

College of Arts & Sciences Faculty Council
October 28, 2005 Meeting Minutes

Present: Joani Spadaro, Hugh LaFollette (vice-chair), Jay Sokolovsky, Melanie Riedinger-Whitmore, Tom Smucker, Chris Meindl, Lisa Starks, Ambe Njoh, Thomas Smith (chair). Invited guests: Mark Durand, Winston Bridges.

Mark Durand – Business School, Community, Accreditation & Recruiting

Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Mark Durand presented an overview of events surrounding Dean Ron Hill's resignation. He said that accrediting bodies were informed of the resignation and that it will not jeopardize USFSP or COB accreditation. Mark also addressed concerns about university-community relations. The Council asked Mark to provide an overview of our SACS status. The head of the SACS site visit team will be Sandra Harper. She is Provost at Texas A&M – Corpus Christi and should have a good grasp of the concept of an autonomous university within a broader system. Mark outlined some of USFSP's recruiting efforts, including advertising at movie theaters, mass mailings, and marketing the new residence hall. Because of a gap between projected and actual enrollments, USFSP may have less money to work with next year. Mark also stated that new lines were driven by enrollment. There are plans to hire one support person to help with grant applications and accounting.

Winston Bridges – College Budget Priorities

Dean Winston Bridges reported that new lines were approved for Organic Chemistry (Assistant Professor) and Criminology (Assistant/Associate Professor). Other monies are being withheld pending negotiations between the administration and the union. The organic chemist could contribute to a pre-health program. Several other searches are underway on existing faculty lines. A review of the programs of distinction is planned, in which the College Council should have a role. The College is reviewing its accounts and there may be additional money available for departmental research and travel. The CASFC will invite Dean Bridges to an upcoming meeting to discuss this further.

Independent Evaluations

The Council began a discussion about the meaning of "independent evaluations" in USFSP's tenure and promotion process. If each level is bound by earlier decisions, there is no reason for them to consider the evidence and make a professional judgment. The reverse happens if "independence" means that each level is completely unconstrained by earlier decisions. If the decision rendered at each level were more than merely advisory this would strengthen the process and give greater recognition to shared governance. One possible way to improve the process would be to require the "upper" level to formally explain to the "lower" level why it reversed a decision. The Council may revisit this issue following the 2005 round of tenure & promotion cases. Alternatively, the Council, possibly along with others on campus, may take up this question as part of a global review of the tenure & promotion process at USFSP.

The Ethics Code

On August 24, 2005, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Mark Durand presented the USFSP faculty with a code of ethics covering the conduct of tenure and promotion and annual evaluation committee members. The Faculty Council has now asked each of the college councils if they would like to appoint a representative to help craft a faculty version of the ethics code. Such a code might eventually extend to the administration as well.

At the College of Arts & Sciences Faculty Council on October 28, 2005, those councilors present voted unanimously that we do not need an explicit set of ethics guidelines governing the promotion and tenure process. The councilors thought that the ethical guidelines, norms and practices contained in the USFSP Faculty Handbook; the Collective Bargaining Agreement; professional codes of ethics; and professional norms and practices (stated and unstated); as well as common sense, adequately protect the integrity of decisions rendered by faculty on the tenure and promotion and annual review committees. The Council was also wary of unintended consequences of a formal ethics code.

Some have claimed that the view of the CASFC on this issue is not representative of the College. In light of this suggestion, we want to make sure that we do, in fact, represent the view of our faculty colleagues. Hence, the Council will put the question to an electronic vote by the entire College.

CAS Compensation & Administrative Structure

The Council unanimously endorsed, with minor edits, the draft memorandum titled "College of Arts & Sciences Academic Units: Administrative Structure & Compensation," and authorized the four-member working group (Smith, Sokolovsky, Spadaro, Meindl) to negotiate with the College administration on this issue.

Prepared by Thomas W. Smith, CASFC Chair