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SALVE REGINA UNIVERSITY FACULTY ASSEMBLY

Minutes of the Meeting of November 5, 2001

Juliette Relihan, Vice Chair of the Executive Committee of the Faculty Assembly, presided as Chair.

1. **Call to Order and Minutes:** The meeting was called to order at 2:04 PM. The Minutes of the October 1 meeting were approved.

2. **Announcements**

Discussion Page: Faculty are welcome to make comments on the Assembly's newly revised "threaded discussion" section of its Web page. Sandor Kadar has agreed to assist anyone who needs help with this project.

Conference Room: Room 200 in O'Hare is available for committee and department meetings or other meetings. Please see Jane Almy, the Faculty Secretary in O'Hare, to reserve a meeting time.

3. **President's Report**

Sister Therese indicated that the Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees was held on October 25, 2001. She noted that in keeping with past practice, she will share with the faculty information regarding the last academic year, which was reported to the Board of Trustees. The overview included information on the annual operating budget, enrollment statistics and action by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC).

Finances:

Sister Therese noted that her overview of the annual operating budget will be brief. Mr. William Hall is available to meet with any faculty members wishing to review details of the budget and/or the audit report. Sister Therese appointed an Institutional Budget Review Committee last spring. This Committee, which includes representatives from faculty, staff and administration, meets quarterly and will advise the President on budget matters.

The University received an unqualified opinion from the auditors (Grant Thornton) on the financial statement for the year ending June 30, 2001. For Fiscal 2001, over \$800,000 from operations will be transferred to the University's Endowment. Sister Therese noted that the linking of our planning and budgeting processes, and strict adherence to fiscal policies have proven to be most effective strategies, resulting in positive bottom lines for the past several years. She reviewed the annual operating budget for Fiscal 2001, and shared the budget for Fiscal 2002, as approved by the Board of Trustees, noting significant increases in budgets for academic and student services for Fiscal 2002.

A five-year revenue and SRU grant analysis was shared with the faculty. While tuition increases have been kept below 5%, the increase in full-time undergraduate student enrollment has resulted in a steady increase in tuition income. The University's maintaining the tuition discount rate below 25% is essential for the institution's financial stability.

Increasing the endowment is a high priority and vital to the future of the University. The President reviewed statistics regarding the growth of the Endowment and the size of the Endowment as compared with the comparison schools used by the University for salary projections. She was pleased to announce that in addition to over \$800,000 from Fiscal 2001 being transferred to the Endowment, a recent gift of \$1,000,000 has also been added.

The current average salary by faculty rank in relation to the median salary of the comparison group that was used as a target for the average salaries was presented. The average salary by faculty rank at Salve Regina University is currently at or above the target figures recommended by the Faculty Advisory Committee on Salary and Benefits.

Enrollment:

The President shared trend reports on full-time student applications, acceptance rate, freshman class statistics and retention. She recommended that department chairs meet with Laura McPhie Oliveira individually to discuss academic interests expressed by potential students. Data related to retention statistics in each department should also be reviewed.

Applications for the freshman class totaled 3,346--an increase of 11.5% over last year. The University's acceptance rate for September 2001 was 64.5%. This is a significant decrease in the acceptance rate of over 85% in 1995. Recruitment and retention strategies have resulted in our attracting an increased number of well-prepared students. The academic quality of the new freshman class has again increased with an average combined SAT score of 1039--up 25 points from last year. There are 122 academic scholars among our first-year students. This compares favorably to 73 academic scholars in the previous class.

The retention of students from first year to second year is an area of concern. The retention goal set for freshman to sophomore years is 80%. The University's retention rate has fallen from 77% to 72%. The annual retention rates at competitive schools were reviewed. It was noted that several of the schools have retention rates above 85%. The Vice President for Enrollment/Admissions was asked to comment on retention statistics. The Vice President noted that only about 40% of those who leave the University complete the exit interview questionnaire. It is difficult to obtain accurate information from students who withdraw during the summer months. There was some discussion regarding the reasons given by students for withdrawing from the University. The President again recommended that department chairs meet with the Vice President for Enrollment Services to discuss retention-related issues. She encouraged all members of the faculty to explore the matter further with individual students, and suggested that first-year student advisors may be able to positively influence this statistic. She encouraged faculty who are not first-year student advisors to participate in this first-year student experience next year.

Total student enrollment statistics for the fall terms of a six-year period were reviewed. It was noted that while full-time undergraduate student enrollment has increased significantly since 1996, the total student population has not. This is due to the decline in graduate enrollment. Increased resources have been allocated to the graduate area for new initiatives to correct this problem. It is hoped that while the full-time undergraduate population will level off, graduate enrollment will increase.

Commission on Institutions of Higher Education – NEASC:

Sister Therese reported that the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education took the following action with respect to Salve Regina University.

“...that Salve Regina University be continued in accreditation;

...that the University submit a fifth-year report for consideration in the Spring 2006;

...that in addition to providing information included in all interim reports, the University give emphasis to its progress in:

- 1. planning that results in a reasonable set of goals and strategies, specific plans to accomplish them, and progress in implementation;*
- 2. implementing an institutional system of academic program evaluation, including identifying learning outcomes, implementing quality assessment strategies, and assessing the number and content of program offerings to ensure that the range of programs is consistent with the resources to support them;*
- 3. assuring that the workload and assignments of faculty members are appropriate to carry out the institution’s mission;*
- 4. revising the institution’s core curriculum to more accurately express the mission of the institution and address identified needs of students;*

...that the next comprehensive evaluation be scheduled for Spring 2011.”

Sister Therese noted that the letter from the Commission will be posted in *inside.salve.edu* along with the report of the Visiting Team and the Institutional Self-Study Report.

Sister Therese indicated that she had met with the Commission in September to discuss the Visiting Team’s report. At this time, she noted that the Senior Administrators have been engaged in an intense planning process to refine goals and strategies for the 2002-2005 timeframe. Much of this work has been accomplished and will soon be published.

A committee appointed by the President has been charged to design a system of program review, which should be ready for discussion with chairs and directors in the spring. The President noted the importance of having an institutional system of academic programs review. The NEASC Visiting Team expressed concern about the University’s ability to effectively staff and financially support the large number of current programs. The Team noted that several of these programs have very small enrollments. Because the University has not had a systematic or comprehensive system of program evaluation, the rationalization of program offerings is not clear to the Commission.

The Visiting Team’s report and the letter from the Commission noted “the faculty may be verging on overextension” and expressed concern about the faculty’s ability to carry out the University’s mission in view of the faculty workload. The President noted that when meeting with the Commission she took exception to this conclusion since it was based on verbal comments and anecdotal evidence from individual faculty members. The University was not asked to provide data on faculty workload to the Visiting Team. In the five-year interim report the Commission has asked that data on faculty assignments and workloads, along with the institution’s own analysis, be provided.

The President noted that the department chairs and program directors should carefully review departmental faculty workloads. She reported that the four-semester average for credits taught over the last two academic years is 9.3 per full-time faculty member. On average, 50% of the faculty taught less than sixty students each semester and only 67% carried 12 credits. The President noted that these statistics are overall averages for the full-time faculty. Averages vary by department. She strongly recommended that department chairs carefully review the schedule of department course offerings, enrollment in classes, and use of adjunct faculty. The student/faculty ratio has decreased to 12/1. Our goal is 16/1.

Through the five-year report the Commission looks forward to learning of the institution's success in revising the Core Curriculum. In addition to learning of the successful implementation of the Core Curriculum, the Commission looks forward to being apprised of the University's plan to assess the resulting student learning outcomes.

In closing, Sister Therese noted that future challenges include issues related to undergraduate curriculum and teaching styles, the revitalization of graduate programs, additional improved resident student accommodations, and building a significant endowment. She noted the important work that the faculty must do in addressing the first two issues and pledged the administration's dedication to accomplishing an increased endowment and improved resident student accommodations.

It has often been said that we are a young institution. Sister Therese noted that the University must be forever young, and that this can be accomplished by constantly renewing ourselves with each new class. She noted that renewal is not just doing new things, but moving beyond activities that have run their course. It is most important that we respond to opportunities created by a changing world, noting that globalization and technology are here to stay and must be incorporated into our teaching. The academic experience is the core of the college experience. The faculty is called to stimulate students' minds with intellectual challenges. The President concluded by saying that she had every expectation that the faculty will succeed in these endeavors.

3. **Core Curriculum Committee.** John Greeley, Co-Chair of the Core Curriculum Committee, reported on the work of the committee and its plans.

In September the committee had sponsored two sets of forums that resulted in four meetings. At these meetings, the committee received ideas, comments, and information from faculty. The committee also asked for written comments and received about a dozen.

The committee then met with the Design Team that had sponsored the model. The committee, in discussion with this Team, then formulated goals for the core curriculum. Two more forums were held to discuss the preliminary draft of these goals with faculty. These forums (October 24/25) were very fruitful in clarifying the nature and functions of the goals for the core curriculum. After this, the committee also met with the Design Team for three sessions to clarify their intentions in designing the core curriculum proposal.

Committee's Future Schedule:

November 5: draw up final draft of the goals for the core curriculum based on input from forums, design team, and written memos from the faculty. November 13: examine the common core courses in light of the goals to set the goals for the common core courses.

November 19: examine the core complement courses in light of the goals to set the goals for each of the core complement courses. November 16: distribute to the faculty a Revised Core Model formulated in light of the goals. December 3: consideration of the Revised Core Model by the Faculty Assembly.

The next step after December 3 will involve the development of the courses and teaching assignments working with the concerned departments and interdisciplinary teams.

5. **FACSB.** Carol Gibbons reported on the Faculty Advisory Committee on Salary and Benefits. The committee has met twice. Among the issues it is looking at are the following:
(a) Continuing health benefits for faculty who have retired after many years of service. (b) Increase in adjunct salaries. (c) Increase in TIAA contributions. (c) Monitoring faculty salaries to see if they are at the level of salaries at comparable institutions.

The committee invited faculty to attend its next meeting on November 19.

A question from the floor concerned faculty teaching workload. The response was that this matter was not at the top of the committee's agenda but that it would be considered.

6. **Development Committee.** Carol Gibbons also spoke about the Faculty Development Committee. Plans are being made for a workshop on January 28 from 1:00 PM to 3:00. The topic will be teaching portfolios for faculty. The speaker will be Dr. Peter Selden. He is an expert on this topic, and has written many books and articles, as well as given talks and workshops at conferences. The committee will send out reminders and articles on the subject before that date.
7. **Social Committee.** Elaine Daniels reported that two members of the faculty had volunteered to help the Social Committee. This brings the committee's membership to three: Elaine Daniels, Judith Keenan, and Eula Fresch. She invited faculty to volunteer.

A mid-year party and party after Commencement are being planned. The committee will send out a questionnaire to solicit faculty ideas about these events

The meeting adjourned at 3:05 PM.