**Faculty Senate Minutes**

**March 10, 2014**

**SU 313 4:03 - 6:06 p.m.**

**Present:** Jackie Apodaca, Amy Belcastro, Deborah Brown, Dave Carter, Kate Cleland-Sipfle, Curtis Feist, Carol Ferguson, John King, Richard May, Kasey Mohammad, Pete Nordquist, Garth Pittman, Vicki Purslow, John Richards, Mary Russell-Miller, Kevin Sahr, Larry Shrewsbury, Robin Strangfeld, Jamie Vener, Elizabeth Whitman, and Erin Wilder.

**Absent:** Todd Carney, Steve Jessup, and Byron Marlowe.

**Visitors:** Mary Cullinan, James Klein, David Oline, Lee Ayers,

Kristi Wright, Dennis Slattery, Max Goldman, Jody Waters,

Thomas Letchworth, Sam Pennington-Vrsek, Dale Vidmar, Sue Walsh, Promise Grace, Dylan Bloom, Jadon Berry, Danielle Mancuso, Alma Rosa Alvarez, Austin Roberts, Lora Stamper, John Taylor, Karen Stone

**Agenda**

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m.

**Announcements:**

There were no announcements.

**ASSOU report:**

Letchworth: I am pleased to announce after months of organizing and a solid 5 weeks spent out of class and in Salem we’re coming home with $500,000.

[applause]

Obviously it wasn’t just me, it was the whole ASSOU working as a team, it was you being lenient with your students in allowing them to take time out of class, extending a deadline here and there. I know that I’ve had some very wonderful professors who were willing to work with me.

The next step is we’re going to work on is outlining ways in which we would like to see that money utilized. We will work on constructing that tonight, and it should be public tomorrow. Obviously it’s not legally binding, but we’re hoping that it will be heeded.

Wright: ASSOU is working on another issue, unfair housing discrimination in Ashland against students. This is a big issue for students looking for housing off campus. They don’t even get a fair chance, there are places that say “no students” and we’re trying to end that. We’re having a forum tomorrow evening in Elmo’s at 5:30, it’s not just for students, it’s for all of our community members so we can have a good lively discussion on how we can make things fair for students while also respecting the landlords, and we want to build bridges between our campus and the community of Ashland. It should be a lot of fun, and there’s going to be pizza.

**IFS Report:**

Waters: We are meeting on the 28th and 29th so I expect our next report will be rather large. In our last meeting about 3 weeks ago we drafted bylaws and distributed them to the Board today. We feel it would be nice to go forward and have those bylaws ratified. So I think if there are no significant objections or questions, and anyone were in a mind to play the “let’s suspend the two-week rule” game, we would welcome and be very appreciative of a motion to approve those. We do meet in a couple of weeks, there are a few things that have come to our attention, one of which is there’s a reduction of funding for IFS President’s participation, which seemed a strange message since there had been such a strong message of support for IFS.

At the end of March there are a couple significant decisions and a couple of things moving forward on the governance models, which has been very ardently pursued as a topic for IFS. So we will ask again that we offer you the opportunity to wave and move forward, but the main thing I want to ask for, if we could beg your indulgence, in a short period of time of turnaround to ratify the bylaws.

Richards: I move that we wave the two-week rule in order to discuss the change in the IFS bylaws.

A second was made by Belcastro.

The motion passed with all in favor, none opposed, and one abstention (Mohammad).

 Carter: Alright, it passed. Just for clarification, as far as ratification, what exactly are you asking for us?

Waters went over the few changes in the document.

Purslow moved to ratify the proposed changes to the IFS bylaws, with a second by Richards.

Carter: Any discussion on the proposed changes to the IFS bylaws?

Nordquist asked Waters what her take was on the “3 votes versus 2.”

Waters felt it was fine.

The motion passed with all in favor, no objections, with two abstentions: Apodaca and Russell-Miller.

Cullinan: Dave and I had a conversation last week about how we can improve communication. One thing we thought of was to move the reports down to being discussions, so there would be a greater sense of “back and forth,” rather than having the President and Provost just report on things, which didn’t seem to be leading to discussions. So we’re trying that today.

I did want to make some remarks about the confidence vote, because we just need to have it out there and talk about it. Of course, I was saddened that people felt it was necessary. I do feel hurt, and I’m certainly affected by it. But I realize people needed to get it out there, and I appreciate that. And I heard people loud and clear. I’m going to talk with Dave and others later this week to talk about how we can move forward in a better way. It was really helpful having faculty last week meet with the Chancellor and her staff when they were here.

And it was incredibly helpful having four faculty work with us all weekend on the retrenchment plan. It was a very intense weekend, but having four very savvy numbers folks working with us, creating a team, was amazing. If we can create more teamwork like that we will be a better institution. So I want to say that I’m sorry that this has happened, but I do hope that we can work toward a better communication and a better future.

There was so much swirl about the article that John Darling wrote about my speech to the Rotary, so I just wanted to clarify. As I was leaving Rotary John came up to me and said, “So, do the faculty have the authority to hire or fire administrators?” I said “No. They are advisory. They make recommendations.” And he chose to write whatever he chose to write. I assure you I do not make comments about personnel decisions to the press. And I would not have said anything other than just “The faculty advise and recommend.” I think it was Kemble who wrote something about how the press writes what they want to write. And that is what happened.

So, I just wanted to precede any further conversation with saying I’m saddened, but I do hope we can work together and communicate better. And I tell you, having the teamwork this weekend was really remarkable. If that’s the kind of work that we can do together, I think this will be an amazing place. Thank you all, and I do want to have discussions on other topics later on, but I just wanted to get that out there.

**Elections Committee Report:**

Jamie Vener read the results of the Vote of Confidence that had gone out last week:

Craig Morris, Vice President of Finance and Administration received 165 (76%) votes of no confidence. Seventeen percent of faculty did not vote and 7% expressed confidence.

James Klein, Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, received 154 (71%) votes of no confidence. Fifteen percent of the faculty did not vote, and the remaining 14% expressed confidence.

President Mary Cullinan received 136 votes of no confidence (63%). Seventeen percent did not vote, and the remaining 17% expressed confidence.

Carter: So based on that material and the material in the Bylaws we shall send a Senate advisory recommendation to the proper authority, in this particular instance, the proper authority is President Cullinan.

Any questions or comments?

[There were none]

**Action Item: Carpenter I Grants**

Purslow moved to approve the Carpenter I Grants, with a second given by Nordquist. The motion passed with all in favor, none opposed, and one abstention (Whitman).

Carter: The House Proposal did go through the University Studies and it is here as an information item today that we can talk about. If we have questions about the material, or things we want to get more feedback on, we can certainly do this in a constructive fashion, so we can have some positive results from this discussion today. Karen Stone has agreed to come and talk about the budget.

Sahr: The Program Proposal lists 5 Houses for next year, and yet the notes on the proposal say there will be no new Houses next year. So I’m just trying to understand what was approved.

Ayers: There were two committees that reviewed this: the Curriculum Committee and the University Studies Committee. The University Studies Committee met last Friday on the 7th, and one of the recommendations, after approving the proposal, was that the Houses that have been in place this year move forward into next year under the new proposal. And that the four proposed Houses be put on hold until we have a better feel for what the three years of curriculum will look like. We don’t have the power to do more than say “Stop building Houses.”

Karen Stone presented the spreadsheet for the budget for the Houses and answered specific questions on it.

Lee Ayers went over the Overall House Proposal. The cover letter that she attached to it was to help dispel the myths and rumors going around about the Houses, and to clarify what the Houses are. The House Proposal is now aligned with the current University Studies Model with the D strand being done outside of the House.

Courses will go through the subcommittee, which consists of Curriculum Committee members, University Studies Committee members, and members from across the division. They will not come to Senate anymore.

Once the Senate approves that the proposals and shells are in place, everything through Honors and Houses would filter through based upon the shells being filled appropriately.

Purslow made a motion to discontinue the talk about University Studies for the remainder of the day so that we may have our discussion with the President and Provost. A second was made by Belcastro.

Sahr wished to make a friendly amendment that we continue this discussion at the next meeting.

Purslow amended her motion to prioritize the existing pilot Houses in our next discussion and after that we would consider the others. A second was made by Sahr.

The motion passed with all in favor, none opposed, and three abstentions (Richards, Brown and Whitman).

Richards read a letter from Vincent Smith:

"Teaching for the Green House this year has been both extremely rewarding and extremely challenging.  Many of our teaching strategies have worked well, some have failed.  Though I am happy to take partial blame for some of our teaching failures, I do want to point out that many of the barriers we face are structural.  For example, our biggest barrier to retention is scheduling.  Until such a time as SOU actually decides to try the House Experience in earnest, we will be unable to commit to the structural changes necessary to resolving conflicts of this sort.  In addition, our students are continuously faced with the reality that their major programs do not understand or are resistant to the House Experience.  While some advisers have contacted me or others involved in the House Experience for answers, others have simply advised students that the major does not work well with the House Experience.  The House Experience is currently regarded on-campus as "the other".  It has a separate website, a separate application process, a separate set of requirements, and even a separate marketing effort.  Until such a time as faculty and administration integrate the program as a serious part of our general education, we will struggle to recruit and retain students in the House Experience.  Finally, lack of clarity at the institutional level is constantly passed on to students.  Many of my students are concerned that the Green House  might not be taught next term or in future years.  They describe hearing rumors to this end.  Clarity would be extremely useful.  If SOU wants to implement a multi-year cohort-based general education program, we just need to try it.  It will take several years and a much more dedicated effort than two classes with limited support to make this successful.”

Sahr made a motion that the Senate supports that the two existing Houses move forward. A second was made by Feist.

The motion passed with all in favor, none opposed, and three abstentions (Ferguson, King, May).

Cullinan told us that the final retrenchment plan will come out later this week. She would like us to be coming together with some kind of process to establish values and goals. And we need to go beyond the kinds of goals we all agree on (student success, etc.), we need to be getting down into some real strategies for success as we look at this new world that we’re going into.

We’re also going into a new world in a year or two with different governance; we’re going to be very much on our own. She raised this very briefly with the team this weekend as they were talking about what was going to be coming forward. There was some sense from our faculty participants that the faculty are pretty overwhelmed right now with the academic reorganization, and that’s going to be on people’s minds and taking people’s time this Spring. Nonetheless Cullinan feels strongly that we need to be starting a planning process that we can enter more fully in the Fall.

She said we should get some things in place this Spring with Senate input. Maybe our focus for Spring and Summer will be more on the nonacademic parts of the university, and then we can focus more on the academic parts in the Fall. But we really do need to be talking together and strategizing because we are in a different world. We know we have constrained resources, and we are all concerned about keeping our students and increasing enrollment.

Cullinan said she hesitates to do the traditional approach-- to create an enormous committee, 40 people with representatives of every kind. Perhaps, instead, we could have smaller task forces that go forward and meet with UPB. Cullinan welcomes ideas.

Ferguson asked for further clarification on what we’re trying to accomplish from this.

Cullinan: I think we need to come out of this with a clear picture of where we want to invest, where we really want to prioritize. We need to be ready for whatever is coming forward in the Fall. If we increase our enrollment and have money to invest, do we have priorities set out? If we do not meet our enrollment goals and we are looking at some further reductions, what are the areas? I don’t want to be sitting here in November saying “Oops” or “Hey, look at what we have,” and we don’t have the priorities.

We need to be thinking strategically. Right now we have a strategic plan that is “up in the sky.” Yes, it’s all about academic distinctiveness, student success, and other good things. But we need to come down to really look at where we need to go.

Nordquist said that the state puts a high value on us serving the region and yet this is not listed as one of our goals. Trying to attract students from far and wide seems to him to not be dedicated to serving the region.

Cullinan said she believes we can attract people from out of the region to a university that is committed to serving the region. And that is the sort of conversation she would like us to have and translate that into academic and academic support areas. How could we do that better?

Vener said in the meeting with the Chancellor, the Chancellor was concerned that, being stuck in the retrenchment plan for a four-year period, there’s nothing built-in for reinvestment. This makes it difficult to take advantage of opportunities that arise. Vener suggested that we develop a “parallel plan” with the retrenchment plan that may look at “best-case” scenarios, “second-best-case” scenarios, etc. This would identify programs and opportunities that we would pounce on if it became available.

Cullinan thought that was a great idea. She does feel there will be opportunities for reinvestment. A retrenchment plan is not a strategic plan, and we need a plan.

King wondered how we could merge these two conversations which seem to him to be intertwined: how we move forward as an institution in developing a strategy that we have confidence in and the results of the confidence vote.

Cullinan said what she’s hearing is a greater desire for communication, and there are clearly issues of trust. She doesn’t know if it’s trust about the data, or something else. There needs to be a co-communication here because the only message she’s really received is “Let’s communicate.” That’s why we’re adjusting the agendas in the Senate so that we have some actual discussion and back and forth dialog. She will be meeting with David Carter and others this week and maybe we can work on some of this.

Klein said one of the ways they’ve been able to address the concerns is in the Advisory Council. We hadn’t really met this term, and the meetings in the Fall were all about the agenda. But last Monday we had a very honest and frank discussion. Thats’ a good place to start that discussion; and it’s a first step in trying to address some of the ways that we communicate. Klein, like the President, knows the anger and the frustration, but they don’t know the actual “Why?”

Russell-Miller said she is having trouble with the clarity between being regionally responsive and being a destination university; those seem like two very different things. So she would like to see some discussion on clarity there, what are the priorities between those two, and do they mix together?

Cullinan said we don’t have a whole lot of choice. We cannot afford to be all Oregon undergraduates, that’s all there is to it. If we didn’t have 1000 Californians here we would be in worse shape than we are now. And we value what our out-of-state students bring to us in terms of their experience, diversity, and retention.

We are a regional comprehensive university with a strong liberal arts background. We serve the region, but, like almost every institution of our size and our nature around the country, we have to attract folks from afar. Or we have to greatly increase our graduate numbers, or greatly increase our online numbers. We are looking at all of these variables. It’s a dilemma we’re all facing, but I do think we can work our way through this. We shouldn’t just be saying, “We’re All Things.” We can refine our focus, and we have to figure it out.

Feist said to Cullinan that it was good to hear about the faculty that worked with her on the retrenchment plan and that felt to him like communication. Cullinan said she was grateful for their help and that they saw everything with new eyes.

Ferguson felt that it was a little narrow to say the only way to increase revenue is by diversifying our students, she felt there are other revenues.

Cullinan: SOU exports the largest percentage of students to other OUS institutions than any other OUS university, and that is not good for us. This is part of the problem.

We have increased our endowment by $6 million in the last two or three years – but this does not support the general fund – it supports scholarships. This helps to support a lot of our students. Really, we are back to state allocation and tuition. We’ve got to play with those two numbers, and there are other ways. Maybe there’s grant money or foundation money for this or that, but we’ve got those two sources of revenue; the tuition one is by far the largest.

The Chancellor’s office suggested that we begin differential tuition in a big way – start charging for really popular programs. We have to do price sensitivity studies; for example, any theatre major has to pay full out of state tuition, but will that be survivable for the theatre program? It’s not an easy discussion, but it’s hard to get around that we only have these two sources of revenue for any foreseeable future.

Carter said we look a lot worse than the other universities in terms of getting money from grants, and that if there were more initiatives and support than we currently have, it would help.

Cullinan said she’s completely behind that and that’s why she supported the hiring of our Grants Coordinator, and she’s just getting started, and she’s going to be fantastic.

Sahr pointed out that on a per faculty basis, we bring in the same as Eastern, $3 million more per year; 30% of that is indirect costs; that $1 million. Western brings in $8.2 million per year more than we do; that’s $3 million in indirect costs every year – that would solve our budget problem right there. So to relegate this income source to “third class” is not a correct assumption. And he thinks the Foundation might be able to leverage Foundation money to support grant initiatives and things that could potentially generate revenue down the road.

Sahr added that if Cullinan and Klein were willing to participate in shared governance in the way it’s written into the constitution and Bylaws we would waste a lot less energy and time trying to demand shared governance. Instead of spending our time and energy on our students we’re worrying about things like a confidence vote. We don’t feel heard; we feel bypassed.

Cullinan said that’s why we’re having this discussion and she looks forward to meeting with David Carter later this week. She hasn’t had this level of conversation with us ever, but we can start now.

Purslow was concerned that Cullinan and Klein don’t have any sense what it is that bothers the faculty. Referring to a draft of the Faculty Senate meeting minutes, she gave some specific examples why there was a lack of confidence:

Sale of the bookstore that was supposed to bring in $1 million, and now it looks like it might only bring in $500 thousand.

Faculty feel that Klein perceives the faculty as lazy and not doing enough; and that many are afraid of him.

Klein: I don’t know where people have ever heard that I think they’re lazy. This is an incredibly hard working group folks.

Sahr: I heard you say at a meeting that we were a bunch of whiners. It may have been a “thrown-out sort of comment”, and not a serious heart-felt comment, but that hurts when you say that to us and we don’t know what to do with it. Now I haven’t heard the “lazy” comment, but I’ve heard from a number of people who have sat at meetings where you’ve said that word. And just to have that perception out there is damaging to our relationship.

Cullinan: Let me get back to the bookstore. We are going to get more information as we go forward to see what a vendor would propose. And if neither of the possibilities can produce what we can produce on our own we’re not going to outsource the bookstore. You are free to attend meetings on the bookstore process.

Sahr: To speak to the bookstore, we’re selling a revenue producing asset, and even though everybody thinks it’s a joke, your house is worth a million-and-a-half dollars, and we spend tens of thousands a year on upkeep on that house. Should we continue doing that in the future when we are a regionally responsive university in a region that is in a depression, essentially. Is that an appropriate thing to do? That’s a source of non-revenue producing income; how do we justify that? How do we have a Finance Director that won’t even give us a number, after three repeated requests in this room, for the actual value of that house?

Cullinan: It’s an OUS building, so it’s not like an SOU asset. I have no idea what the house is worth. It is part of my compensation, so if the house goes away something else has to happen in terms of my contract, and it’s and OUS deal, not an SOU deal.

Sahr: But if we were to go to OUS and say “Look, we don’t see this as a revenue producing asset, can we release this capital to reinvest in the university in things that do produce revenue?” I think they might be responsive to that. We aren’t even allowed to have that conversation because unfortunately our VP of Finance Administration is, I don’t even know what word to use, I think the general perception is that he’s not competent. And it’s not just me; you saw the vote of no confidence for him.

Cullinan: Let me come back to communication. No one has ever talked to me about my house, which is an OUS house. That’s another piece where I can get more information if it’s needed. It’s like an SOU asset like Churchill Hall or Taylor Hall owned by OUS. That’s as much as I know.

Sahr: You were in the room when I asked those questions, you were sitting right there.

Cullinan: I don’t know whatever happened with the rest of the conversation …

Sahr: I asked Craig for an answer. He thought it was a joke.

Cullinan: Now I know that Kevin, I don’t know what happened as a result of that conversation, and now I do.

Sahr: Alright, fair enough.

Cullinan: I don’t want us to be arguing, but there are sore feelings right now, but that’s why it’s good to have a conversation.

Nordquist felt that the reorganization will cause more of a hindrance to the direct communication between the faculty and President and Provost. Richards disagreed with that.

Cullinan suggested that we give the new reorganization a try. There was considerable support for when we created the college of Art and Sciences; it works on a lot of campuses, but it didn’t work out very well for us. We’re trying something else, and she has no doubt as we move forward there will be things that will need to be adjusted. It hasn’t even started yet, so let it go forward with these wonderful people who have stepped forward to be division directors. Let them do their work, see how it goes. But if we continue to communicate and say “Hey, that’s not working”, then we pivot.

Cullinan: To me I think the new structure is much more “SOU-like,” it reflects who we are, as opposed to just putting out a structure that reflects what a lot of other schools are.

Sahr noticed that two of the division directors are interim, and wondered what the procedure was for moving forward to get an actual director.

Klein: We’ll meet with the division faculty this Spring and talk about it.

Sahr: Are you going to do an external search?

Klein: I don’t think so. We haven’t had a lot of good luck with external hires, when we had Deans. I read all of the comments that you wrote about them. That was one of the reasons why I was very interested to see if we could make this work with the folks that people know, the internal folks. Let’s give that a try.

Carter: Now that we have all of the Directors identified, are we going to be seeing more materials as far as how they are going to allocate FTE within those divisions, and what chair responsibilities are going to be. What do you see for that timeline?

Klein: This Spring term is going to be transitional. It’s going to take a while for the Directors to get up to speed. One of the reasons for getting started this Spring was to give them time to be ready by the Fall.

Carter: Mary and I had a discussion about moving them so that we could have more of a discussion, like we had today. I would like to get your feedback, but I felt today’s conversation was pretty genuine and healthy, in terms of openness and actual communication, which I think is what the goal is.

Cullinan: We’re in momentous times; there’s never been so much change coming at an organization as there is right now, hitting SOU and the whole university system. The more that we can talk, the better.

Carter: I will table the House Proposal, keeping it as a discussion item, I will make sure that I put in the audio recording discussion, and potentially have a bookstore update.

Adjourned 6:06 p.m.