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Faculty Assembly Minutes, 4-13-11

Salve Regina University

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Faculty Assembly Minutes
April 13, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 2:34.

1. The minutes for the March 2011 faculty assembly meeting were approved.

2. Reports and Announcements

   Treasurer's Report (Craig Condella): Announced that there is a balance of greater than $1200 in the faculty assembly account.

   Faculty Social (Debra Curtis): Announced the details of the upcoming end of the year faculty social at the Atlantic Beach Club. She encouraged faculty to RSVP to attend.

   Parliamentarian (Steven Symington): Announced that Dr John Greeley will be stepping down as Parliamentarian at the conclusion of the year. A certificate of appreciation and gift was presented to John Greeley on behalf of the Faculty Assembly for his years of service. A call for volunteers was put forward seeking members of the faculty to serve as Parliamentarian. The Executive Committee is seeking to have multiple Parliamentarians available for the Faculty Assembly in the upcoming academic year.

3. Culture of Scholarship (James Yarnall)

   Dr. Yarnell presented a motion for the Faculty Assembly to endorse the document entitled *Fostering a Culture of Scholarship*. This document encourages University support for faculty involved in scholarly endeavors. Faculty expressed the need for continued support of individual scholarship. The motion was passed by the Faculty Assembly. (See Appendix I for complete document)

4. EPC Proposal (Chad Raymond)

   Dr. Chad Raymond presented a motion to modify the procedure used by the Evaluation Process Committee (EPC) to evaluate the administration. Faculty expressed concern over the amount of time utilized by administration responding to the online evaluations, particularly during the faculty assembly. Faculty made various motions for amendments to modify the proposal to allow for more flexibility in administration's response to faculty evaluations. The motions for the amendments were voted on a passed. The motion to accept the modifications made to the procedure used by the EPC was also passed by the Faculty Assembly. (See Appendix II for the revised procedure used by the Evaluation Process Committee)

5. ENG150 Pilot (Donna Harrington-Lueker)

   Donna Harington-Leuker made a motion on behalf of the English Department to be permitted to change the number of common texts in ENG 150 from five common texts to two common texts. The change in the common texts will be evaluated in a two-year pilot program. It was important that this change does not alter the goals and evaluation of the course and the pilot program was endorsed by the curriculum advisory committee. Dr. Harrington-Leuker responded to comments that were received in the online evaluation process, which included discussion of the choice of the common texts and issues raised about the evaluation of the

pilot program. The faculty passed the motion presented by the Dr. Harrington-Lueker that ENG 150 to change the number of common texts. (See Appendix III for Request to the Faculty Assembly for a Two-Year Pilot Program in ENG 150)

6. Speaker: 2011-2012 Academic Year

   Dr. James Mitchell was nominated by the members of the Executive Committee to serve as Speaker for the upcoming academic tear. Dr. Mitchell accepted the nomination to serve. The Faculty Assembly voted to make Dr. Mitchell the Speaker for the 2011 – 2012 academic year.

7. FACSB (Jameson Chace)

   Dr. Jim Chace updated the faculty on the ongoing discussions with the administration concerning issues relating to faculty salaries, list of comparative schools, and professional development. Faculty discussed the list of comparative schools utilized by the administration and how it should be modified. Members of the assembly then discussed modifications to the faculty endorsed the Teir IIA and IIB list of comparative schools. FACSB also presented data on adjunct faculty salaries for Salve and other Rhode Island schools. It was noted that salaries for adjunct faculty members is lower than most of the other competitive schools. Faculty expressed concerns over the inability to compete for new adjunct faculty and retain existing faculty due to the lack of a competitive salary structure.

8. It was noted that the Faculty Assembly no longer had a quorum at 4:05 PM

9. The Faculty Assembly meeting was adjourned at 4:20.

APPENDIX I

Fostering a Culture of Scholarship

A Culture of Scholarship

It is a laudable goal for Salve Regina University to become a University of Distinction. This implies that the University will attain excellence in its facilities, its curriculum, its student profile, and its faculty. Faculty excellence manifests itself in several ways: teaching performance; service to the university or community; and scholarship. Teaching and service are part and parcel of the quotidian life of the university and faculty. Scholarship demands that faculty members reach outside of the daily routine and seek out opportunities to work with their peers, to explore research interests, and to produce a range of discipline-specific products, including lectures, journal articles, monographs, exhibitions, and performances. The question is: how can the faculty and university foster a culture that helps such scholarship thrive?

Role of the Faculty

The faculty is responsible for ensuring that the academic climate of Salve Regina University is vital, challenging, creative, and topically relevant. To this end, faculty members must be active in their respective fields. Faculty members should subscribe to discipline-appropriate professional organizations and publications, and should be encouraged to volunteer for leadership roles on outside organizational and editorial boards. Regular attendance at national and international conferences (with or without the presentation of a paper) is essential for the development of faculty members who are current, networked, and engaged in their disciplines.

All faculty members—junior, mid-career and senior—should be encouraged to set lofty goals and to attain the highest standards in their own personal academic scholarship. At times, this scholarship may be linked to engagement with professional organizations. At other times, this can be a collaborative effort with colleagues within or outside the university. Often, however, this is a solitary quest involving a highly specialized area of research. Whatever the particular circumstance for a given faculty member, there needs to be the strong support of both peers and the administration to provide the incentive and means to undertake such scholarship.

Role of the Administration

The administration needs to provide an atmosphere in which scholarship in all of its permutations is highly valued and adequately supported. In order to encourage both senior and junior faculty, and to attract outstanding new faculty, the university must allocate more resources for scholarly pursuits, conference attendance, and sabbaticals. These are the primary activities by which faculty members keep current, engaged, and relevant in their fields.

Recommendations

The reality of becoming a University of Distinction and fostering a culture of scholarship will not be reached without the sincere will of the institution to commit more resources than are presently provided. Research indicates that peer institutions have exhibited a consistently higher level of

support for faculty scholarship. FACSB proposes the following increases and changes in the existing policies to foster a culture of scholarship and promote the image of a University of Distinction:

- **Faculty Development Funds.** The current sum of $500 per year available from the administration for each faculty member should be increased significantly. $2,000 is an amount generally in keeping with other Tier II peer institutions. These peer institutions also allow faculty to apply for additional faculty development funds in a competitive manner.

- **Travel Funds.** Each faculty member should have available from the administration up to $2,000 per year for conference attendance, conference presentations, or for scholarship requiring travel. This is especially important for junior faculty who need to be encouraged to stay current in their respective fields. Regular attendance at professional meetings is an essential part of being an active professional. The university should also make a special effort to encourage junior faculty to engage in scholarship outside of the classroom.

- **Sabbaticals.** Funding for sabbaticals should be commensurate with the quality of sabbatical proposals submitted by the faculty at large. Up to five sabbaticals should be available per academic year, a number that approaches our Tier II peer institutions.

MOTION

Be it resolved that the Faculty Assembly endorses the document *Fostering a Culture of Scholarship*. This document puts forth a concrete proposal for continuing and adequate support from the University for scholarship development funds, travel funds, and sabbaticals.

Appendix II

Proposal to revise the procedure used by the Evaluation Process Committee:

1)   At the opening meeting of the academic year, job descriptions of the VPAA and academic deans are distributed to faculty members. The VPAA and deans respond to feedback received via the previous academic year's evaluation process, present progress on past goals, and identify new goals.

2)   During the spring semester, each administrator briefs the faculty on matters relating to what was stated at the beginning of the academic year and on more recent developments, and responds to questions from the faculty.

3)   At the end of the spring semester, faculty members complete a single anonymous, online IDEA survey that has separate sections for each academic administrator. The results of the pertinent section(s) of the survey are distributed to each administrator, the administrator's immediate supervisor (the university president in the case of the VPAA, the VPAA in the case of each academic dean).

Appendix III

Request to the Faculty Assembly for a Two-Year Pilot Program in ENG 150

The English Department is asking permission to change the number of common texts in ENG 150 from five common texts to two common texts as a pilot program (for two years, unless curriculum changes make such a pilot null and void).

For the reasons cited below, the Department believes it can provide students with a more substantive, interesting, and rigorous first-year experience while still fulfilling the existing goals and objectives of the Common Core Curriculum, especially those that focus on academic writing, critical thinking, and analysis.

Please note: We are not requesting any other changes in ENG 150. The course's goals and objectives, its themes, its commitment to academic writing, and even our assessment instruments for the course would all remain the same. We are simply asking for more flexibility in the texts used in the course. Instructors will continue to teach a minimum of five substantial texts in each class, one of which must be an international or global work.

We will assess the success of the pilot using the approach in Appendix A below.

I. CURRENT PRACTICE
Currently, Department members agree to five common readings.* In theory, instructors are allowed to add one or two readings of their own choice. In practice, though, there's very little opportunity to add works other than the common readings when the course also addresses basic writing, research, and analytical skills and includes the provision/requirement of multiple drafts of papers.

As a result, most of the sections of ENG 150 (which amount to between 12 and 16 sections per semester) use only the common texts.

II. ISSUES BEHIND THE REQUEST

Three key issues have surfaced over the last several years of teaching this first-year course:

● *Limited Text Selection and Rigor/Substance*: Recognizing the centrality of the course to the first-year experience—and its importance in helping students grow both academically and morally—the Department believes that, with the limited time available (one semester), it can offer a stronger and more rigorous experience if the selection of texts had a much greater chance of reflecting both the instructor's strengths and the Common Core goals and objectives. Anchoring the course in two significant common texts will provide continuity while a selection of equally challenging texts of the instructor's choice will provide students with an additional layer of perspectives and experiences.

● *Plagiarism*: With common readings making up so much of the course, the possibility of plagiarism is high no matter how much instructors try to differentiate assignments. Given the small number of core texts—and the common kinds of academic writing experiences the course needs to provide—after just a single semester, the pool of papers available for "resubmission" is significant.

● *Keeping Writing Central*: Individual instructors could certainly expand the existing course by making more use of their own readings, or, as a department, we could enlarge the list of core readings. But in each case, we would have to give only passing consideration to writing, research, and documentation.

III. REQUEST

We are submitting this proposal for 30-day review as per the protocol. We would like to reduce the number of common readings in ENG 150 to two—most likely one play by Shakespeare and one Greek tragedy or comedy. We believe that the agreement on two "essential" works will be easy to reach and will substantially "ground" the themes and perspectives of the course. (We also believe, as a result of our experience teaching this course over the last ten years, that this approach is preferable to a "category" approach (defining selections by genre). Instructors would then be able to choose their own texts to supplement these readings—always in light of the goals and objectives for the course and of the University mission.

Such flexibility in the choice of texts has already been afforded to the Capstone course. We would like to pilot an arrangement that is similarly flexible.

We believe students, in the end, will benefit from a better, more exciting, more unique first-year experience; with such flexibility, we can remain true to the university's mission and improve first-year retention.

* Currently, 75 percent of the course's readings must be common readings; 25 percent is left to the instructor's choice. Because of the emphasis on writing and multiple drafts, though, the common readings tend to account for nearly all of the readings in the course.

APPENDIX A: ASSESSMENT

We will be defining success as an increase in student engagement—and we will be measuring engagement via the quality, complexity, and thoughtfulness of the work we look at the end of the school year.

Given that none of the learning goals, objectives, or requirements for ENG 150 will change, the Department believes it will be able to make effective use of its existing assessments for ENG 150. These assessments currently include:

1. DIRECT MEASURE: A rubric-based assessment of college-level writing skills—including thesis, development, organization, attribution, and mechanics—used with the research paper assignment that's done in all sections of the courses. We began using this rubric in 2010, so we will have two years of comparative data on student performance as baseline data. Papers in this assessment are awarded a score of between 5 (superlative) and 1 (unacceptable), and tracking changes in the number of papers receiving the various grades will give us an indication of changes in student performance.

2. DIRECT MEASURE: A rubric-based assessment of the course's affective component—personal change and growth—used with an end-of-the-semester writing prompt involving a student's personal interaction with a piece of literature studied. Again, tracking changes in the scores papers receive in a given year will allow us to determine changes in performance. We will have comparative data from 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 as a baseline.

3. INDIRECT MEASURE: At the suggestion of the dean of arts and sciences, we will add a short (perhaps half a page) assignment to be submitted with the final draft of the final paper of the term asking students to assess what they've learned about writing and how they learned it.

4. OTHER MEASURE: The questions on the back of the teacher evaluation form will also allow us to gauge student's self-reported engagement with specific texts.

MOTION

Be it resolved that the English Department be permitted to change the number of common texts in ENG 150 from five common texts to two common texts as a pilot program for two years (as outlined in the Proposal submitted to the Faculty Assembly on 13 April 2011), unless curriculum changes make such a pilot null and void.