**Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting**

January 23, 2014

Bump Conference Room

**I. Call to order**

Chair Ed Corwin called the meeting to order at 11:05 AM.

**II. Roll call**

Senators present: Drs. David Boyles, Al Boysen, Robert Corey, William Cross, Marius Ellingsen, Adam French, Patrick Gilcrease, Travis Kowalski, Timothy Masterlark, Frank Matejcik, Charles Tolle, Purushotham PT Tukkaraja, and Frank Van Nuys.

Also attending: Provost Duane Hrncir, Jesse Herrera, Hacklynn Stephen.

**III. Approval of agenda**

The agenda was approved.

**IV. Approval of minutes**

The minutes of the December 11, 2013 meeting of the Faculty Senate were approved.

The New Business items of the agenda were addressed first in the interests of the visitors’ time.

**V. New business**

1. *Report from the Provost*. Provost Hrncir met with the Senate to discuss several matters of interest to the University.
2. *StraighterLine*. There are both national and system-level discussions about accepting course credit for StraighterLine’s online courses. Academic Affairs has indicated that SL courses might be acceptable for some Gen Ed courses, and produced a list of “acceptable” courses. However, they felt that SL courses should not be accepted for upper-level and/or major-specific courses; moreover, this policy seems to be what our sister universities are doing. Dr. Hrncir would further recommend we not accept SL credit for Mines “gate-keeper courses” like introductory Chemistry or Calculus. The Regents have indicated that it is up to each campus to decide its policy with regards to SL; however, if a campus such as BHSU accepts Course X via SL and then transfers to SDSMT, we would almost certainly be required to accept the credit. The Senate’s major issues of concern were with the rigor of such courses, including (1) though final exams through SL are proctored like AP exams, they do not have AP’s proven track record for their classes, and (2) since SL offers only classes rather than degrees, it need not be accredited, and as a rule we generally don’t accept courses from non-accredited programs. In the end, the Provost asked the Senate to draft a recommendation for a course of action, either to recommend that Provost Hrncir (continue to) argue at the system-level for the “exceptionality” of Mines as a reason to exclude SL courses at SDSMT, or to pursue working with SL.
3. *Desire 2 Learn*. Dr. Hrncir addressed the question of whether or not faculty would be required to use D2L as a part of their classes. Though this is a requirement at some sister institutions, it is only a “local” requirement, and neither SDSMT nor the Regents give any indication of making it a global one. That being said, certain applications (like TurnItIn) may only be available through D2L; others (like Starfish) are easily accessible through it.
4. *Vice President of Research Affairs search*. The search committee has had phone interviews with its pool of 6 or so top candidates. As with the Presidential Search, the top 3 candidates will be interviewed on the same day on campus (tentatively, February 22). Details are still forthcoming.
5. *Graduate student funding.* Dr. Hrncir discussed the contentious mandate that all graduate students have their tuition and fees paid through grants, which had come about when Ron White had expressed concerns that we might have an auditing problem because SDSMT didn’t treat all its employees on federal grants the same. Acknowledging the protests and concerns of the faculty (the issue had come up repeatedly in Senate meetings during 2013), the *mandate* has been revoked, but it is still a *strong recommendation*. Absent this mandate, noted Dr. Hrncir, the campus must address ways to stay competitive in graduate education. “Full tuition and fees” is a common incentive in other graduate programs, but without something similar at SDSMT, we will not be able to sustain the graduate programs we already have, much less grow the program. The Senate noted that in addition, the average graduate offer of $20K is ridiculously small in comparison to similar graduate programs; moreover, we don’t have any married student housing, which is also a problem.
6. *University growth*. The school’s enrollment is up 6% over last spring, which is close to the desired 5% growth rate. Dr. Hrncir noted a potential problem in this good news: in Fall 2013, the freshmen enrollments were up 20%, having a net effect of a 9% boost at the University level. However, sustained 8-9% growth will strain our already tight resources, so we may have to look in the near future at tightening enrollment numbers.

As for growth on the campus itself, the new Wellness Center breaks ground in April 2014; a new project manager is being brought in to overs it. There is also talk of a new energy research building to be funded entirely by private dollars. There has also been a request sent out for the next phase of university housing to be ready by 2016.

On a different front, as of January 2014 Facilities is no longer contracted through Aramark*;* JerilynRoberts has taken on the role of Facilities Director.

1. *Intercultural Development Inventory*. Jesse Herrera (Director of Multicultural Affairs) and Hacklynn Stephen (Human Resources) spoke to the Senate about the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). The IDI provides a means to improve how we grow and collaborate with a diverse student body by assessing (an individual’s/a university’s) “intercultural competence.” It is a 50-item questionnaire that measures a mindset for cultural adaptation and acceptance, and provides means to improve diversity and performance, and to reduce conflict; it has been well vetted, is statistically valid, non-biased, and predictive. The IDI would be administered to SDSMT faculty and staff to provide a baseline for campus cultural competency, which would identify areas to make the campus more attractive to students with a different background (women students, students of color, foreign students, etc.) and provide concrete, quantitative, and statistical multicultural data available for grant proposals that require diversity data. The University can then develop new programs based on the IDI results, after which the IDI can be re-administered later to assess improvement measures and for quality control.

Some Senators expressed concern about the anonymity versus confidentiality of the survey results: Mr. Herrera noted that the results are not anonymous but kept confidential; individual results could be analyzed (at cost). Another concern regarded the potential outcomes of the IDI; Mr. Herrera noted that the purpose of the IDI was not to analyze demographics and groups, but rather to determine how we as a campus interact with those groups, and what could be done to make it more appealing to groups that are historically underrepresented. Another Senate concern was on the appropriate focus of the results: the *campus* or the *discipline*? Many Senators noted that “written, symbolic science” is the dominant mode of discourse on the campus; as such, it ignores other traditional forms of information transmission (e.g. oral tradition) and learning strategies. Consequently, it is entirely possible that the *campus* as a whole is culturally competent, but the *disciplines in which we focus* are not. Mr. Herrera noted these as valid concerns, and noted that the IDI would at least provide a concrete dataset on which to base these discussions.

**VI. Report from the chair**

* The Nominating Committee has been form: Senators Cross, Ellingsen, and Tukkaraja, together with Drs. King Adkins and Kazem Sohraby.
* Dr. Sadegh Safarzadeh has joined the Research and Scholarly Affairs committee.
* A General Faculty Meeting is scheduled for January 30.
* The Bylaws Committee needs to tweak the bylaws to allow moving the date of a Senate meeting when such meetings conflict with other university functions.

**VII. Committee reports**

* The standing committees had nothing to report.

**VIII. Old Business**

* There was no old business to discuss.

**VII. Adjournment**

The Senate adjourned at 12:15 PM.