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Faculty Senate

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FACULTY SENATE MINUTES FOR February 6, 2007 (Vol. XXXV, No. 14)

The 2006 – 2007 Faculty Senate minutes and other information are available on the Web at <http://www.eiu.edu/~FacSen> The Faculty Senate agenda is posted weekly on the Web, at Physical Sciences Building 1450, and on the third-level bulletin board in Booth Library. Note: These minutes are not a complete verbatim transcript of the Senate meeting.

Call to Faculty: Faculty interested in serving on the Research and Creative Activities Advisory Board from the College of Arts and Humanities should contact John Pommier (jhpommier@eiu.edu or 581-6597).

I. Call to order by Chair Assege HaileMariam at 2:00 p.m. (University Ballroom)

Present: A. Brownson, L. Curry, R. Fischer, A. HaileMariam, B. Joyce, J. Kilgore, R. Mazumder, J. Pommier, T. Sinclair, J. Stimac, and B. Wilson. Excused: J. Ashley, R. Marshal, J. Snyder, and D. Van Gunten.

Guests: Listed under the individual break-out session they attended.

II. Approval of Minutes of 23 January.

Approval of the Minutes of 23 January (Wilson / Brownson) with correction – Yes: Brownson, Fischer, HaileMariam, Joyce, Kilgore, Mazumder, Pommier, Sinclair, Stimac, and Wilson. Abstain: Curry.

III. Announcements

IV. Communications

V. Old Business

A. Committee Reports

1. Executive Committee: no report.
2. Nominations Committee: no report.
3. Awards Committee: no report.
4. Elections Committee: no report.
5. Faculty – Student Relations Committee: no report.
6. Faculty – Staff Relations Committee: no report.
7. Budget Transparency Committee: no report.
8. Faculty Forum Committee: see New Business, below.
9. Other Reports
 - a) Provost's Report: no report.
 - b) Other Reports: no report.

V. New Business

A. Faculty and Student Forum.

The topic of this year's agenda, Promoting Academic Excellence, was introduced by Senator Wilson. After a brief overview of the topics and break out sessions, four discussion groups were formed: Academic Quality and Standards (John Kilgore, moderator and note taker), Research and Creative Activity (Robert Horvath, moderator; Tom Sinclair, note taker), Internships/Study Abroad/National Student Exchange (Mike Havey, moderator; Brenda Wilson, note taker), and Cultural Opportunities (Mona Davenport, moderator; Ann Brownson, note taker). The following summaries were submitted by session note takers. Recommendations follow.

Academic Quality and Standards.

Attendees: Sean Anderson, Kathy Bower, Charles Eberly, Robert Fischer, Chris Hanlon, Michelle Hopper, Bonnie Irwin, James K. Johnson, Chris McCormick, Suzie Park, Mildred M. Pearson, Ashley Rueff, Jeff Stowell, Charles, Wharran, Bill Wolf, Bailey Young.

We can do more, perhaps much more, to project an image of Eastern that emphasizes academic achievement as our central value. In particular, the point was strongly made that high school seniors in

Illinois do not, at this point, think of Eastern as the school most likely to challenge them academically and set them on the path to professional success. It was suggested that Eastern's web page might place greater emphasis on the long-term success of alumni while emphasizing short-term gratification a bit less. At this point, however, we became aware of some sharp tradeoffs. The danger in promoting college as a route to career success is that it may undercut two other traditional goals of the liberal arts, education for citizenship and for human completeness. Further, an overly single-minded emphasis on academic rigor might obscure the commitment to individual student success that has been Eastern's hallmark, and might even work to discourage applications from disadvantaged students. It remains true, however, that a huge majority of students conceive of career preparation as their most important goal in college, and this fact must be dealt with. It was suggested that EIU could make better use of the data it already collects on incoming students and the decision process that leads them here; and that we need to participate more fully in the National Study of Student Engagement.

One participant suggested that EIU's lack of a truly rigorous foreign language requirement, and its use of a textbook rental system rather than a purchase arrangement, were factors that detracted from the appearance and reality of academic excellence—or that at least those questions should be energetically pursued.

Turning to the matter of academic grading standards, we found some consensus that the present situation lacks clarity and coherence. Grades seem generally inflated and institutional benchmarks extremely rare; the relatively new institution of student evaluations exerts a significant pressure toward higher grades, a linkage that calls for fuller scrutiny than it has yet received. In the end grades convey little to anyone outside the immediate context of a given class, simply because no clear definitions of grades exist, nor any mechanism for ensuring that such definitions be adhered to. Absent explicit standards, the expectation that the professionalism of instructors will suffice to stave off grade inflation is misplaced and may be disingenuous.

The good news is that the academic mission survives this odd predicament quite well; excellence in teaching and learning are still inexplicably common, and may even be fostered by what looks more and more like a system of *de facto* pass-fail grading. Even so, our grading practices deserve further investigation and discussion; perhaps we should at least articulate a rationale for the current state of affairs, since a determined critique from the outside can make our practices appear permissive or hypocritical. Beyond this, our group had several particular suggestions: 1) Encourage or require faculty to report personal grading statistics in their portfolios; 2) Give more explicit grading guidelines and benchmarks to new faculty in particular; 3) Make institutional data on grading patterns and statistics more visible and accessible. Not everyone agreed on all of these points.

A final general point seemed to cast a helpful light on all the particular issues we had visited. Though classroom experience is the heart of college education, extracurricular activities are also enormously important, often almost equally so where the graduate's first job is concerned. We seem to be doing a better job inside the classroom than outside, and should work hard to integrate the two areas, seeking every opportunity to connect course work to internships, club participation, study abroad, campus events, cultural opportunities, and work experience. Ideally, we want our graduating seniors to have not just a transcript attesting to intellectual aptitudes, but a resume showing significant real-world experience, with the two together reflecting an overall consistency of purpose.

One participant advocated for participating in the Cooperative Institutional Research Program, and making full use of the ACT Profile Report as well as other student recruitment services offered by ACT.

Research and Creative Activity.

Attendees: Terrence Books, Bob Chestnut, Jessica Eyer, Robert Horvath, Bill Joyce, Blair Lord, Rajit Mazumder, Graham Milldrum, Tom Sinclair, Jenny Sipes, Wafeek Wahyby.

How do we support faculty initiated research/creative activity?

- Robert Horvath stated that he sees the need for a broader representation is needed from all areas of the university to discuss different levels and types of research/creative activity.
- There needs to be a clearer understanding of what is creative activity and research and how they are the same and different. With this discussion it needs to be determined if these two areas are of equal importance. Also it needs to be determined if the goals are different or the same!
- In art there is no clear understanding of the outcome and it is often misunderstood especially in the quest for research/creative activity monies at the university level.
- Traditions vs. Creative – there are many different techniques utilized in research/creative activity. A

consideration should be whether it useful in a discipline. This is challenging due to tangible results that do not always happen. The result is the building of some future knowledge or outcome that is not clearly defined.

- Bob Chestnut stated that the form is determined by the faculty member
- Bill Joyce stated that research often thought to form the perspective of the null hypothesis and we need to broaden this idea and communicate how this can be judged.
- Robert stated that considerations should include is it new? Important? Relevant?
- Bill stated that this should be reviewed by peers and uses accreditation criteria when it is appropriate and expect an outcome that is acceptable within the given discipline.
- Tom Sinclair stated that research is very different in special education as it is difficult to get large numbers of subjects so we must utilize single subject research design and build a knowledge base. This is acceptable in the profession but not to other disciplines.
- A big question is how could this be supported at the department level? College? University? In a fair and equitable manner?
- Rajit stated that his research has higher cost because much of it is done in India and the travel and expenses are much greater. The support for this is necessary for this research to be completed.
- Bob Chestnut said that the three things are necessary to support research: money, time, and people. There is funding in place for release time and awards in fall and summer. The departments need to address the people issue.
- Bill stated that some universities take a portion of professors pay and use that to support a research pool. Dean of the particular college would have the pool and distribute the funds.
- Rajit again emphasized the need for resources for more cost and time intensive research. He sees this as the big challenge as the focus is on the present project but still must plan for future development of projects.
- Two rounds of funding in summer and fall led to some discussion of:
- How effective is the way that the grant awards are determined?
- Perception is that it is very difficult for some areas to get these awards how can we change this perception or reality?
- IS there a concrete clearly defined manner in which these awards/grants are determined that is sensitive to the differences across disciplines?

What undergraduate and graduate research opportunities should be available for students?

- Bob Chestnut shared that Wisconsin-Eau Claire has a fund where the students pay a fee that goes directly to research that involves undergraduate and graduate students. A move for this would probably have to start with the student senate. There are about 25 \$4000 awards to faculty at the present time here at EIU.
- Art is more of a continual line of research/creative activity, which is generally tied to their work/research at shows and applied techniques/information.
- In art the students generally pair with a faculty member to build what the student wants to do. Hours of work goes into this type of work.
- Robert posed the question of how can we increase the recognition or prestige of working with faculty? How could we honor this work and accomplishment?
- Also need for monetary stipend for students to engage in research with faculty.
- Robert shared that in art much of this type of work is done at summer residencies and academies. How could we fund students to go? Maybe matching funds that they receive from the academies?
- Bill brought up the point that much research does not fit into time frames that students are here. We basically have them for 2 years in our discipline and then they graduate. Projects do not always fit into this time frame and this is another challenge.
- What research students do is often determined by the program they are in and not what is going to be published in professional journals.
- The group wondered if students know about or understand how participation in research affects their futures. How do we improve this understanding?
- Assege state that research is a part of the Psychology curriculum and 20+ students present at conferences per year. This is done in a class that is an introduction to the profession.
- The need also to assist students and faculty to share research with other students and faculty members across disciplines. At this time it is seen as very departmental and not communicated across campus.
- Bill stated that it is necessary to be well read outside and inside your discipline and this is needed for

true academic dialogue.

- Graduate student intern stated that she did not know about research and working with faculty until after 2 bachelor degrees and a master's degree.

Summary of Main Points for future consideration:

- Do student know about undergraduate research? How do we expand their awareness? Future possibility of undergraduate research fair.
- Define and communicate what is the process and what is research/creative activity in different discipline.
- Faculty to student mentoring the idea of research and making it meaningful (time and willingness the only cost).
- Needs of departments and colleges vary widely as are the resources that are perceived as available to faculty? Must set priorities.
- Need of faculty to know how it is determined by discipline and the needs that go with research/creative activity in a given discipline.
- Research by both faculty and students is valued by the university, but looks different depending on discipline. We must define this, communicate this and establish guidelines to allow for this in grant competition.
- Idea that could faculty senate/student senate support undergraduate research fair?

Internships/Study Abroad/National Student Exchange.

Attendees: Lynn Curry, Melissa Faller, Mike Havey, Mallory Holle, Kahlyn Lonkar, Margaret Messer, Cathy Passananti, Colleen Schoenfeld, John Stimac, Wendy Williamson, Brenda Wilson, Mark Woodsmall.

Questions in this discussion were 1) What does EIU presently do to promote internships and study abroad? 2) What more could be done? 3) What can students do to create their own opportunities for learning outside of the classroom?

In a discussion of study abroad, current avenues of promoting study abroad were stated to include Freshman Orientation, class presentations, informational session for interested students, tables at campus events, Study Abroad Fairs, etc. There is reportedly 30-50% growth in students taking advantage of study abroad from year to year. Suggestions for increasing interest in study abroad included getting the message out to students while they were still in high school. It was felt by students in the discussion group that this was a valuable experience that should be considered before applying to college. A suggestion was that students who had participated in study abroad could be recruited and used as ambassadors when they return to their high schools. Another important point was that scholarships or tuition waivers for students enrolling in study abroad would be very beneficial. One participant initiated a discussion on the option of doing student teaching abroad for education majors.

It was determined that internships at EIU take many forms. Some program representatives reported required internships either at the graduate or undergraduate level. Some departments offered optional internship opportunities. While many internships are unpaid, many are paid. There was a discussion of opportunities for matching internship dollars through an EIU grant for undergraduate internships. All students and faculty members agreed that internships were valuable experiences for students, and that they provided a great transition for students when applying for that first job. Students can and do develop their own internships, either while in school or after they graduate. Psychology offers a one credit course on Orientation to Internships. For students who are interested in ROTC, but didn't begin the program when they entered school, there is a five week summer internship that allows them to catch up and still be eligible for the program. There was general consensus that internships should be coordinated at EIU, ideas shared, and opportunities be expanded.

National Student Exchange is new at EIU, but students are already applying. This program allows undergraduate students to take a semester or a year of courses at a participating university outside of Illinois. Students pay EIU tuition while in this program. Again, it was felt that this opportunity should be prominent on the EIU web page, and that students should begin considering this option before they apply to colleges.

In general, participants felt that all of these learning experience options for students should be prominent on each piece of marketing materials for potential EIU students. Students felt that recruiters should tell high school students about these opportunities even though they may not know to ask about them. While study abroad and NSE are well organized programs at EIU, internships require a central

coordination to maximize benefits for students. General orientation courses about internship, study abroad, and NSE opportunities should be considered by all departments.

Cultural Opportunities.

Attendees: Ann Brownson, Mona Davenport, Diane Jackman, Jess Kinsella, Allen Lanham, Jeff Large, Jeffrey Lynch, JC Miller, Kimberlee Moock, John Oertling, John Pommier, Karla Sanders, Elise Sommerfeld, Paul Willard.

During this breakout discussion, we began with an overview/listing of the types of cultural opportunities that are available on campus. Among activities listed were theatre, music, lecture series, a variety of film series, special months (Asian American, African American, Hispanic American, Native American), University Board offerings, Teach me Tuesdays, and athletic events.

Almost immediately, a wide-ranging discussion followed of the cultural disconnect that seems to exist related to many of these activities—that many events are brought in to entertain, rather than to educate. One example of this was the bringing in of reality TV “stars”. The only events that get attendance are these kinds of activities. A need to build rapport with students was discussed—offering things that they WILL attend first, and getting interest and buy-in toward attending ANY events as opposed to sitting in one’s room, and then moving on to more diverse programming.

A question was raised as to why students do not attend cultural programming...they don’t care, they like what they already know and do not want to extend their comfort zone. It was suggested that people look at the world as if they are in the dark and only see what is in their flashlight’s beam, and the mission of the university is to widen that beam, to extend cultural awareness. It was also suggested that for many students (and other members of the university community) that it is a marketing issue, that people really need to be hit over the head with advertising before they see that something is happening that they might wish to attend. Flyers just don’t work—it is important to advertise where students are—facebook, email, text messaging—other new strategies, and that the co-curricular needs to be incorporated into the curricular. For example, if a faculty member suggests that students attend an event, the faculty member should be there, of course, and that after the event, there should be some kind of follow-up or discussion. A student stated that students are looking for what they can get out of their participation and talked about how important that interaction was. It’s not enough for students to attend events that faculty suggests—they also want to talk about it. They want interaction rather than one-way communication.

Another issue raised was the campus culture/environment. It was said that at many other schools, there is school spirit and students, faculty and staff are involved in the life of the campus. The fact that many faculty members do not live in the Charleston area makes it difficult for them to be involved in campus life, and students notice that. However, it is not only the faculty that drive this involvement. One example of lack of involvement was related to lack of attendance at athletic events.

How do we get students to adopt a concern for their own education? One of the issues with this generation of students is that throughout their lives, nearly every moment has been structured. They have been taken to soccer practice, ballet, play groups, etc. since they were little, and may not have the skills to find things to do on their own. We also need to fight through the belief that if something is educational, it is loathsome.

So how do we promote international awareness and experiences of cultural and ethnic diversity? Again, we talked about marketing, a University wide calendar, and how different departments are supporting some of the University-wide events that are being held (e.g. the various ethnic months). Are we assessing the events that are already happening? Perhaps we need to go with less events, but bring in higher quality. We talked briefly about small study abroad events, and that as the number of students who are participating in study abroad grows, there may be an increase in cultural/international awareness.

A final thing discussed was the idea of collaboration, that many groups could come together in support of a larger event. For example, an international symposium that would include things like poster sessions from study-abroad participants, programs from international students, and major speakers from a variety of disciplines might be a good thing. Perhaps we need to come up with a yearly theme and program in a more focused way related to that theme. The one-book-one-university program was mentioned. It was also said that without resources being put toward this initiative, it will not happen. The university community needs to decide that this is important and begin to make linkages to begin to make it happen.

General Recommendations

Academic Standards and Quality.

- Faculty Senate should appoint a Liaison for Publicity, a faculty member serving for a two-year term, whose responsibility would be to work creatively with Admissions, University Communications, and Alumni Services to suggest ways in which publicity materials can emphasize academic excellence and career success.
- Increase distribution of Old Main Line around the state.
- Make institutional data on grading patterns available to all faculty on a password-protected website. Send an e-mail message to all faculty each semester when new data have been compiled.
- Recruit 20-50 faculty members to participate in a study of “faculty motivation and performance at EIU.” Participants would be asked to respond in depth to two main questions: 1) What factors have most encouraged in you a wholehearted commitment to EIU, in and out of the classroom, and what factors have most discouraged this? 2) How do student evaluations affect your performance of your basic academic duties, and in particular your grading patterns? The anonymity of all participants should be carefully guarded, but for the second question, ACFs should be studied as a separate cohort. The study might last two hours, and suggestions for improvement would be solicited in both areas.

Research and Creative Activity.

- Clearer definitions of research/creative activity with consideration of different disciplines in regard to competition for grants and awards.
- EIU should have an undergraduate research fair to celebrate undergraduate research.

Internships/Study Abroad/NSE.

- Promote these types of learning experiences in all marketing materials.
- Establish coordination of internships at a university level.

Cultural Opportunities.

- Continue to work toward an all-university program/event calendar.
- Discuss how attendance at cultural events can be made more relevant than just extra credit points for classes.

VI. Adjournment at 3:30 p.m.

Future Agenda Items: Construction Updates; Athletics; Research and Sponsored Programs, Faculty Retirement Reception, EWP Survey Results; Family Friendly Campus Initiative; Faculty Handbook.

Respectfully submitted,

John Paul Stimac