

Faculty Senate Minutes  
Thursday, February 28, 2002, 3:30 P.M.  
**Starlight Room, Sharwan Smith Center**

I. Call to order (including introductions and acknowledgements) at 3:33 p.m. by President Steve Evans. The delay was due to a change of venue for the meeting and a mandatory wait until a quorum of senators had arrived.

Those attending: Senators Steve Evans (Pres.), Brian Heuett (Pres. Elect), Joe Baker (Treasurer), David Lund (Secretary), Virginia Stitt (Parliamentarian), Rick Lambson, Richard Dotson as proxy for Robert Eves, Boyd Fife, Ben Davidson, Steve Barney, Curt Bostick, Darin Wadley, Ron Martin, Steve Heath, Rea Gubler, Deborah Hill, Greg Colf, Tom Cunningham, Steve Barney, Jim Mills, James Aton, Roy Johnson, and Kay Anderson; Visitors: Rhiannon Bent (journal), President Steven Bennion, Provost Carl Templin, Assoc. Provost Mike Richards. Absent: Eric Brown, Idir Azouz

II. Review and approval of minutes from meeting of January 31, 2002. As there were no corrections or additions to be made to the January minutes, it was moved by Ben Davidson that the minutes from that meeting be approved. The motion was seconded by Virginia Stitt. The motion carried in the affirmative by unanimous vote of the Faculty Senate.

President Evans asked that the agenda be amended to allow President Steven Bennion to address the Senate regarding the current economic status of Utah and Southern Utah University. President Bennion indicated the current legislative session has been very interesting due to the nationwide economic downturn and the split session of the legislature which resulted from the Olympics in Salt Lake City. There is another \$54 Million shortfall in addition to the shortfall already realized in the state's budget—the current shortfall now totals \$256 Million. SUU has had to adjust to a 3.34% reduction in funding from the state up to this point; the legislature is still debating the final means to deal with this additional shortfall. The higher education institutions have committed to work with whatever amount we are asked to cut, but have also asked for flexibility in dealing with the reduction on an individual institutional basis. In the end, the cut may be as high as 6%. He indicated that budgets must be tightened for next year, and departments need to be prepared to absorb at least some of the budget cut. He indicated that we should have knowledge of the final legislative decisions regarding the budget shortfall no later than Friday, Mar. 8, 2002. It is possible that some of the deficit that the universities will be asked to cut from budgets may be offset by growth money from funds realized as a result of tuition from new students; but our growth at SUU was relatively low this past year, around 4%. President Bennion also indicated that the administration is also working with the student government regarding possible tuition hikes for SUU students. There is a minor possibility for

some of the refund checks from the Olympics to be used as a onetime offset of some of the shortfall. Many entities that will be affected by further cuts in the state budget urge that some one-time money from the state's "rainy day fund" be used to deal with the shortfall, rather than have current deficits become permanent cuts. They reason that the economy appears to be slowly turning around, and it would be better to use some one-time funds and reduce permanent budget cuts. Finally, the status of the bond for higher education building has now been cut to \$100 Million; consequently many things originally included in the bond, including a new education building at SUU have been cut from the projects the bond would fund—President Bennion reminded us that this could change anytime.

### III. Priority Items:

A. Course Syllabus Policy (a copy is in the Faculty Senate Secretary's file with the minutes): In the course of a short discussion, Rick Lambson commented that it was fairly general, and every one could take advantage of the flexibility written into the policy to tailor syllabi to individual department and course needs. Darin Wadley wanted to know if all prerequisites needed to be listed for a particular class or just the last one that is required—the statement regarding this seemed vague to him. Mike Richards indicated that it was left vague on purpose in order to allow departments to determine exactly what was necessary when the prerequisites were listed. A motion to accept this policy was made by Richard Dotson as proxy for Robert Eves; the motion was seconded by Ron Martin. There was no further discussion. A vote was taken and the motion carried in the affirmative with 15 votes in favor, 1 vote against, and 2 abstentions.

B. Leaves Policy (a copy is in the Faculty Senate Secretary's file with the minutes): To open the discussion, Jim Aton wanted the Senate to consider amending the wording of the section on eligibility for sabbatical leaves, to preclude those seeking a terminal degree from consideration for sabbatical leave. He indicated that he was not aware of any other university where such practice occurs. It was determined that this practice was allowed, and even a good practice, when SUU was a two-year institution. Now as a four-year institution, we need to move away from this policy. Greg Colf wondered how it would affect those who have already been hired, who were promised that they could use the sabbatical funds for this purpose. Jim Aton reiterated that it was time to move on and it would be too bad for those faculty members. Steve Heath indicated that it has been difficult to even get Ph.D.'s in Mathematics due to a lack of funding to hire Ph.D.'s, and this problem could also be found in other areas of the university. Richard Dotson said they are struggling with the same problem in Science, specifically relating to the Senate information regarding difficulties in hiring faculty in Chemistry with terminal degrees. He is concerned that if we

exclude the degree seeking faculty we may be creating a problem we cannot deal with in the future. Rea Gubler agreed, stating that changing the sabbatical leave policy in this manner is something to go for in the future; however, it may not be prudent to make such a big change at the present time. Steve Evans indicated that we have made a significant step in this direction by requiring that proposals for sabbatical be prioritized with non-degree seeking proposals being considered prior to consideration of proposals made for the purpose of completing a terminal degree. Greg Colf said the policy is really fine as is now written, since the degree-seeking proposals would only be funded if there was money left over after the non-degree seeking proposals had been funded.

Roy Johnson wanted to know how many people have actually used the sabbatical to seek a degree. Provost Templin thought it might be one every 2 years at the most. The policy actually allows two years of leave to be granted, one year as a sabbatical leave, and a second year as leave without pay. Steve Evans reiterated future possible problems with the inability to get Ph.D.'s in many areas if the language of the policy becomes so restrictive. Steve Heath concurred and used the example of training faculty in computer science, in which case this policy would have precluded sabbatical to gain expertise in this area when it was a critical need of the university.

Deb Hill voiced her opinion that she does not think it is a good idea to pay someone to get a degree and pay for their replacement at the same time, especially in the current economic state in which we find ourselves. Kay Anderson indicated that it is still a problem in Fine Arts, as well. We were told by members of the committee that under the past policy, there were occasions in which non-degree seeking proposals were not funded, while degree seeking proposals were funded. The new language as the policy now stands, would prevent this from occurring. Greg Colf then pointed out that allowing the rewritten policy we were considering to become policy might have a positive effect on SUU--we could train our own Ph.D.'s at a lesser cost than bringing in others from outside. Jim Aton, moved that we exclude degree seekers from the policy. Curtis Bostick seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion was defeated by a vote of five senators in favor of the motion, 14 opposed to the motion, and one abstention.

Jim Aton then brought up a problem with the language regarding ranking proposals by merit. This word is too vague, what is merit. He had drafted a definition which was passed out for discussion (the statement follows):

Merit shall be defined as the overall scholarly/creative quality of the project, i. e., how it relates to the larger scholarly/creative world outside the university. Discussions of merit will not include the timeliness of the project; the benefit to the individual, department, college or university; or the number of past sabbaticals an applicant has had.

This would not affect other criteria regarding how often and when sabbatical proposals could be submitted by faculty.

A short discussion of timeliness ensued. Steve Heath indicated that timeliness could not include trying to keep up with current research. Ron Martin also had a question about timeliness, would this apply to taking time off to work with a funded grant. Richard Dotson agreed with not basing proposals on deadlines for some degree. Steve Barney wanted to know if the definition might be too restrictive regarding the actual definition of the sabbatical. Rea and Steve Barney thought it might be useful to change the definition of merit to be in line with the definition of sabbatical at the first of the policy document. Roy Johnson thought the definition works well for a research sabbatical, but doesn't really apply to the other aspects of the definition of sabbatical. Steve Heath said that is why we can't define merit, and Roy Johnson countered saying that maybe we need merit to be defined for each instance listed in the definition so that leave, rank, and tenure committees have some guidelines with which to judge proposals for leave.

Virginia Stitt then wanted to know why we are discussing this at all, since the definition really says that the leave is determined by the Provost. Some of these changes will affect the whole document. Rea Gubler said that perhaps we need to have the document go to the leave, rank, and tenure rewrite committee to rework the whole document. Jim Aton moved that the statement at the beginning of the sabbatical be changed to read; "A sabbatical leave means a leave of absence with compensation as determined by the Provost of the University and the Board of Trustees for one year or a fraction thereof." This motion was seconded by Virginia Stitt. There was no discussion and the Senate passed the motion in the affirmative by a vote of 17 senators in favor, 1 senator opposed, and 1 abstention.

Carl Templin wanted to know how this affected his role in determining funds-- could he drop compensation from the policy required percentages, etc. This needs to be clarified. Roy Johnson thought it might not be appropriate to have this in this section, Rea agreed with that and said we should remove the verbiage regarding the role of the Provost and Board of Trustees from the definition.

Richard Dotson moved that the definition of sabbatical should be rewritten to eliminate the reference therein regarding who determines the disposition of the funding and to have a definition of merit rewritten by the leave, rank, and tenure rewrite committee. Deb Hill seconded this motion. In discussion, Tom Cunningham wondered why we should send this policy document back to a committee when we might be able to resolve the matter by using only the first part of the definition for merit. The question was then raised as to how the committee reviewing proposals would interpret merit without some kind of guidance. The motion then passed with a vote 19 senators in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention.

Jim Aton brought up one more point regarding leave without pay and it was recommended that the leave, rank and tenure committee look at part c of that section, as well. No motion was made nor was any vote necessary, since the senate had already voted to send the policy back to the committee for revision.

Steve Barney wondered about the clause that requires the person granted leave to sign a statement to return for the length of the leave. He said he could not find this statement in the previous version discussed by the senate. Deb Hill looked in her previous notes and found that it was in the policy, and underlined as new language. This language was added to the policy on purpose to prevent the University from losing the benefit of the sabbatical according to Provost Templin. The leave, rank, and tenure rewrite committee was instructed to look carefully at this information, as well.

#### IV. Officers' Reports

##### A. President

1. Steve Evans indicated that the copy of the letter to Faculty Senate from Pres. Bennion was for information only. It was informally accepted by the senate.
2. Explanation on Sunset Policy for Tenure – A handout (a copy is in the secretary's files) was distributed describing the history of the process regarding changes and amendments to this policy. Steve Evans read the proposed verbiage for amending the policy to allow appropriate grandfathering so that tenure track was appropriately defined, and subsequent changes in policy would not affect a faculty member hired in a tenure track position. There were some grammatical changes suggested by the senate to clarify the policy, they are noted on the sheet. Steve Barney moved that the clarification be accepted by the senate, Ben Davidson seconded the motion, and the motion was then carried in the affirmative by a vote of 20 senators in favor, and one against.

##### B. President-elect

1. SUU Board of Trustees – Brian Heuett attended the last meeting of the board and was instructed by them to let us know that they are impressed with the work of the Faculty Senate this year.
2. Status of Policy Review – Brian also wanted to let the policy review committee know that they have also done a great job this year. He indicated that there were a number of minor policy changes still to cover in addition to 5 more coming from the office of Mike Richards. Steve Heath wanted to know why we are doing so much revision. Brian indicated that many of

these policy revisions are required in preparation for and to meet changing requirements for the upcoming Northwest Accreditation review.

#### C. Treasurer

1. Report on Provost Search Committee – Joe Baker reported that the committee has received 37 applications so far. He is confident that the committee has a good pool of candidates and that they will be able to choose a well qualified candidate to fill the Provost position.
  
2. Report on Finances – Joe Baker said that we have approximately \$14,000 in the various Faculty Senate Accounts. Two of the three Faculty Senate scholarship students are doing well, the third dropped out and we did not use all of the funds that were allocated for this year.

#### V. Organizational Reports

- A. Faculty Development and Evaluation Committee (Faculty Evaluation)-this report was tabled to next meeting at the request of Tom Cunningham.

#### VI. Other Business

A. Development of Faculty Senate Website (Tom Cunningham) – Tom said the real concern is keeping the site updated. He requested input to take care of this. Steve Evans has some ideas and will talk to Tom later about this issue. A report will be made at the next meeting.

B. Annual awards committees have not received many recommendations for the various awards. Greg Colf, who oversees one of these committees, would like more recommendations for the awards—they are due by tomorrow, March 1, 2002. A handout was passed out explaining all of the faculty and student awards and who is responsible for determining who receives them.

VII. The motion for an Executive Session made by Rea Gubler, seconded by Joe Baker and carried in the affirmative by unanimous vote of the senate.

VIII. Adjournment 5:11 p.m.