, after discussion, the Senate passed Senator Ved Nanda's motion that the Senate endorse DU's Supplier Code of Conduct.

### *Recommendations regarding gifts from students*

The Student Relations Committee discussed the issue of student gifts at the November meeting. There are University policies dealing with gifts from vendors but nothing specifically about receiving gifts from students.

It was agreed that most gifts are simply a show of gratitude and there is no appearance of impropriety. The faculty members appreciate the gesture and the student is able to show respect. Faculty members are not required to either accept or decline any gift from students. It is completely the decision of the faculty member. However in the instances where there may be some ambiguity or the situation presents an appearance of impropriety, or at times during the quarter that make the faculty member uncomfortable, the committee developed some guidelines. The guidelines were discussed and placed on the Senate website.

### *Recurring tasks*

Many important recurring tasks were 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 arise. 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:

- Associate Provost, Inclusive Excellence
- Associate Provost, Research
- Chairs, Academic Strategic Positioning Committees
- Chair, Faculty Review Committee

Director, Campus Safety  
Director, Human Resources  
Director, Office of Teaching and Learning  
Director, Student Conduct  
Executive Director, Conventions, Events, and Special Programs  
Vice Chancellor for Admissions  
Vice Chancellor for Advancement  
Vice Chancellor, Athletics and Recreation  
Vice Chancellor, Business and Financial Affairs  
Vice Chancellor for University Communications  
Vice Chancellor for Technology and Chief Technology Officer  
Vice Provost, Internationalization

**Pending issues for the coming year:**

Completion and adoption of the revised APT document  
Support for implementation of high-priority issues identified by RenewDU

Respectively submitted,

Donald J. McCubbrey  
Faculty Senate President 2010-2012