Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes  
May 8, 2012

Senate President Tim Nohe called the meeting to order. There will be no President’s Report because Dr. Hrabowski is out of town.

Provost Designee Rous began his report by notifying senators that President Hrabowski has received his award as one of Time Magazine’s 100 Most Influential People in the World. He was one of five honorees asked to offer a toast at the awards ceremony.

The General Assembly’s special session begins on Monday, May 14th. During the regular 90-day legislative session both houses passed the spending piece of the budget but not the revenue piece. If this part isn’t passed, the so-called “Doomsday Budget” takes effect and that means drastic cuts to higher education. The special session will begin where the regular session ended. The administration does not know where the campus stands but hopes that the base budget is safe and that cuts are taken as one-time things. A budget will be finalized as soon as something is known and the administration will continue to work on the possible scenarios for dealing with whatever cuts are made.

Dr. Rous thanked Tim Nohe, Kathleen Carroll, the Executive Committee and members of the Faculty Senate for their hard work this year. He noted that Tim Nohe has been a tireless advocate for faculty. Shared governance is strong on this campus but it is a fragile thing that we want to preserve and enhance.

The minutes from April 10th were approved without correction or addition.

President Nohe presented the Senate President’s report in combination with the Executive Committee report. The Committee is monitoring developments in Annapolis as we move toward the Special Session scheduled to begin on May 14th. He has spoken with Catie Collins, SGA President and is impressed with actions our students are taking to advocate against the looming “Doomsday Budget.”

The Executive Committee continues to work with the Provost and President to focus on the issue of faculty diversity at UMBC. Recruitment and retention of faculty are critical to the success of this initiative. A report on the STRIDE Program at University of Michigan was presented at the last Executive Tea.

Finally, the Executive Committee continues to follow-up on the promotion process for Associate Professor to Professor. The Faculty Affairs Committee has also begun to look at this issue and will take it up again in the fall. There were no questions on this issue from the floor.

Bruce Walz reported for APB. The committee received 3-Year Reports from the Provost Office and reviewed four at the last meeting. The Ancient Studies report elicited some concerns from APB about hiring replacements for retiring faculty. Two full-time faculty members retired recently and two more will be retiring in the near future, one sooner than planned. There is a hiring plan but given the current budget situation it is of concern. The LLC Program has
managed to stabilize its faculty and has hired a much-needed full-time administrative assistant. There are still some space issues and issues with GA support. In response to increased demand and decreased resources, the Mathematics & Statistics Department has had to increase class size in its introductory courses. This has been somewhat offset by the increased utilization of interactive learning through CASTLE. Faculty retention, administrative support and increased workload on full-time faculty through reduction of part-time faculty are all ongoing concerns. The final 3-Year report reviewed by APB was Sociology & Anthropology. Faculty retirements are of concern, particularly because department faculty teach in many different areas. There are also ongoing concerns about limited resources. After discussion, the 3-Year Reports for all 4 programs/departments were accepted.

APB also reviewed and approved the new M.A. in English Studies. Planned faculty hiring based on growth milestones is still of concern in these uncertain budget times. APB will continue to monitor the proposed program.

Bruce Walz was unanimously elected Chair of APB for next year.

Joyce Tenney gave the Faculty Affairs Committee report. This year, at the request of the UFRC, the committee reviewed and revised the policy on promotion and permanent status for librarians. Senators received an electronic copy of the marked-up policy and a summary of the changes and corrections made. There were no questions and the senate voted unanimously to approve the revised policy.

Marilyn Goldberg, Chair of GEC, reported on the committee’s activities. Issues of assessments and assessment standards have complicated the committee’s work. Historically the committee has been responsible for course designations for new courses and older courses which did not have designations. Program reviews now come with the requirement that the GEC review all courses within the program. There is a subcommittee assigned to monitor these assessments.

The committee has successfully dealt with an inadequate website. The new site is much more streamlined and functional. Senators were furnished with a hard copy of directions for submitting courses and asked to share it with department chairs. Dr. Goldberg elaborated on indirect and direct assessments and functional competencies for the senate and noted that meetings are being held with departments whose GEP-designated courses are being resubmitted. The Registrar’s office has suggested CourseLeaf, software that would enable the GEC to connect with various other components of the process, including UGC and the Registrar. It has been presented to the budget committee for approval. Another issue of concern is that many people do not understand the concept of assessment and do not know where to go for information. GEC will continue to work on all facets of the assessment issue next year. Dr. Goldberg has agreed to chair the committee again.

Marv Mandell reported for the Graduate Council. The M.A. in English Studies was approved at the May 3rd meeting. Senators received a copy of the council’s report.

The Nominating Committee presented a slate of nominees for shared governance committees for approval. There were several changes to the slate sent to senators prior to the meeting. Tom
Beck, who has been acting as the committee chair, noted these changes. He commented to senators that the committee had experienced difficulty filling all of the vacancies because there were very few volunteers. He reminded everyone of how important service on shared governance is and that despite perceived faculty burnout after years of being asked to do more with less, participating on a committee does fulfill service requirements for promotion and tenure and can provide insight into the workings of an academic environment. Committee service also can bring faculty into contact with colleagues, foster good campus governance and usually does not require a large investment of time. The senate approved the slate, as submitted, by a unanimous vote.

Carolyn Seaman reported on the Undergraduate Council. Senators received an electronic version of the report prior to the meeting. In addition to routine course reviews and approvals, UGC reviewed and accepted the APR in Interdisciplinary Studies. In concert with recommendations from outside reviewers, UGC recommended that the program seek to increase its visibility. The UGC also discussed and unanimously approved the proposal submitted by the English Department to require students take English 100 within their first thirty credits of study. Dr. Seaman will step down from the UGC next year.

Kathleen Carroll presented the report of the University Steering Committee. The committee finished its review of the Plan of Organization but has some lingering questions about which committees should be included. The question centers on the issue of what constitutes a University committee as opposed to another type of committee, such as a Faculty Senate committee. For example, the General Education Committee (GEC) began as part of the Undergraduate Council (UGC), which is a University committee, but is generally considered to be a Faculty Senate Committee. A request for clarification will be sent to University Counsel before the Plan of Organization is finalized and disseminated to the various campus senates.

Steven Caruso reported on the activities of the Committee on Organization and University Operations which has been reviewing and revising the Faculty Senate By-laws. Senators received an electronic version of the by-laws with edits and notes explaining the revisions. According to Dr. Caruso most of the changes were typos. Additionally, the process for electing senators was revised and senators were asked to take the revised document back to their departments in preparation for beginning the senate discussion of the proposed changes this fall. Questions, comments and suggestions should be forwarded to Steve Caruso at scaruso@umbc.edu.

There was no Old Business.

The next item of business was the proposed Master of Arts in English Studies. Senators received copies of the proposal in April. Both APB and UGC have approved the proposed program. Without discussion, senators voted to approve the M.A. by a vote of 27 FOR and 1 AGAINST.

Jessica Berman, Chair of the English Department, presented a proposal to require students take English 100 within their first thirty credits of study at UMBC. This proposal was created in consultation with the Office of Undergraduate Education, the Registrar’s Office, Enrollment Management, Academic Advisement and the Provost Office. Writing is increasingly becoming
the gateway to employment and the earlier in their academic courses of study that our students take composition, the better. The English Department is able to offer enough sections to accommodate those students who enroll and a student survey indicates there are no major obstacles to taking it early. Students simply don’t feel like it and put it off. The English Department hopes to change the campus culture by reinforcing the importance of taking composition within the first 30 credits. In addition to helping students, this will also help academic advisors and instructors who are being asked to give permission to take writing intensive courses to students who have not already met the composition requirement. The proposed enforcement mechanism was discussed. Rather than a hard-enforcement measure at 30 credits, the proposal creates a series of enforcement steps warning students at various points in their course of study and culminating with a hold on registration when a student reaches 60 credits without having taken English 100. The mechanism for managing student enrollment at this point is still a work in progress. Currently the Registrar has to release all holds. The proposal would not apply until Fall 2013 so there is time to figure out the specifics. A gradual rollout is anticipated so that there is time to work out the logistics and manage any glitches that occur. Senators were asked to take the proposal back to their departments for discussion.

Election of officers for next year was next. There were no nominations from the floor. The nominations process was closed by a motion and second. By a showing of hands, Timothy Nohe was unanimously elected President of the Faculty Senate for a second term beginning in September 2012. Kathleen Carroll also was unanimously elected Vice President of the Faculty Senate for a second term beginning in September 2012.

The final item of business was a presentation on the faculty mentor program by David Clurman, Assistant Director for Residential Education in Residential Life. The program is a partnership created to foster relationships between students and faculty and is also a helpful tool for student retention. The Office of Residential Life has found it increasingly difficult to recruit faculty as mentors. To that end, stipend paid to faculty mentors has been increased to $5000 and the office is reaching out to faculty through meetings like the Faculty Senate. Senators were given a handout highlighting the goals, expectations and benefits of the program. Senator Brennan, a former mentor, commented that the experience was very enjoyable and did not require a burdensome time commitment. He also noted that because we are not part of a college town or larger community, students and faculty have very limited opportunities to connect outside the classroom and the mentor program provides such opportunities. Both Diane Lee and Nancy Young commented that our students appreciate this program and Doug Hamby, Director of the Linehan Program, noted that being a mentor allowed him to connect with students he’d never have gotten to know otherwise. He learned about their lives and life in the residence halls and felt the one-on-one connection with individual students was very valuable. He also enjoyed planning activities for students when he was there. Mr. Clurman reminded senators that although UMBC does not have Freshmen Dorms, this program is primarily targeted at first-year students. Senators who are interested in becoming mentors or who know of other faculty members who are interested were encouraged to contact Mr. Clurman.

There were no other items of business and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Lynn Knazik.