Faculty Senate Meeting

Minutes from Meeting on Friday, 30 January 2015

Call to Order:

Faculty Senate meeting was called to order by Ms. Amanda Urquhart, President, at 2:01 pm

Members Present:

Amanda Urquhart (Science/Math), Shawn Seat (Science/Math), James Galt-Brown (Liberal Arts), Joseph Brown (Liberal Arts), Diantha Ellis (Business), Carlos Lopes (Business), James McCrimmon (Agriculture), Jason Scott (Agriculture), Jeannie Paulk (Nursing), Chrissy Dent (Nursing), Jimmy Ballenger (Human Sciences).

Guests Present:

Dr. David Bridges (ABAC President)

Dr. Gail Dillard (Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs)

Presentation of Minutes:

Sen. Pres. Urquhart presented the minutes from the meeting of Friday, 21 November 2014. Sen. Galt-Brown made a motion to accept the minutes as written; Sen. Scott seconded. Minutes of Friday, 21 November 2014 accepted unanimously as amended.

Address to the Faculty Senate from the President:

1. Clarification of RFI Policy:
   a. President Bridges opened his remarks with a response to the concerns raised in the Faculty Senate meeting of 21 November 2014 regarding the new RFI Policy.
   b. He stated the intent of the memos of 19 and 20 November 2014 was to address the distribution of institution-level data relating to business operations of the college. The new policy did not detail exceptions because it was not meant to address personal comments to members of the media. It was also not intended to mean faculty could not respond to questions from SACS officials or auditors. The intention of the memo was simply to move forward creating an archival system with a central depository for results.

2. Summer Pay:
   a. Responding to a question concerning summer pay posed by Sen. Pres. Urquhart, President Bridges noted pre-budget development begins the first week in February and continues into mid-June. Budget hearings usually fall around the first week in March. Therefore, the budget for Fiscal Year 2016 is built at ABAC between February and March. The Board of Regents approves in mid-April, and the Governor signs around June 1.
   b. Base pay, merit pay, promotional pay and summer pay all come “from one pot” of money within the budget.
c. The current summer pay scale was enacted in 2008. Prior to that, summer pay for faculty was on the adjunct pay rate. This pot of money is managed by the deans of the respective schools.

d. While the FY 16 Budget has yet to be finalized, President Bridges stated he and the Cabinet have “decided to roll with the old rank-based pay used since 2008 for at least another year.”

e. President Bridges noted there will potentially be a change in policy in the future regarding the requirement that deans teach in the summer, something which reduces teaching opportunities for faculty. This change is not in writing as of yet but can be taken as his word.

3. Faculty Load and Pay:

a. President Bridges informed Faculty Senate the Administration is currently looking at faculty loads. The current goal is to aim for a 27-hour load for everyone. This is still in the working stages but is the plan for the future.

b. The Administration is also looking at trying to balance pay raises as well, particularly increasing promotional pay to better reflect achievement of new rank.

c. President Bridges noted there is a lot of information floating about in the media regarding merit pay raises approved by the General Assembly. He stressed it is important to keep in mind what is reported in the media regarding a college’s budget may not in fact be reality.

4. Entertainment of Questions:

a. Sen. Scott referred to the possible change regarding the removal of the teaching requirement currently in place for Deans and asked if such a change would be considered for Department Heads who are 12-month faculty as well.

Dr. Bridges responded the burden of responsibility for managing instruction rests on the backs of the deans. However, he stressed this burden also includes “what is in the interest of student learning? – not all courses are equal.”

b. Sen. Galt-Brown asked about the future of the ACCEL program in the regard of “all classes not being equal,” noting the low numbers for the ACCEL classes taught at the high schools and questioning if faculty might not be considered to be of “more value” teaching a larger class.

Dr. Bridges responded that ABAC is involved in the ACCEL program for more than the financial interest, which is minimal. Instead, we are involved because it is good for the students to have a collegiate atmosphere and because it provides the college early contact with good students. He further stated he has no intention of decreasing or diminishing the ACCEL program even though it is one of high cost.

c. Sen. Scott asked what the estimated time frame for the implementation of the 27-hour load.

Dr. Bridges responded that was still in question as the change is in the working stages.
d. Sen. Galt-Brown asked if the legislative cuts in Louisiana would filter Georgia’s way.

Dr. Bridges responded to again be wary of what is printed in the news. His analysis is that the legislative cuts may not happen but allocative cuts could.

e. Sen. Galt-Brown then posed “one concrete question, literally and metaphorically.” What about the Science building (Gray Hall), which is currently experiencing flooding issues.

Dr. Bridges responded that we are not going to spend a lot of money on Gray, only to tear it down once we are able to get construction of the new building started. There are delays, but the construction is on the way. In the meantime, ABAC is looking at portable lab buildings to solve the problem in the short term.

Dr. Bridges also noted that a King Hall renovation is under consideration. ABAC has the funds in place for King due to its historic qualities. The architectural plan is to start renovations after graduation in May 2016 and reoccupy by August 2016. The building will be restored to its full WPA grandeur with offices and classrooms.

There is also a $15.5 million project in place for the J. Lamar Branch and Carlton Centers.

The concept for the Carlton Center is for the 1st floor to be a retail space, technical support, coffee shop, informal high traffic area. The next two floors are envisioned to be a student learning center, which will include stacks of books and other learning aids, and technology-based learning center. Parts of these areas will more than likely have 24-hour access. Student media will also be housed at the Carlton Center.

Recently, the Library was moved from reporting to the VPAA to the VP of Technology due to the changing nature of this field. ABAC’s current VP of Technology was on the re-design team for the library at Georgia Tech.

The concept for the J. Lamar Branch Center is for the Fine Arts Department to finally have a home.

The projected time frame for the renovations of these buildings is FY 16-17.

f. Sen. Seat asked if there was a plan in place for Britt Hall. Dr. Bridges responded there were presently no plans for Britt.
Old Business:

1. **Evaluation of Advising:**
   a. Sen. Pres. Urquhart reopened the discussion of advising evaluation tabled in the meeting of 21 November 2014 noting that many faculty turned in annual reports this year with no instructional or advising evaluations for the Fall 2014 term due to the change from the TK20 administered reports.
   b. Sen. Galt-Brown asked how frequently ABAC was expecting to accumulate the data.
   c. Sen. Scott suggested advising evaluations issued at the time of the graduation application.
   d. Sen. Galt-Brown submitted that advisees should be evaluating their ultimate advisor for the major in which they were graduating. He questioned whether advisees should evaluate advisors at every turn or only the final advisor. He agreed with Sen. Scott that issuing the evaluation at the time the graduation application is issued should result in a net increase in the volume of advising evaluations. He also noted graduating seniors would seem to be the best qualified to make an assessment of advising.
   e. Sen. Pres. Urquhart then posed the question to the Faculty Senate regarding whether the assessment should be conducted each time advisors meet with their advisees or one time upon graduation.
   f. Sen. McCrimmon pointed out the flaw with one time at graduation is that there are still a lot of students who complete their first two years at ABAC and transfer elsewhere. We spend a lot of time with these students; yet if the evaluation is only issued with the graduation application, we would receive no feedback from them.
   g. Sen. Scott then suggested possibly issuing the advising evaluation any time a(n) advisor/major change occurs.
   h. Sen. Galt-Brown suggested a detailed advising evaluation at the time of graduation paperwork and a general (voluntary) evaluation at the time of a(n) advisor/major change. He noted a question regarding how many advisors a student had while at ABAC might be in order.
   i. Sen. McCrimmon pointed out a question regarding how many times the student changed his/her major would also be good.
   j. Sen. Pres. Urquhart stated the detailed evaluation might include a question regarding which advisor (or professor) helped the student the most because oftentimes students speak frequently with instructors who are not necessarily their “advisor of record” concerning career opportunities, graduate school as well as future coursework.
   k. Sen. Dent made the motion that a subcommittee under the Faculty Senate be created to focus on advising evaluations, the questions which should be included and the way to approach the process. The committee would then bring their suggestions to the Faculty Senate for approval or further discussion. Sen. Galt-Brown seconded. Motion to create subcommittee carried.
New Business:

1. **Load Calculation and Overload Determination:**
   a. Sen. Seat shared with the Faculty Senate an issue that occurred within his department the week prior to the beginning of Spring 2015 classes. Over the break he and another faculty member were assigned to team teach a lab for the first time. Neither faculty member was informed prior to the switch which occurred because of the need to balance each faculty member’s load to 15 total hours. He asked fellow senators if this situation or one similar ever occurred in their respective departments.
   b. While many schools team teach, no one present had encountered this type of issue. It was suggested that the situation be presented to the dean and/or department head for clarification.

2. **Length for Required Office Hours:**
   a. Sen. Brown brought to the table a question from newer Liberal Arts faculty regarding the current length of 10 hours per week for office hours. Many new faculty have asked him where this stipulation appears codified and what the rationale is for it, given the fact most faculty are also required to teach 30-hour load.
   b. Note was made that further research into the question should be conducted, beginning with finding out what the origin of the policy is and what the academic norm is for the state.

3. **Payment of Faculty Salaries over 12 Months:**
   a. Sen. Brown noted several Liberal Arts faculty have asked for clarification of why 10-month faculty are not given the option to be paid on a 12-month schedule if they so choose.
   b. Sen. Galt-Brown stated ABAC used to offer the choice but eliminated it due to costs.
   c. Several senators noted previous schools at which they had taught as 9 or 10-month faculty and were given the option to choose to be paid 12 months of the year instead of the current ten.
   d. Sen. McCrimmon stated benefits are a choice, so why not offer the choice of 10 vs. 12 month checks?
   e. Mention was made that giving the option could help alleviate summer volatility as well as improve faculty retention.
   f. Sen. Pres. Urquhart stated if we had a better idea of how many faculty across campus would want a 12-month disbursement, it might give us a better idea of how to move forward with this discussion. She suggested asking the faculty in each school to get an idea of the level of interest.
   g. Sen. Brown noted that we would need to talk to the financial office about any possible roadblocks which might stand in the way of proceeding with this option.

4. **Bookstore Issues:**
   a. Sen. Dent presented the Senate with yet another instance of no books in the bookstore for students to purchase at the beginning of classes.
   b. Sen. Paulk noted the faculty member stated the bookstore had informed her that the order was cancelled by the publisher without notification. The faculty member called the publisher and got the books after spending an entire afternoon working through the problem.
c. There was also another issue noted by this faculty member regarding students being overcharged in the bookstore (paying $350 for a bundle and receiving a used book).

d. Sen. Scott asked how many times a formal complaint had been written regarding the bookstore issues. He noted that if these things keep happening, a record should be made through the proper channels so that a change can be enacted.

e. Sen. Brown suggested a letter of concern from the Faculty Senate regarding the bookstore issues and possibly an email to Tom Grant about a poll of students to be published in the Stallion regarding their experience with the ABAC Bookstore.

f. It was agreed the Letter of Concern concerning the ABAC Bookstore ordering issues should be sent from the Senate President to the VPAA and the VP for Fiscal Affairs.

**Adjourn:**

Sen. Dent made the motion to adjourn; Sen. Galt-Brown seconded. Motion carried. The Senate adjourned at 4:40 p.m. The next meeting will be held 27 February 2015.