

President's Report to the Faculty Senate – April 9, 2014

1. **Meeting with Graduate Student Affairs Committee on Monday, April 8.** Senators Hedreen, Shea and I met with the GSAC to introduce them to the Faculty Senate and listen to student concerns. Graduate Council Chair Petto also was in attendance. We stressed our desire to have an on-going relationship with GSAC, which was very well received. Student comments—“uncut”—included:
 - Graduate courses are canceled too soon, leaving too few sections. Graduate students should not be penalized for registering within, but towards the end of, the registration period. Departments know how many majors they have, and using planned programs to guide needed seats should keep sections open for them. Course cancellations are problematic for students.
 - Graduate students pay graduate tuition when registering for undergraduate courses. [NB: This is a system policy.] Have more graduate courses, or cross-list courses with graduate numbers (and have commensurate assignments). There are not enough course offerings/choices.
 - Languages: Graduate students take undergraduate language courses, but some would benefit from intensive workshops at “graduate course times,” offered “in the way graduate students learn.” Would like to have graduate level (and number) languages courses.
 - Course rotation is problematic in some programs (e.g., required course offered every 3rd semester; postpones progress and/or results in waiving prereqs/taking courses out of sequence).
 - Some programs offer very few electives, so all students take those courses by default, even though the topics might be of little interest to them. (The reason given to students is “insufficient faculty”.) Expand course options so students don’t have to take “whatever.”
 - Raise GA funding! Graduate Assistants are paid very poorly (less than GAs at UConn). The University may be losing good applicants because of this.
 - The School of Graduate Studies was described as very disorganized. It does not respond to students; it does not get information about applications out in a timely way. Example given: applicant for GSGA never received notification of that she did was not selected.
 - Add more graduate certificates, especially in research and “analytics”.
 - Do a better job of announcing/reporting (internally) on faculty and student scholarship.
 - There is a need for more study areas dedicated to graduate students. [NB: Sen. Hedreen noted that a graduate study area is in the design for the renovated Buley Library.]
 - Library issues:
 - Library is too noisy. Library homepage is not user-friendly – difficult to access databases. Offer more library-use information sessions. Expand electronic journal collection.
 - Where graduate programs interface, more coordination would benefit students.
 - Academic advisement is very good.
 - “The thing we like best about Southern is personal relationships we have with our professors.”
 - Saturday courses? Students present unanimously responded in the negative.
 - More online courses? Students present unanimously responded negatively. Comments:
 - Maybe for undergraduates, but we are specialized/focused and want direct instruction.
 - Interaction with other students is important in our courses.
 - We are more interested in having a relationship with our professors.
 - Online courses devalue our degrees.
 - Maybe hybrid courses would be a better idea.

GSAC members expressed appreciation for the opportunity to be heard and the desire for an ongoing relationship with the Senate.

2. **Error found in recently approved Graduate Council By-Laws. Resolution needed to correct error.**
 It has been discovered that the GC By-laws have an internal contradiction. Please compare the following two sections:

III.A.2.b.(3). [Duties of the Vice Chairperson shall include] serving as chairperson of the Academic Standards Committee.

V.A.4.b. [Academic Standards] Committee Chairperson: the members of the committee shall elect a chairperson at the first committee meeting of the year.

Section III.A.2.b.(3) represents long-standing practice by the GC. Therefore, it is requested that the Senate correct the by-laws by eliminating section V.A.4.b. To accomplish this requires a resolution. Accordingly, the following is recommended:

Whereas SCSU exists for the primary purpose of furthering academic excellence;

And *whereas* the Graduate Council By-laws provide a structure for promoting academic excellence in the graduate program;

And *whereas* a contradiction exists between sections III.A.2.b.(3) and V.A.4.b. in the recently approved Graduate Council By-laws regarding the selection of a chairperson for the Academic Standards Committee;

Therefore, be it resolved that section V.A.4.b. shall be stricken from the Graduate Council By-laws.

3. **Adjunct budget cuts.** Following a very recent reduction to our adjunct faculty budget that resulted in course cancellations an inquiry was made by a member of the faculty to faculty leaders at our sister institutions about cuts to their adjunct budgets for AY 15. I received copies of the replies. These came from the Senate Presidents:
- CCSU: “My understanding was that this was an internal decision, not system-wide. Haven't heard anything about more cuts for 2014-15.”
 - ECSU: “I am not aware of anything like this at Eastern.”
 - WCSU: “At WCSU we have not heard of future cuts to the adjunct budget.”
4. **Senate meeting space.** A meeting space is being created in the current faculty dining room in Connecticut Hall, with the intention of making it available for Faculty Senate meetings.

Status of AY 14 Faculty Senate Resolutions					
Number	Date	Resolution on...	For	Disposition	Comments (abbrev.)
S-14-04	2-26-14	Approve Revised Graduate Council Bylaws	Approval	Approved	With complete copy of bylaws emailed 03/06/14
F-13-03	11-20-13	UCF resolution on LEP course caps	Approval	Disapproved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolution is unnec. and creates confusion: language re class caps is contained in CBA, which governs parties' understanding and conduct • Several “whereas” clauses not entirely correct and/or not universally accepted
F-13-02	10-25-13	Bring P&T Doc. in Line with CBA Regarding Role of Univ. President in by Hardship	Approval	Approved	
F-13-01	10-25-13	Change Language Regarding BOT	Approval	Approved	