Faculty Senate Steering Committee Meeting  
February 22, 2011  
Minutes

Present:  
Paul S. LaFollette (Pres.), Joan Shapiro (V. Pres.), Roberta Sloan (Secy.), Joan Delalic (Engr.), Don Harris (Law), Deborah Howe (SED)- by phone, Michael Jackson (STHM), Charles Jungreis (Med.), Luke Kahlich (BCMD), Stephanie Knopp (Tyler), Jim Korsh (CST), Laurie MacPhail (Dent.), Charles Ruchalski (Pharm.), Douglas Wager (SCT), David Waldstreicher (Fac. Herald) Cheryl Mack (Coord.).

Absent:  
Karen Turner (Past President) on leave, Mark C. Rahdert (Law) on leave, Nora Alter (SCT) on leave, Tricia S. Jones (Educ.) on leave, Margaret Devinney (CLA), Jay Sinha (FSBM), Adam Davey (CHPSW)

Call to Order:  
The meeting was called to order to 1:09 pm.

Approval of Minutes:  
The minutes from the last Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting of February 8, 2011 were approved.

President’s Report – Paul LaFollette:  
President LaFollette said that he did not have much to report since the last meeting. The Bylaws Committee and the Bargaining Units Liaison Committee are conducting their business.

Mary Burgan, author of the highly touted book, Whatever Happened to the Faculty, will be the keynote speaker on April 5 and 6th at a forum being presented by the Faculty Herald, the Faculty Senate and the Provost’s Office.

A senator asked President LaFollette what Vice President and Provost Englert’s reasoning for not putting the budget online, had been when he explained it at the last Representative Faculty Meeting which took place on February 15, 2011. President LaFollette succinctly described Provost Englert’s explanation and reminded the members that he had posted an URL in an email to the Senate listserv so that they could hear what was said at the meeting.

A senator shared an opinion that it would be helpful to see the budget with an explanation of the context. Another senator suggested that a budget report would be very helpful and would explain the context.

Vice President’s Report – Joan Shapiro:  
VP Shapiro said that senators are needed to place their names in nomination for election to both the EPPC and the University Tenure and Promotion Committee. Committees that need more appointed members are the Committee for Administrative and Trustee Appointments (CATA), and the Committee on the Status of Women, among others. Immediately needed are faculty for the Student Award Selection Committee. She requested that members of the FSSC encourage qualified senators to participate on University Committees.

Guests: Presidential Faculty Fellows; Thomas Marino (School of Medicine), Susan Jansen Varnum (CST):  
The new Presidential Faculty Fellows began by saying that since they are so new to their positions, they are not entirely sure of what they will be doing. They do know, however, that part of their duties will be to review faculty files for tenure, promotion and contract renewals. They also mentioned that
President Hart has tasked them to be concerned about the status and treatment of the university graduate students.

Professor Marino stated that he feels that they bring "an academic part of the discussion" to the president’s office. They also are able to provide a "science" perspective. Additionally, since Professor Marino is from the Health Sciences campus and Professor Varnum is from the main campus, together they can provide different campus perspectives. They stated that their hope is that this will be helpful. They both wish to provide a faculty perspective to various issues. They will also have some administrative tasks. Between the two of them, they feel that they can provide different viewpoints on various events and discussions that are happening on campus. They can serve as liaisons for the faculty and students to President Hart’s office. They added that they will be making recommendations, and will not be in the position to make decisions. They will also be interfacing with the deans and the provost.

Senator Michael Jackson asked that graduate externs be included when considering TUGSA issues. There was a discussion of the issue of the change that happened last semester when grad students were no longer allowed to be adjuncts. The Presidential Faculty Fellows mentioned that President Hart set aside a $3 M budget for those graduate students to be able to have assistantships. These conversions will take place over the next three years. There was a discussion amongst those present as to what will happen after the three years are over and how the new policy will negatively impact many departments and hurt a number of graduate students. Professor Varnum stated that she feels “a one size fits all” policy might not work out. She feels any absolute can be dangerous.

A senator mentioned his concern that both of the Presidential Faculty Fellows are from the Sciences and questioned if the Humanities and the Arts are being disregarded.

The question of the treatment of all graduate students was brought up again and one senator suggested that what is needed is a “Graduate Czar” who will “watch out” for the well being of the graduate students. It was suggested that it is abusive that all graduate students are not afforded in-state tuition. It was also mentioned that if a student has a fellowship, he/she is not allowed to teach and that this can have a negative effect when they later seek teaching positions. It was suggested that the issues of Non-Tenure Track Faculty, Faculty Adjuncts and Graduate Assistantships all need to be examined separately.

A senator brought up the issue of reinstating undergrad lab assistants, and felt that this issue needs to be revisited. Another senator suggested that not allowing "gradjuncts" lessens the effectiveness of certain programs at the university and will negatively impact diversity, which could result in cultural arrogance.

The question of how many "Faculty of Color" there are on campus arose. A senator reported that this question has been asked over and over again and no numbers have been forthcoming from the administration.

The Presidential Faculty Fellows concluded their visit by saying that they invite questions and concerns from faculty and students be addressed to them.

President LaFollette continued:

One senator suggested that a Representative Faculty Meeting be devoted to "budget context.” Another stated that what is needed is budget justifications, and that conversations about the university budget are needed.

It was suggested that the Faculty Senate Budget Review Committee members were chosen because of their interest in finance and because of their expertise in this area. It was generally agreed, however, that more than reports from the BRC are needed, and that the issues are much more complicated than this committee has communicated to the faculty at large. One senator stated the feeling that there is now a "new situation” at the university and more information is needed. Another Senator stated the feeling that the Faculty Senate Budget Review Committee does not challenge the administration. It
was suggested that having an FSSC subcommittee to collaborate with the BRC would be a good idea. There was a suggestion that the entire BRC be invited to come and speak with the FSSC.

There was a suggestion that there should be a “committee on committees.” A senator asked about the progress of the Faculty Quality of Life Committee and the GLBTQ committee. President LaFollette stated that he had visited with Scott Gratson about GLBTQ issues and he is satisfied with the progress that is being made.

Senator Don Harris said that he would be happy to meet with the Faculty Quality of Life committee, and assess their progress on the faculty survey that they are developing.

The spring FSSC/Dean’s retreat was discussed and President LaFollette shared that Senator Trish Jones again volunteered to be the primary point person on arranging the retreat. She and Vice President and Provost Englert will continue to meet along with a dean or two to develop the retreat agenda. The members of the FSSC agreed that it is their hope that there is opportunity for substantive discussion rather than “dots.”

President LaFollette is continuing his discussions with VP and Provost Englert about the Collegial Bylaws Template.

One senator asked about policies regarding the involvement of deans in faculty and chair searches. It seems as if there are different policies in various schools and colleges. One senator mentioned the concern about the “low-balling” of financial offers to incoming faculty.

**Unfinished Business:**

President LaFollette asked everyone to think about and suggest someone who would be willing to serve as the Senate’s new parliamentarian.

President LaFollette mentioned that he has received many emails complaining about the upcoming summer school formula.

**New Business:**

None.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta Sloan, Ph.D.
Faculty Senate Secretary