

Meeting Minutes
Faculty Senate Rules Committee
September 16, 2011, 1:00 p.m., 2237 TLC

Members Present:

Margaret Mitchell, Chair; John Ponder, Co-Chair
Ron Best, Lisa Connell, Linda Haynes, Michael Horvath, Ravic Ringlaben, Jane Simpson,
Andrea Stanfield

Margaret Mitchell brought the meeting to order. The first discussion was related to meeting times. The consensus was that the committee will meet monthly – the week before Faculty Senate meets – and then other times as needed. The meetings will be on Fridays at 1:00 p.m.

Margaret Mitchell advised the committee that she and John Ponder are co-chairing the committee with Margaret listed as the Chair of record.

For future meetings, Margaret Mitchell will send out a call for agenda items.

President's Special Commission to Improve Graduation Rates

The first charge discussed was feedback on the draft report of the President's Special Commission to Improve Graduation Rates. The following general items were discussed.

Reference was made to page 17 of the report and the importance of the number of seats addressed. Equal emphasis on supporting faculty was not found and more emphasis on faculty would help.

A problem to be addressed is the number of students being dropped for non-payment and then requiring faculty to fill out forms to add the students back.

On page 3 of the report, faculty would be ideally placed for involvement.

The large number of DWF grades was noted. The need for more information about the type of instruction was discussed. Discussion also focused on the fact that the courses may be too difficult for students who are often underprepared. Further committee discussion centered on the need to review course requirements and prerequisite skills that are necessary for student success.

Other discussion focused on the need to look at our peers. For example, who is doing a better job at getting students through? We also need to identify who will be in charge of a general area because the report contains so much material that keeping track can be difficult.

We also need to identify which recommendations will get the best results. We also need to see more action items. For example, choose two or three things and decide where to start.

Further discussion focused on the need to talk more with the students.

Michael Horvath stated that we are accepting the burden of responsibility and noted that the burden belongs to students and we cannot study for students. He also noted that we talk about student preparedness and we need better K-16 alignment. He also pointed out that we need to make our expectations known and also go outside our walls and partner with K-12 schools.

Committee discussion also focused on the characteristics of students and the fact that although the majority of our students are in the traditional age group, many of them have children and/or work full-time. Discussion also focused on the need for more information about the reasons for the problems. Recommendation #45 was noted with the point that sometimes students cannot attend class due to a babysitter cancellation for example. Other points made were that we need to raise graduation rates without lowering expectations and we also need to know more about student preparation.

As a summary, the committee developed four recommendations:

1. Consult more with students.
2. Prioritize which solutions are easiest to implement for more immediate results.
3. Prioritize student needs according to which solutions will make the most impact.
4. Develop a timeline.

Reviews of Program Changes

John Ponder stated that Chris Huff had previously asked which program changes should go to Faculty Senate and which need only administrative approval. John Ponder will follow-up with Chris Huff about that question.

SACS Report

John Ponder stated that each Faculty Senate standing committee is responsible for part of the SACS Compliance Certificate assignments. The Rules Committee will have two standards to address.

Policies and Procedures Manual

Discussion of revisions of the Policies and Procedures Manual focused on identifying the latest version of the manual in order to verify accuracy. Margaret Mitchell will follow-up on locating the latest version for comparison.

Minutes prepared by Linda Haynes