

ACADEMICS

A Monthly Newsletter for the Faculty of the University of Florida

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Chair's Message:

By: *Danaya Wright*, Faculty Senate Chair



Danaya Wright

Happy Holidays from the Senate office! This is a busy time of year and probably the last thing people are thinking about is whether we sunset another major or pass new constitutional language. But this is an important milestone – half of the academic year has passed and we have only four more Senate meetings

to accomplish a number of important policy initiatives. At the December Senate meeting we will be voting on adding minus grades and recalibrating grade values. The last time such a change was made was 1978. In January the Senate will be voting on hiring a faculty dispute resolution officer to work with faculty and administration in resolving faculty concerns before they become grievances or go to court. The Senate's Councils and Committees are busily working away and you can expect to see some other long-awaited issues finally reaching the Senate floor this spring.

In other news, the President's Academic Enhancement Program to charge an enhancement fee of \$500 per semester to all incoming students to be used exclusively for hiring of new faculty and academic advisors is well on its way to becoming a reality. The BOG has approved the BOT's request to the legislature to allow us to move forward on this program, and the BOT approved a resolution to do so at its December 1st meeting. This might possibly be

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Hot Topics:

Dispute Resolutions Officer Proposed Language

The following language was presented at the December 14, 2006 Senate meeting and will be an action item at the January 18, 2007 Senate meeting.

The Academic Freedom, Tenure, Professional Relations and Standards Committee unanimously requests that the Faculty Senate approve the following recommendation to hire a Dispute Resolution Officer (DRO):

The University of Florida shall hire a Dispute Resolution Officer whose primary duties will be to assist in the resolution of faculty disputes, grievances, and concerns by providing information to faculty about grievance and dispute resolution processes available at the University and to assist the faculty and administration in resolving disputes before formal grievance procedures are initiated. The DRO shall have faculty status (either as a current tenured faculty member or a newly-hired employee with faculty credentials) and shall report to the Vice President for Human Resources. The AFTPRS Committee shall participate in the search for the DRO through membership on the search committee and must approve the slate of candidates from whom the final choice will be made. The Vice President for Human Resources and the AFTPRS Committee shall jointly evaluate the DRO's performance on an annual basis, or bi-annually if the parties so agree.

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the single most important initiative of the year, as it will allow for the hiring of 200 additional faculty over the next four years to deal with understaffing in undergraduate teaching. Moreover, the President has committed these positions to being tenure-track lines. While this won't solve the understaffing problems in those colleges that provide the most undergraduate teaching, it should help significantly reduce some of the pressure. The students should be commended for their support of this program and, while the current students are not likely to see much benefit from it and won't be paying for it, they showed great leadership in envisioning a better UF for future students.

I have been asked by a number of faculty about administrative changes happening in Tigert, namely the creation of a CFO and a Senior Vice President for administration. The details are not entirely worked out yet on either position, but the President's goal is that faculty will see greater accountability and responsiveness on administrative matters without radical changes in the day-to-day business of getting things done.

In early January, the final candidates for the dean of the graduate school will be on campus and a group of Faculty Senators (as yet to be defined) will be meeting with each candidate. Because the dean of the graduate school crosses college and academic unit boundaries, it is important that the Senate play an important role in reviewing the candidates.

Not much else to report – oh yes, we are going to some game somewhere in Arizona in early January but that's not really big news.

Danaya Wright is a professor in the College of Law.

DRO from, pg. 1

If more than one DRO is hired, the conditions of appointment and evaluation shall be as stated above for each DRO hired.

It is understood by the AFTPRS Committee and the Faculty Senate that the DRO shall be as neutral as possible in the administration of his or her duties, shall assist in the resolution of disputes before formal action becomes necessary, and that no oral and written communications made in the DRO process – prior to the grievance actually going forward – could be used in the grievance process. It is also understood that when a faculty member contacts the DRO with regard to a potential dispute, the time limit for filing grievances under any University policy shall be followed.

Diversity Organizations at UF (continued from the October issue of Academics)

Association of Black Faculty and Staff (ABFS)

The Faculty Senate Office was recently notified about the Association of Black Faculty and Staff (ABFS). Please take a moment to read about the organization as it should have been recognized in our October Diversity issue.

The Association is a collective of University personnel with an Afrocentric consciousness and a commitment to improving the relations among all members of the University community. The Association observes the following objectives:

To participate in the decision-making process at the university; To advise the university administrators on policies, practices and procedures as they relate to Black people at the university; To monitor the development and implementation of policies, practices and procedures which relate to Black people at the university; To establish a communication and information-sharing network among Black people at the university; To suggest and coordinate programs and activities for Black people at the university; To promote goodwill and enlightenment throughout the university community. <http://grove.ufl.edu/~abfs/>

December Announcements

January Shared Governance Conversation

The January 11, 2007 Faculty Development "Conversation about Shared Governance" will be an all day workshop and discussion featuring Dr. Bernice Durand, Vice Provost for Diversity and Climate, Professor of Physics, University of Wisconsin-Madison and Dr. Frank Cerra, Senior VP, Health Science Center, University of MN. The event will be held at Emerson Alumni Hall. As our visiting experts, Drs. Durand and Cerra will address attendees briefly and enter into discussion with each other and faculty during the morning session. Afternoon (small group) workshops in which attendees from colleges across campus discuss best practices as well as concerns and challenges met thus far in their journey toward implementing shared governance will begin after lunch. To register, please visit the Faculty Development Website at <http://www.aa.ufl.edu/aa/facdev/conversations/sessions.asp>.

If you have questions or need additional information please contact Dr. Debra Walker King at dwking@aa.ufl.edu or 392-6004.

Academic Learning Compacts by Sheila Dickison, Associate Provost

The Academic Learning Compacts for each undergraduate major have been put into a consistent and student-friendly format. You can take a look at them at <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/programs/majors/alc/>

They represent a great deal of work on the part of the faculty in the individual departments, college associate deans, the Council on General Education and the University Curriculum Committee, as well as Vicki Clifford and her staff in the Registrar's Office. Thanks to all who helped us get these done.

Call for Regulations Development

November 29, 2006 MEMORANDUM

TO:

Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors and Department Chairs

FROM:

Jamie Lewis Keith, Vice President and General Counsel

SUBJECT: 2006-2007 Call for Regulation Development

It is time to prepare proposed changes to University of Florida regulations for 2006 to 2007. If you or those in your units would like to propose changes to any University of Florida regulation (refer to the University of Florida Regulations website at <http://regulations.ufl.edu>), please submit the proposed changes to the General Counsel's Office by January 8, 2007 so they may become effective in 2007.

Please include the following in the submission for each proposed changed regulation:

1. the existing regulation with the proposed changes (additions and deletions) highlighted;
2. a brief explanation of whether you consider the change to be substantive, or merely a technical correction or clarification; and
3. the applicable Vice President's approval of the proposal.

The General Counsel's office will analyze the proposals and review with you whether the change is substantive and Board of Trustees' approval will be required. If we have any suggestions, we will contact you to finalize the proposed changes. We will also place the final proposed changes in regulation format, and draft the necessary notices and other supporting documents. Please share this memorandum with the person in your office who is responsible for regulation development. If Barbara Wingo or I can help in any way as you consider changes, please feel free to contact either of us.

cc: Barbara Wingo, Associate Vice President and Deputy General Counsel
Danaya Wright, Chair, Faculty Senate

*Admitted to the MA Bar and seeking admission to the Florida Bar.

Council in Review: Academic Policy Council

Beginning with this issue of Academics and for the rest of the year we will be highlighting one of the Senate Policy Councils and its contributing committees. This month it is the Academic Policy Council, which is charged with “*all matters of educational policy, including the creation, modification, or deletion of academic programs and units; curriculum; academic standing; relationship of academic units to each other; general policies concerning student instruction; and academic merits of candidates for administrative positions of academic significance*” (UF Const. V(3)(1)). The Council’s charge, members, and current minutes are available at its Web site: <http://www.senate.ufl.edu/councils/policy/>.

The APC is currently investigating issues surrounding commercial notes services and honor code revisions. It is reviewing some of the recommendations in the CLAS 5-year plan to discontinue certain academic programs (those involving the *relationship of academic units to each other*) and it is working with President Machen on a procedure for making periodic revisions to the University Strategic Work Plan. They spent a significant amount of time in the fall looking at the implications for UF of the new Bologna Process, a multi-lateral agreement among European universities to grant 3-year baccalaureate degrees. And of course, they spent quite a bit of time reviewing the issue of adopting minus grades.

Many of you probably only have a slight tangential interest in many of these issues, but this is where the rubber hits the road for shared governance. If we don’t have dedicated faculty thinking long-range and academically about the implications of these policy matters we could easily find ourselves 3 or 5 years down the road witnessing dramatic declines in international student attendance. Or, we could be caught in a problematic bind when students’ creativity and new technologies challenge our luddite assumptions about honor code violations. We might not be nimble enough to respond quickly to emerging opportunities that could put UF at the forefront of cancer research or literary scholarship without adequate procedures for updating our Strategic Plan. More importantly, UF may be nimble enough to respond,

but it will do so without the input of faculty because shared governance procedures have not been well-enough implemented and tested. The APC is, ultimately, the faculty’s forum for determining academic policy and leading the academic mission of the university.

Contributing Committees:

The chair of each of these committees (or an elected faculty member) is a member of the Academic Policy Council.

Graduate Council assists the UF Graduate School Dean in setting up programs and policies related to graduate study and research at the University of Florida.

Honorary Degrees Committee shall formulate principles covering the conferring of honorary degrees by the University, and shall initiate or entertain suggestions as to individuals to whom honorary degrees shall be granted. This Committee shall make its recommendations to the Senate for transmission to the Board of Trustees.

Student Petitions Committee shall act for the Senate on the petitions of students requesting waivers of University academic regulations except petitions requesting: late registration, exceptions to minimum-maximum load regulations, changes of schedule after the date authorized for such changes, and adding of courses after the date set in the University Calendar as the last time for adding courses.

University Curriculum Committee shall consider all requests for changes in undergraduate curricula or catalog listings, and for the addition of new courses of instruction in any of the colleges, divisions and schools of the University, except the Graduate School. The Committee’s decision on proposals to add, delete, or make changes in programs of instruction leading to undergraduate degrees shall not be a final decision, but shall be submitted to the Senate for final action.

General Education Council establishes a philosophy of what constitutes the general education component for baccalaureate degrees offered by the University. It reviews all courses proposed to fulfill general education and Gordon Rule requirements. It makes recommendations to the Curriculum Committee regarding the continued effectiveness of the general education program.

Faculty Senate News: 11.16.06 Meeting Outcomes

Chair's Report:

Dr. Wright reported on a few items that should be ready for information items in December including the Academic Freedom, Tenure, Professional Relations and Standards Committee resolution regarding a Dispute Resolutions Officer and timeline for filing grievances. The Academic Policy Council also is working to create a policy for revisions to the strategic plan. Dr. Wright also reported that the Welfare council has reviewed the climate survey which will be distributed in January or February 2007 and announced the follow up workshop on Shared Governance that is scheduled for January.

Action Items:

Name Change: Department of Decision and Information Sciences to the Department of Information Systems and Operations Management from the Curriculum Committee

Sheila Dickison, Curriculum Committee Chair

Laurence Alexander presented this information item on behalf of Dr. Dickison.

The item was approved.

