

Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting

March 15, 2018

Bump Conference Room

I. Call to order

Chair Rod Rice called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM.

II. Roll call

Senators present: Drs. Andrea Brickey (MEM), Robert Corey (PHYS), William Cross (METE), Patrick Gilcrease (CBE), Mengistu Nisrani (CEE for Marc Robinson), Mark Novak (CABS), Darin Pagnac (GEOL/GEOE), Adam Piper (IEEM), Albert Romkes (ME), Charles Tolle (ECE), Frank Van Nuys (SS), Jon Weiss (MCS), and Coach Jason Henry (Athletics)

III. Approval of agenda

The agenda was approved by voice vote.

IV. Approval of minutes

The minutes of the February 8, 2018 meeting of the Faculty Senate were approved by voice vote.

V. Report from the Chair

Dr. Rice included the following material in his report from the chair.

Dr. Rankin is considering changing the way in which commencement speakers are honored. Traditionally, SD Mines has given an honorary degree to a single individual and paid for the speaker's trip to Rapid City. However, Dr. Rankin is proposing giving two honorary degrees to alumni and others with distinguished careers and inviting an additional VIP to do the commencement speech. .

The Strategic Plan is also under review. All six goals and the structure/content will be reviewed. The Executive Committee will drive this, and preliminary plans include appointing an 8 to 12 member steering committee composed of faculty and staff. This steering committee will oversee a group of 40-60 faculty and staff who will be used in smaller groups to examine each goal. With respect to faculty, Dr. Rice believes the most important current goals are Student Success, Research, and People. Dr. Rice invited Provost Kouris to the next All-Faculty Meeting to discuss this and other issues. He also asked senators to identify colleagues who might be good candidates to serve on the steering committee.

VI. Committee reports

Committee reports are covered in old and new business.

VII. Old business

A. Chair of Faculty nomination committee

Senator Piper indicated that six candidates expressed interest in being the Chair of the Faculty Senate. These candidates were Drs. Abata (ME), Muci (ME), Jensen (IEEM), Ahrenkiel (NANO), Montoya (ECE), and Cross (MET). The candidates will be introduced to the faculty at the March All-Faculty Meeting. The initial election will be held April 3-6, 2018 and follow Senate By-Laws procedures.

B. Department Senate elections

Other than METE, all departments who have an expiring Senate term had sent their choices for their new Senator to Dr. Rice. METE was delayed pending the Faculty Chair elections because Dr. Cross is one of the candidates.

C. Plus/minus grading resolution

MCS and some GEOL/GEOLE faculty prefer plus/minus grades because they provide more precision and flexibility in grading. Conversely, others suggested that this often leads to increased student complaints and that faculty may end up spending more time adjudicating small differences in grades. Some were also concerned that a shift to plus/minus grades would require reconfiguring GPAs and may require some sort of accommodation for students caught in the middle of the transition. Still others believed the extra “granularity,” as Dr. Weiss put it, would be useful. On the other hand, MEM and IEEM were split. All departments were asked to discuss the issue with their constituents and give feedback to the Senate.

VIII. New business

A. Curriculum proposals (at http://sdmines.sdsmt.edu/cgi-bin/global/a_bus_card.cgi?SiteID=424026)

The curriculum proposals that had passed the Curriculum Committee were presented to the Senate. Only EE301/L and EE 303/L were discussed in detail. ECE wishes to separate the grading of the lab and class for both of these courses starting in the current semester. Some senators questioned why averaging the grades was not sufficient. Mainly, the request for separate grades was thought to have arisen because the labs are not being taught by the same instructor as the main course. Why this proposed shift is beneficial was not entirely clear. In addition, there could be legal liability from splitting these during the semester, which would be inconsistent with grading procedures established in course syllabi at the start of the spring term. These two course approvals were tabled until the April Senate meeting, when one of the originators would be invited to address the subject. The other curriculum requests were approved by voice vote.

B. Emerita/Emeritus requests (Dr. Sneller, Dr. Petukhov, Professor Mitchell)

The requests for Dr. Sneller, Dr. Petukhov, and Professor Mitchell were approved. The Senate noted that all three have made significant, lasting contributions to SD Mines and strongly supported their respective requests for emerita/emeritus.

C. Time limits for completion of undergraduate degrees

The Academic Affairs Committee was asked to investigate what other states do with respect to this issue and gather additional information.

D. Agenda for 27 March All-Faculty Meeting

The agenda for the All-Faculty Meeting included inviting Provost Kouris to discuss the review of the Strategic Plan, outlining procedures for the Chair election, revealing the names of the Chair candidates, and identifying Senate membership for AY 2018-19.

IX. Other

On behalf of Dr. Montoya (ECE), Dr. Tolle asked if the Senate had any ideas about what could be done about poor response rates for the online IDEA surveys.

X. Adjournment

The next Senate meeting was set for 12 April 2018 at 11 AM in the Bump Lounge. The Senate adjourned at 12:30 PM.