Special Representative Faculty Senate Meeting
Thursday, December 10, 2009

Minutes

1. Call to Order:
The meeting was called to order by President Turner at 3:14 P.M.

2. President’s Report: Karen M. Turner
President Turner explained that the purpose of this meeting was to discuss an amendment related to the issue of a quorum. However, before turning to the amendment, itself, she provided some background. To accomplish this, she presented a power point presentation which went over the problems related to the quorum issue from April 16, 2009 – November 17, 2009.

After the overview, Karen Turner turned to the senate bylaws and the discussion of the quorum. In particular, she spoke of the wide range of business conducted by the senate and the fact that electronic voting is now part of the bylaws.

Michael Jackson (STHM) put forth the motion that there should be the following amendment to the bylaws, Article, V, Meetings, Section 6.

A quorum of the University Faculty senate shall consist of 40 eligible members. A quorum of the Representative Faculty Senate shall consist of 25 eligible members. It shall be assumed, upon the call to order, that a quorum is present: the minutes shall be read. If, after reading and before approval of the minutes, any member shall suggest the absence of a quorum, the presiding officer shall determine whether a quorum be present. If no quorum be present, the presiding officer of the meeting shall determine either to wait for the appearance of a quorum or to adjourn to another date. In the event a quorum cannot be obtained, at the presiding officer’s discretion, the meeting may continue informally for purposes of debate or discussion, but no formal action may be taken. A member may at any time after the approval of the minutes suggest the absence of as quorum, but the presiding officer may rule said suggestion out of order if, in the presiding officer’s opinion, a quorum is present.

A discussion followed the motion. There were six positive comments and two negative comments regarding the motion. Some positive comments were:

• A long-time Temple faculty member had never heard of a quorum call until last year. He said that all kinds of business had been conducted, including curriculum change, with this size of a group. He felt that this amendment was long overdue and it removed the threat of shutting down of the faculty senate;

• A steering committee representative believed that the actual figures of who attended the senate from the last three years were compelling because she could see how low the numbers were. (The actual figures were put up on the screen so that everyone could see the attendance record of the past three years. Karen Turner clarified the numbers by saying that until today there was no break out of the ex officio members. Now the 30 ex officio members were visible.)

• Another steering committee representative said that Robert’s Rules of Order that set the quorum number as the minimum number expected to attend a meeting in order for the body to conduct its business. He also said there was protection against a small group making decisions because of the safeguard that two meetings had to be held in succession before a vote could be taken as
well as past practice. He also said that electronic balloting was also a safeguard.

- Yet another steering committee member spoke of the discretion faculty had to determine what kind of ballot would be used. This, he pointed out, is a small group but the steering committee in the last ten years has never co-opted the senate.

- A representative clarified the fact that the faculty senate steering committee can call for a vote and that any senator can call for a written ballot;

- A Steering Committee member put forth the points that Robert’s Rules of Order made it clear that the number should not be too high for a group to do business and that even the Canadian Parliament and the House of Commons only asked for 6% of its members to be present to make a quorum and our 3% or so was not all that different.

Some negative comments included:

- A representative was concerned about the tyranny of the minority of a small group;

- Another representative did not like the motion and felt that the numbers of 25 faculty out of 150 senators and 40 out of the university faculty senate were too few. He felt the numbers were too extreme.

In addition to the comments from the senators, President Turner made the point that there are other safeguards that make it hard for a small group to dominate. In particular, she said that the meetings are recorded and the minutes are available on line.

Orin Chein (CST) called for a vote on the motion. This was passed. Mark Rahdert (LAW) followed up by asking for a paper ballot. The paper ballots were collected and counted. The motion passed; 33 for the motion and 8 against it.

**Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:43 P.M.

Submitted by Joan Poliner Shapiro, Secretary