Faculty Senate Meeting
Minutes from Meeting on Friday, August 30, 2013

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

Members present: Amanda Urquhart (Science/Math), James Galt-Brown (Liberal Arts), James McCrimmon (Agriculture), Chrissy Dent (Nursing), Doug Waid (Agriculture), Heather Cathcart (Science/Math), JoAnn Brannen (Business), Diantha Ellis (Business), Donna Campbell (Human Sciences), Jordan Cofer (Liberal Arts), Susan Roe (Liberal Arts)

Dr. Niles Reddick, Vice President of Academic Affairs present.

Old Business: None

New Business

1. Acceptance of Minutes of last meeting on Friday, April 19, 2013. Sen. Galt-Brown made a motion to accept the minutes as written; Sen. Vice President Dent seconded. Minutes accepted unanimously.

2. Sen. President Urquhart and Dr. Reddick addressed the issue of changes relating to the Faculty Senate’s role. Sen. Pres. Urquhart noted that there is now a website on which all Faculty Senate meeting dates are announced for the entire academic year and agenda for upcoming meetings will be posted a week in advance and minutes of previous meetings will be posted within a week of each meeting in draft form with the official minutes posted within a week of approval. Dr. Reddick noted that either he or Dr. Bridges would come to the first part of every Faculty Senate meeting to address any faculty concerns or questions as well as provide updates. Sen. Pres. Urquhart will be meeting with the President’s cabinet in November as a part of the Senate’s role in an advisory capacity to the President. Dr. Reddick noted that the Center for Teaching and Learning under the direction of Dr. Hans Schmeisser will be offering opportunities for faculty professional development which will correspond to the categories for development for Promotion and Tenure thereby affording faculty the chance to take advantage of these opportunities on campus.

3. After Dr. Reddick left the meeting, the Faculty Senate discussed the issue of scheduling Freshman Convocation and Honor’s Day. Sen. Pres. Urquhart began the discussion by noting that the first open Thursday afternoon seemed to be the best time to hold convocation as it would interfere the least with class schedules.

Sen. Cathcart communicated the suggestion from her department (Science) that Convocation be viewed as a culmination of welcome week and noted that an evening or late afternoon Convocation would interfere the least with classes. She also noted that inclusion of Convocation on the Academic Calendar in advance would lend importance to the ceremony. Sen. McCrimmon noted that the School of Agriculture had a Friday seminar class, the first class period of which was replaced with Freshman Convocation this year thus leading to no class meetings prior to the end of Drop/Add (Friday of the
first week). This also led to instructors effectively having to perform roster verification for a class that never met. Sen. Brannen noted that the time to dismiss students needed to be clarified as well because traditionally that has been 10:30 a.m. while this year it was changed to 11:00 a.m. Sen. Galt-Brown relayed the suggestion from his School (Liberal Arts) that we make Freshman Convocation compulsory (for the freshman, at present is only compulsory for faculty) or that we at least provide food and activities to encourage more student attendance. Sen. Cofer pointed out it would be rather hard to make attendance mandatory for the students. Sen. Roe noted that the presence of something other than the ceremony might make more students aware of Convocation as many she met that week were unaware of the event. The other faculty verified they had the same response from many students, leading them to believe there was a breakdown in communication to the very group for whom Freshman Convocation is designed. Sen. Pres. Urquhart noted that food and/or activities would more than likely come out of the Welcome Week budget.

The final recommendation for day and time for Freshman Convocation by the Faculty Senate was the first Thursday afternoon at 3:30 followed by activities and/or food. Motion was made by Sen.Vice Pres. Dent and seconded by Sen. McCrimmon. Vote was unanimous.

4. Sen. Pres. Urquhart also addressed the issue of the order of business at Freshman Convocation. All present were in agreement that the ceremony this year being kept to an hour was good but there were concerns with it not exactly seeming ceremonial which rather leads to a communication of lack of importance. Mention was made of how the end for Convocation this year and in years past did not quite have the same panache that a graduation ceremony has (i.e. everybody just gets up and leaves at the end of the alma mater and prayer instead of giving the students a preview of what to expect four years from that date with faculty filing out first and then the students filing out. Sen. McCrimmon noted that the faculty are in the place in front with the students in the bleachers, giving the impression that the speakers are talking to the faculty instead of the freshman. Suggestion was made of the way Honor’s Day is conducted with faculty on each side of the students who have a prominent place in the center. Sen. Waide suggested room for the staff in the bleachers. Sen. Cofer asked what happened to the Ceremonies Committee. Sen. Pres. Urquhart stated it was proposed and created but that was it. Sen. Galt-Brown stated we needed the Ceremonies Committee. Sen. Dent suggested if not formal then at least informal as there are many faculty on campus who have communicated great ideas for a more ceremonial feel to Convocation. Motion was made by Sen. Galt-Brown that the Ceremonies Committee be reactivated. Sen. McCrimmon seconded. Vote was unanimous. Sen. Pres. Urquhart stated she would address this issue with the President and VPAA.

5. The next item was discussion of Honor’s Day. Sen. Cathcart suggested that it not be on the last week of classes as it was last year because this interferes with last classes and labs. She also mentioned that an evening event would be nice for parents who would like to attend. Thursday evening was noted as a good time. In addition, the inclusion of Honor’s Day on the Academic Calendar would lend it more solemnity. Sen. Roe stated
that might be an issue as we have to know Board of Regents scheduling so that the President could be present and there is the issue of concert date scheduling as well. Sen. Brannen pointed out that Honor’s Day scheduling is not that big of an issue because both faculty and students know that it is coming somewhere around the last month of spring classes. The issue was tabled for further discussion at the next meeting after representatives have time to talk more with their departments. Sen. Galt-Brown moved to table; Sen. Dent seconded. Vote unanimous.

6. Sen. Galt-Brown brought the issue of election of two senators at large to the Faculty Senate to be voted on by the entire faculty as per a suggestion from a few faculty in his school. Sen. Campbell noted this is not realistic as some schools are far too small to send more than the two representatives already present which would lead to a lack of balance on the Senate. Sen. Pres. Urquhart noted that whoever is voted as a Senator at Large would always be loyal to his or her school which could affect voting. Sen. Campbell stated the Faculty Senate should be kept as is which is balanced among the schools; and if someone wants to join the Senate, then that person should put his or her name forward when the school is voting for its representatives. The other senators agreed. This was not an issue that needed a vote.

7. The final issue of the meeting was bookstore ordering problems. Sen. Cathcart noted that the Biology classes require a text, a mastering biology code, iClickers, and a lab manual which is custom to ABAC only. At the date of the meeting, she and other Biology instructors still had students who had no manuals due to the bookstore not ordering enough. Instead of ordering based on the numbers provided in estimate from the schools which includes new faculty teaching additional classes, the bookstore has been ordering based on how many sold last year which has created a shortage. Sen. Brannen stated this has happened with the CISM classes as well which have been bundled together as created with the publisher for ABAC even though the publisher for that text (Cengage) makes allowance for the books to be ordered and saved for the next term instead of sent back. Sen. Pres. Urquhart noted this has been a problem in Math classes as well. Sen. Cathcart said that her publisher has stated they will take the old editions back if not sold so that the ABAC Bookstore is not stuck with that inventory; she just wants her students to have the tools necessary to complete the class successfully. The main issue here was noted as the Bookstore not ordering based on what we tell them but on past sales. Sen. Roe and Sen. Campbell noted this seems to be an issue for the Vice President of Fiscal Affairs. Sen. Pres. Urquhart noted that the Faculty Senate can come up with a solution, per Dr. Reddick. The consensus from the Faculty Senate was for Sen. Pres. Urquhart to discuss this issue further with Dr. Reddick and John Clemens and update the Senate.

8. The Senate adjourned at 3:50 p.m. The next meeting will be held September 27, 2013.