**Minutes of the Spring All Faculty Meeting**

March 26, 2013

Classroom Building 203

Chair Ed Corwin called the meeting to order shortly after 4 pm. There were 13 members of the faculty present.

**General discussion of issues**

1. *Emeritus policy*. Dr. Corwin discussed the current draft of the Emeritus Professor policy as presented by Dr. Gunn in the February 14 Senate Meeting. Among the new aspects, the policy puts as minimum requirements service of at least 10 years with “significant contributions” to the university; the application is made during the final year as faculty; emeritus rank requires approval by the Faculty Senate; and the emeritus rank assumes further responsibilities including advocacy on behalf of the university. Several concerns were voiced regarding this policy, including:
   * *The role of the Senate*: why should the Senate have any say in the granting of emeritus status? As explained by Dr. Kyle Riley, who was a part of the committee that drafted the proposal, this was an attempt to add a layer of transparency to the process: it provides an official “paper trail” as well as serving the purpose of notifying the faculty through their Senators.
   * *Overstepping the BOR policy*. The official Board of Regents policy on emeritus rank already includes minimal eligibility criteria for the emeritus rank as well as the benefits conferred from it; we open a potential can of worms by trying to paraphrase these policy points rather than referring directly to them. Moreover, BOR policy specifically allows for each institution to determine their own process for recommending emeritus rank and allowing further benefits from attaining it; consequently the SDSMT policy should address only these two aspects, and nothing else.
   * *Responsibilities of emeritus faculty*. Faculty overwhelmingly felt that the imposition of responsibilities fundamentally goes against the spirit of the emeritus rank. Consequently, they recommended that the sentences regarding the expected responsibilities of emeritus faculty be stricken.
2. *Changes to the By-Laws.* Dr. Corwin presented the proposed change to the By-Laws of the Faculty Senate as approved of by the Senate at the January 17 meeting. As explained by Dr. Stan Howard, the essential changes gave the Senate the ability to elect a new Chair (or propose an ad hoc procedure to seat one) in the event that the normal election procedure failed to nominate a one. Some concern was voiced over the Senate’s ability to elect a Chair on its own; Dr. Howard clarified that such an event would occur only after the faculty had already had a voice in the process through the standard nominating procedure outlined in the By-Laws; it simply prevented the Senate from falling into subsequent limbo if that process proved insufficient. After further friendly amendment wordsmithing, the faculty present voted unanimously to approve the new By-Laws.
3. *Starfish*. Dr. Corwin relayed information from his discussion with Dr. Gunn regarding Starfish. Mandated by the Board of Regents and to be implemented system-wide in Fall 2013, Starfish is an online “retention and early intervention” program that issues progress reports to students, Pat Beau, coaches and (possibly) advisors on students in academic jeopardy. According to Dr. Gunn, Starfish will in general be used just like DEF notices, except that they will be issued at 3 and 8 weeks into the semester, although there is no faculty requirement that grading events need be scheduled at 3 or 8 weeks. Faculty members were decidedly skeptical on the potential benefits of the system, raising several concerns:

* Starfish has the ability to include behavioral concerns along with academic ones. Is the faculty responsible for reporting behavioral issues as well? What level of surveillance is expected of the faculty regarding their students?
* Just how effective will automated email alerts be in motivating a student that cannot already be bothered to email (or respond to emails from) his or her professor? Faculty worry that Starfish is an “expensive administrative solution to an academic problem.”
* Is there any research that this kind of system increases retention or student performance? If so, what is it; if not, what are the goals of this experiment? Faculty members were wary of being “suckered into another piece of software.”

Since Starfish is a statewide program, many faculty members felt it appropriate to seek out the views of other Senate Chairs in the state system.

1. *Lecturer oversight.* Current university policy leaves the oversight of a department’s lecturers entirely up to the Department Head. However, in the March Senate meeting some Senators, noting the vested interests faculty have in hiring effective lecturers, expressed concern over the lack of professorial oversight in the lecture track; for example, the lack of involvement in the faculty in the advancement process of lecturers, or the ability of the lecture track to independently select the elementary textbooks (and therefore the learning outcomes) of a program without faculty input. Many of the faculty members noted that in their respective departments, the professoriate *are* a part of the textbook selection process or the drafting of learning outcomes, whence a current problem might reflect less on the nature of the lecturer ranks than a failure of proper supervision at the Department Head level. It was also noted that while the Tenure and Promotion Committee ensures some level of quality control by the professoriate, there is no such analogous committee for lecturers; however, as a counterpoint, it was also noted that problems with lecturer quality would typically come to light through comments by students and faculty in addition to departmental evaluations, which would again add a measure of professorial input into the advancement of lecturers.

Discussion of parking policy was deferred due to the lateness of the hour. The meeting adjourned at 5:15 pm.