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SALVE REGINA UNIVERSITY FACULTY ASSEMBLY

Minutes of the meeting of October 2, 2000

Terrence Gavan, Speaker of the Assembly, presided.

1. **Call to Order, Minutes, and Attendance:** The meeting was called to order at 2:05 and minutes of the meeting of May 1 were approved. Approximately 70 members of the Assembly attended, in addition to a delegate from the administration and Professional Librarians.

2. **Announcements**

   Library Open House: Kathleen Boyd, Director of Library Services, invited the Assembly to a Faculty Open House, October 23, 2:00 – 4:00 PM. The Library will provide information on services available to faculty, such as electronic reserve and electronic books.

   FACSB: Carol Gibbons informed the Assembly that the Faculty Advisory Committee on Salary and Benefits will work on a new proposal and it will include equity issues, both external and internal. She invited all full-time faculty to join the committee or to send issues to it. For more information, she or Mary Louise Greeley may be contacted.

   Dues: The Speaker announced that 32 dues have been paid so far. He reminded the Assembly that dues go for expenses, such as social events and expressions of condolences or congratulations.

3. **Network Services:** Mark Robson, Director of Network Services, demonstrated the potential uses of the Faculty Assembly's Web-site (under construction). The site, to be located at http://inside.salve.edu, will provide information about the Assembly, such as its Minutes and scheduled meetings. In addition, the site will have a place for threaded discussion, where faculty may leave comments or ideas about a certain topic. This forum for a running commentary allows faculty to continue a discussion beyond the monthly meeting of the Assembly and to see different sides of an issue.

   Plans are being made for wireless Internet connection on campus. This will be useful for someone who uses a laptop.

   Jason Black has just been hired as the University's Internet developer.

   In the future a student will be able to check his/her transcript and register for courses on-line. Security measures (password, firewall, audit trail) would protect privacy and prevent abuse.

4. **WebCT:** Sandor Kadar demonstrated some of the possibilities of WebCT, which can be as simple as a syllabus on-line or as complicated as an entire Web-based course. He provided a handout and showed some of the information available at http://chem.salve.edu. He also pointed out that WebCT is available for faculty and he can help them to set it up for courses. He invited faculty to a series of workshops that he will be conducting (2 hours a week, 8/9 weeks). Faculty may, if they wish, only attend the sessions that meet their needs.

5. **Undergraduate Core Curriculum:** Stephen Trainor, Dean of Undergraduate Studies, spoke to the Assembly about the Core Curriculum.

(He digressed at the beginning of his remarks to say that, so far, 1200 tickets have been given out for Elie Wiesel's Atwood Lecture on October 18.)

Dean Trainor began by noting that *Pathway to the Future: Strategic Plan 2000-2001* (p. 7) presents the following as one institutional goal: "To uphold and enhance the academic quality and reputation of the University." Among the strategies for achieving that goal is this statement: "Build a unique, contemporary core educational foundation. Design, develop and strengthen interdisciplinary programs." The core, Dean Trainor stated, should hold a place of honor at an institution and be "strong, attractive, and beautiful." There has been a long debate in colleges and universities about the merits of a common learning *versus* specialization and a student's freedom to choose courses. The consensus today is that there are things that an educational community needs to know in common.

Dean Trainor observed that the current Core is a distribution model. It depends on the excellence of individual instructors and courses but not on a larger design. Too often the current Core is treated as if it were 16 discreet courses "to get out of the way," rather than a system to build a philosophy and, in the words of John Henry Newman, "to map out the universe."

The Mission statement has a certain beauty in its ideals; the Core, in contrast, is not distinctive and does not measure up to the goals of the Mission. We need a creative Core to go along with the Mission – something that says Catholic, learning in community, harmony, mercy, justice, and wisdom.

He presented a handout entitled "Core Curriculum Planning Process / 2000-2002" (attached). He also described the steps for reaching the goal of a revitalized Core:

1. **Be aware.**	See the problems.
2. **Be creative.**	Generate as many curricular models (ideal core programs) as possible. Require that all the suggested models contain certain information. Do not criticize the proposals or shut out types of ideas. Be open to all models that are put forward. Even the current Core could be proposed as a model.
3. **Be critical.**	Come up with criteria. Judge the proposed models on the basis of the criteria.
4. **Communicate or act.**	Select the appropriate model.

To facilitate this project, a Steering Committee will be established: four faculty appointed by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Assembly and four appointed by Dean Trainor. The representation on the committee should be as broad as possible. The Undergraduate Council would be involved in the process. The Assembly would be asked to ratify the Steering Committee's proposals at key points in the planning process.

The Dean's presentation was followed by a discussion that centered on this issue: Does a new Core have to be structured so that current faculty are employed as they are now? Responses from faculty included the following points: (1) One reason for the design of the current Core is to provide full employment for faculty who are no longer needed. (2) The current Core is the result of evolution and consensus. The University has hired faculty to teach that Core. It would be wrong to abandon certain faculty at this point because of a new Core curriculum. (3) A University must offer a broad range of subjects, but some of those subjects do not attract many students. Seventy years ago, colleges and universities confronted the problem of balancing the need for a breadth of subjects and enrollment pressures. One solution (e.g., at Columbia University) was to offer Core "Humanities" courses taught by faculty from various disciplines, including departments with low enrollments.

Dean Trainor emphasized that the University's primary responsibility was to students and their needs. If certain faculty lost courses as the result of a new Curriculum, other employment for them could be found within the University. He stated that it was necessary to let go of the past history of Core curriculum development at the University – with its failed proposals and solutions. The time has come for a new metaphor, a new paradigm. It is often said that moving a Core curriculum at a university is like moving a graveyard. But we must keep in mind another comparison: Moving the current Core curriculum is like a cruise – going to a better place, traveling with friends, and having fun along the way.

He began this "cruise" by inviting faculty to a wine and cheese party on Wednesday, October 11, 4:00-5:00 PM, Pell Center.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15. All were invited to an ice cream social in the lobby.