

Faculty Senate Minutes
Special Meeting – 19 November 2014

Senators Present: Lea Ann Alexander, Ajay Aggarwal, Kristen Benjamin, James Duke, Carolyn Eoff, Dan Fitzroy, Emily Gerhold, Greg Gibson, Megan Hickerson, Jana Jones, Travis Langley, Patricia Loy, Lonnie McDonald, Richard Miller, Holly Morado, Janice O'Donnell, Ingo Schranz, Brett Serviss, Suzanne Tartamella, Patrick Wempe, Penny Whelchel, Fred Worth

Senators Absent: Steven Becraft, John Greene, Franc Hudspeth, Malcolm Rigsby, R. C. Smith, Peggy Woodall

Others Present: Steve Adkison, Stephanie Barron, Martin James, Nydia Jeffers, Wayne McGinnis, Vernon Miles, Allison Vetter

1. Call to Order: President Fred Worth 3:15
2. Discussion with Discussion with Provost/VPAA, Dr. Steve Adkison
 - a. Dr. Adkison noted that the special meeting grew out of unscripted comments regarding the campus climate survey he made at the previous faculty senate meeting and his deep concerns about those results; he specifically mentioned three concerns: lack of communication with the senior leadership, compensation, and a crisis of confidence in senior leadership; he remarked further that although we cannot change the past, we can learn from it.
 - b. Dr. Adkison then asked for feedback on how to fix concerns articulated in the campus climate survey.
 - i. A senator noted that fear must be removed from the equation; many faculty are currently fearful of providing feedback.
 1. Dr. Adkison responded that the results from the staff survey also indicated this; they expressed not only fear but also apathy borne out of a sense that no one listens.
 - ii. The senator also noted the incompetence on campus—people who are simply unable to do their jobs.
 1. Dr. Adkison remarked that newer faculty have a fear of speaking out in their departments for fear that such could damage their chances of tenure and promotion; he assured everyone that tenure is evaluated according to a published criteria and that “collegiality” is *not* one of those criteria.
 - iii. A senator mentioned that there is a general lack of trust in the administration as well as a true concern about compensation; while there has been a period of transition, several years ago the Senate held a special session in which it discussed salaries and how much could be reasonably asked for (an amount that was “not laughable”); the senator further noted that demands for salary increases in the past had to be “panderings couched in language deemed unoffensive” by the administration; the senator further noted that all of this discussion was carried on in the context of the notion that faculty salaries are always tied to tuition.

1. Dr. Adkison responded that he was hearing the concern that a lack of action has equated a lack of trust; he also noted that we are at a “tipping point” vis-à-vis tuition and that salaries cannot be linked to tuition; in the (previous) absence of true, participatory shared governance, these cries went unheard.
- iv. President Worth remarked that several years ago raises were given to mid-level administrators; these raises gave the faculty the impression that they were unvalued.
 1. Dr. Adkison mentioned that uncompensated overload is illegal.
 2. He also noted that President Jones has stated that no one making >\$100,000 will receive a raise until faculty salaries are dealt with.
 3. Dr. Adkison remarked that when directorships are combined, sometimes salaries are increased.
- v. A senator noted that one of the problems regarding compensation is the very idea of having to ask and that the faculty has tried various methods, to no avail.
 1. Dr. Adkison noted that he could not agree more and that he would like for salaries to be as high as we could make them; he reiterated that this is part of the strategic plan and that President Jones and he must deliver on this or face the repercussions.
- vi. A senator asked about looking at the entire budgeting process, particularly the reallocation of existing funds. The senator noted that previous administrations have not been willing to entertain this idea.
 1. Dr. Adkison responded that the strategic plan will force us to do this, as will the HLC; he remarked that our fund balance is healthy; the board of trustees asks that we maintain a fund balance of 5%—ours is currently at 20%; we have the resources, but we must decide how to use them.
 2. Dr. Adkison added that a better job with retention and stable enrollment would help with this, as the process is in some ways a juggling act (what money goes where); in a larger sense, though, we must look at needs in a reactive way; he again referenced the strategic plan as a means of determining what deserves funding.
- vii. A senator asked about the best way to approach the administration and noted that the previous methods (resolutions, letters, etc.) have met with very limited success.
 1. Dr. Adkison responded that subsequent requests like this will move through the shared governance model; we can also speak to Steve; he added that President Jones was caught off guard by the Senate’s previous resolution about salaries.
- viii. A member of the audience noted that a previous Senate has already discussed the idea of starting with the salaries (during the budget process) and then moving from there; the information was sent forward and the response was a color-coded chart explaining why the ideas could not be implemented.
 1. Dr. Adkison noted that he has had experience with this climate (“if you don’t like what you’re getting paid, find another job”) before; he noted that he had experience in interest-based bargaining at Eastern Oregon University (EOU) and that the idea worked well even though

the campus was unionized; he emphasized that we have placed significant (and specific) interests in the strategic plan.

- ix. A senator expressed concern with the poor communication coming from the top (the most recent examples being the health insurance increase [buried in an e-mail attachment] and the parking problems caused by the recent construction [only addressed after the fact]); the senator noted that this is extremely troubling given the known dissatisfaction of the faculty.
 1. Dr. Adkison responded that the senior leadership is still learning and that it is easy to fall into sloppy habits; he noted that he could not justify what has happened and that we will work at getting things “less wrong”; he cited the fact that President Jones called an emergency meeting with the executive committees of both senates after realizing what had happened vis-à-vis the health insurance issue.
 2. He added that the health insurance changes create further compensation erosion; this is why we (the faculty) cannot fear speaking out about perceived problems on campus; we must actively question decisions by him and other members of the senior leadership.
 3. The senator responded that one problem is that the senior leadership does not practice effective listening, which further corrodes faculty confidence.
 4. Dr. Adkison asked for specific suggestions and added that the deans and the provost’s council are part of the solution here.
 5. The senator responded that seeing senior administration “on the ground” would be one idea.
 6. Dr. Adkison referenced the recent ventilation issues in Russell Fine Arts (RFA); he mentioned the faculty reaction to the provost’s being in the building and raised a question about rotating executive offices; he noted that Cal State has no “administration” building but rather scatters its administrative offices around campus; Dr. Adkison asked about a similar scenario on Henderson’s campus; some discussion ensued.
 7. President Worth noted that there are already space issues on campus.
- x. A senator raised a question about accountability and noted that many faculty ask “who cares?” when it comes to accountability; the senator also questioned the efficacy of some administrative positions—what exactly are they doing and how well are they doing it? The senator noted that new positions are also created with no justification.
 1. Dr. Adkison responded that he was surprised that more people have not fallen into apathy and reiterated his earlier sentiment that if we as faculty have questions we should not hesitate to ask; there are still things on campus that “boggle his mind” and he wants to hear concerns about accountability.
- xi. A senator noted that while the forum was about why the survey results were so dismal, he/she wanted to return to the salary issue; the senator mentioned two previous resolutions that were pushed back against by the administration; the senator also spoke to salary compression issues borne out of promises made by the previous provost that were later rescinded; the

senator also noted that when “equity” raises were given, the “piddling” amounts were insulting; a discussion regarding equity adjustments ensued (including the notion that faculty were originally told they would have to “apply” for these raises).

1. Dr. Adkison noted that the decisions regarding equity raises were data-driven; he agreed that faculty should never have to apply for equity raises and reaffirmed his commitment to a clear and transparent process.
- xii. A member of the audience raised the issue of the 20% overage (which Dr. Adkison noted was a “fund balance,” not an overage) and asked that with such a balance, why are our salaries still so meager?
1. Dr. Adkison responded that we have everything that we need; the pieces are not necessarily knit together.
- xiii. A senator asked if we had always run a fund balance.
1. Dr. Adkison responded that last year’s fund balance was approximately ten or eleven percent and was eight percent approximately five years ago.
 2. Dr. Adkison added that Henderson had just been issued thirty million in long-term bonds which did not cause our budget ratio to change such that it would be flagged by the HLC.
- xiv. An audience member noted that some of the ideas under discussion seemed counterintuitive: if we are looking at prioritizing, we have the resources (the overage) and yet will not fund the health insurance premiums.
1. Dr. Adkison responded that Henderson attempts to live within its budget.
 2. He added that the institution is changing and that “everyone should fear the provost” vis-à-vis the budget as he has first dibs on money; Glen Jones believes in the “strong provost” model.
- xv. A senator noted that last year’s allotment for equity raises was \$46,000 dollars and asked how much discretionary money is given to the deans and mid-level administration; the senator questioned the status of travel funds and noted, for example, the dwindling funds for Chemistry Club.
1. Dr. Adkison responded that he can show specific data regarding this type of funding and noted that this problem has to do with holding deans accountable; he added that he actually now approves all travel, etc. to track accountability.
- xvi. A senator asked a question about how much money is spent on materials distributed to students at the beginning of the year.
1. Dr. Adkison referenced the language on the website regarding the provost, specifically his role as an advocate for the faculty.
 2. A senator reiterated the idea of an advocate and noted that we have not previously had an advocate in this position; the senator pointed to salaries (and particularly the equity pay) as a classic example of the previous provost’s lack of advocacy.
 3. Dr. Adkison noted that he chose President Jones very specifically as a president for whom he wanted to work; President Jones spoke to a need to have a provost who was a strong faculty advocate.

- xvii. President Worth noted that in some instances we have to create salary compression.
 - 1. Dr. Adkison noted that we have also created inversion and that we are losing some faculty to the public schools (as they pay more).
 - 2. A senator stated that compression should be dealt with as it happens; the senator also references previous “scoldings” from the administration when the Senate passed resolutions about compression.
 - 3. A senator observed that often the bottom line for the faculty is simply feeling valued (something that has not always been the case).
- xviii. An audience member asked why the university does not cover the insurance premiums for this year and then budget to cover them next year.
 - 1. Dr. Adkison responded that Henderson is one of only two Arkansas universities paying full benefits.
 - 2. He added that if enrollments are above projections, we want to do ongoing compensation increases plus faculty bonuses.
- xix. President Worth mentioned retention, specifically faculty members under pressure to pass and “retain” more students.
 - 1. Dr. Adkison shared an anecdote about grade distribution and the folly of questioning grades; he added he will *never* question grade distribution and that he has high standards vis-à-vis academic integrity.

3. Adjourn 5:04

Respectfully Submitted,
P. Gregory Gibson
Faculty Senate Secretary