THE MINUTES OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

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February 23, 2015

Members excused: O. Benavides, P. Crume, M. Dangi, G. Kriehn, J. Kwon, S. Lam, K. Madhusudan, B. Myers, S. Schlievert, J. Slagter

Members absent: A. Alexandrou, L. Crask, B. DerMugrdechian, D. Lewis, U. Müller, A. Nambiar, J. Pausewang, L. Rios, R. Thornton, V. Torres, J. Wang

The Academic Senate was called to order by Chair Ayotte at 4:07pm in HML 2206.

1. Approval of the agenda

Senator Henson (English) moved that item #9 on teaching assistant fee waivers be moved to become item #6 with the rest of the agenda reordered accordingly. Motion was seconded and approved.

MSC approving the agenda as amended

1. Approval of the minutes of February 2, 2015

Friendly amendment offered and accepted.

MSC approving the minutes of February 2, 2015, as amended

1. Communications and announcements
2. President Castro

Expressed concern about the proposals by community colleges to offer four year degree programs. He and the other CSU presidents have provided feedback to the Chancellor, arguing that most duplicate degrees offered by the CSU, and many of these programs are different from what their titles suggest that they are.

At the CSU presidents meeting last week in Long Beach there was a great deal of discussion about the number and percentage of tenure-track professors in the system. Overall the number is declining. At Fresno State less than 60% of faculty are tenure-track. The Chancellor wants to reverse this, but the issue is whether there is enough money in the system to support it. At Fresno State we are prioritizing more money for faculty equity raises over hiring new tenure-track faculty. Senator Chapman (Modern and Classical Languages) noted that the historical level of tenure-track faculty is 75%, and that in 2001 the Academic Senate passed a resolution calling on the administration to get Fresno State back to that level. Senator Kensinger (Statewide) said that hiring tenure-track faculty needed to be a higher priority for the administration, though Senator Karr (Music) emphasized the importance of raising faculty salaries as well.

It is expected that next year’s budget will increase by about $4 million, though not all of it will go to academic affairs.

Athletics Director Jim Bartko is developing a five-year plan for his department. He will be presenting it to the Academic Senate in the near future.

1. Chair Ayotte

At the meeting of senate chairs in Long Beach last week concern was expressed about the community colleges offering degree programs, as well as the tight time-frame for providing feedback from the CSU on these programs. The Chancellor is pushing back on this, but these programs have already been authorized by the legislature, if only on a pilot-program basis, so his ability to stop these new degree programs is very limited. More Fresno State faculty need to be told about what is happening so they can complain, especially to the legislature.

Noted that former Vice President Matson responded to Academic Senate and Executive Committee questions and concerns regarding the Fresno State budget. Her memo will be made available to senators. Interim Vice President for Administration Astone and Interim CFO Moffit will be invited to the Academic Senate to discuss next year’s budget.

1. Senator Williams (Agricultural Business)

Faculty and staff can ride the Fresno Area Express bus system for free. We should all try to do this at least once a week. Perhaps the president could have electric car charging stations installed on the campus, and even buy a small fleet of electric cars for faculty to use.

1. Consent Calendar

MSC approving the consent calendar containing revisions to APM 306 and APM 360 conforming policy to the new collective bargaining agreement.

1. New business

None.

1. Resolution on Teaching Associate Fee Waivers.

Senator Henson (English) introduced the resolution, and several current teaching assistants were recognized to speak on its behalf. The argument was made that campus presidents have the authority to offer fee waivers, and that TA salaries have not really risen in the last ten years and do not come close to covering tuition. Many TAs are first generation students and it should be part of the university’s mission to support them. Several TAs noted that they have to work several other jobs outside of the university to support themselves and their families, and many have to take out loans to pay for tuition. International student TAs cannot even get loans.

Senator Ram (University-wide) asked how many TAs there actually are on the campus, including departments and what their responsibilities are, noting that many colleges and departments do not have any at all. Senator Henson responded by saying that several departments in the colleges of Arts and Humanities and Science and Math were mentioned as having TAs and the numbers in each department roughly range from 1 to 15. In these departments TAs are teaching introductory courses as instructors of record, such as first-year writing courses, which is essential since the number of tenure-track faculty has fallen so low.

Senator Bryant (Ex-officio for Political Science) asked how much money is involved with a fee waiver, and just what kinds of fees we are talking about waiving. No specific amount of money was mentioned, but Senator Henson said that different plans are worth considering, such as waiving just tuition, or just waiving fees in excess of tuition, or waiving both. She hopes that if the resolution is passed that the administration will present a fee waiver plan to the Academic Senate.

Senators Forgacs (Math), Maitra (Chemistry), and Wakabayashi (Earth and Environmental Science) noted that we are having a lot of trouble attracting graduate students to Fresno State because the pay is so low. We need more graduate students so professors will have more time to write and conduct their research.

Senator Williams (Agricultural Business) pointed out that granting the fee waiver would have significant, but as yet unknown, impacts on a budget that is already very tight. It was also pointed out, though, that fewer graduate students might mean more part-time faculty covering a lot of classes, and that would be an even greater strain on the budget.

AVP Caldwell (Faculty Affairs) noted that the provost has been thinking a lot about this problem and they will be talking to the UAW (which represents teaching assistants) about it in the near future. They are also looking at other campuses to see what they do.

Senator Maldonado (Philosophy) asked if the administration would provide some hard data on how many students we are talking about and how much this might cost. AVP Caldwell promised to provide it.

The Academic Senate adjourned at 5:15pm.

The next meeting of the Academic Senate will be March 9, 2015.

Submitted by Approved by

Thomas Holyoke Kevin Ayotte

Vice Chair Chair

Academic Senate Academic Senate