

January 9, 2008 General Faculty Meeting, Martha Marking, Chair, Faculty Senate

Good morning and welcome back from what I hope was a restful break for all of you. I appreciate your attendance on this momentous day. After the speakers have concluded their remarks we will entertain the first votes to revise the Faculty Constitution since 1986. I would be remiss to not express my thanks to Pam Mitchem, a faculty senator and an archivist in the library, for unearthing this information for me. I would also like to thank the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment and Planning, who were instrumental in determining the list of voters and helped to implement our plan for voting. Thanks too to Sandy Sanders of the Provost' Office for the many hours of work she has contributed to our cause today. I will speak more on the restructuring of the faculty senate at the close of my address. I would like at this time to provide you with an overview of the accomplishments of the Faculty Senate during the past two years. We have been very busy.

As I was preparing for my address today the old adage that "the more things change the more they remain the same" became particularly salient. Many of the issues that have been explored in the past two years have been considered at other times in Faculty Senate history and for a variety of reasons had not received approval by the Senate, or if they had passed through the Senate, were not approved by the administration. I am pleased and proud to say that we have resolved many of these issues in a satisfactory manner for all involved.

The Faculty Grievance procedures were currently under scrutiny since the Code of the University of North Carolina was revised in 2004 and some of the provisions in the Faculty Handbook were inconsistent with the Code changes that had been made. Discussion of the faculty grievance procedures on our campus had occurred in 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000. The grievance procedures currently in place were developed in 2001 and had not been substantively revised since their inception. I am indebted to Paul Gates, John Abbott, Chip Arnold and Katie Mawhinney for the untold hours that were put toward this task, even over the summer months. I also want to express my appreciation to David Larry from the University Attorney's Office and Dr. Aeschleman who read and commented on numerous iterations of our draft proposal. Faculty grievance procedures are surely a touchstone of faculty governance on any campus and I am pleased to say that the administration worked with us in a collaborative and collegial manner. Some of the committee recommendations that are notable are that we are requiring mediation prior to an issue being brought before the Grievance Hearing Committee, we have enlarged the membership of the committee and have allowed for committee members to be of all tenured/tenure-track ranks, as they are now but we have also recommended that should non-tenure-track faculty have a grievance members of the committee must come from the rank of the grievant. We have recommended that should the administration decide to go against the recommendations of the Grievance Hearing Committee, the Provost must provide his or her reasons in writing to both the grievant and the chair of the Grievance Hearing Committee. According to the Code each campus' Board of Trustees must provide a standing committee to hear grievance appeals. We made the recommendation that the Chair of the Faculty Senate and the Chair of the Board of Trustees would jointly recommend the members of this committee. The Senate and the Provost have approved these recommendations and they will go to the Board of Trustees for their consideration at their March meeting.

Another divisive issue on our campus in our recent, and not so recent, past is that of voting eligibility. Again the Faculty Constitution is inconsistent with the Faculty Handbook so we must address this expeditiously. Voting issues have been discussed often since 1999. A small ad hoc committee began work on this issue last year and brought a proposal to Faculty Senate in the spring. After consideration by the Senate it was remanded back to the committee. This

issue, I felt, deserved a more comprehensive consideration so instead of remanding it back to the original committee, I established, with the Provost's approval, an ad hoc committee consisting of twelve faculty members representative of each college or school and from every faculty rank. The committee was comprised of a Dean, three department chairs and eight faculty, including a non-tenure track faculty member. This committee has done yeoman's work in studying other university's policies regarding voting eligibility and faculty classification and have written a draft proposal that is currently on Dr. Aeschleman's desk. We hope to bring this to you later this semester for your approval.

Another item with which we have made considerable progress is with administrative review. Although Faculty Senate mandated it in 2002, Deans' evaluations had not been administered on a systematic basis as recommended by the Senate. Within the past two years, with the exception of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, the faculty in each college or school has evaluated their dean. We have not had an evaluation process in place for any administrative position above the level of the deans since 2000. I have established an ad hoc committee to develop policies, procedures and an instrument to be used to evaluate the Chancellor, the Provost and all other Vice-Chancellors and Vice-Provosts. We are close to finalizing this proposal, which will be brought to the Senate for approval in February. We expect to evaluate the Chancellor and the Provost this spring.

Two individual proposals have been approved by Faculty Senate and revised in consultation with the Council of Chairs and David Larry and are awaiting final approval at our January meeting. They include provisions for allowing faculty members to bring a mutually agreed upon observer to their annual conference with their chair, and approving a deadline after which no one, except under specified circumstances, may add items to a faculty member's personnel file prior to a personnel action. Related to these concerns is a sense of confusion over where a faculty member's official personnel file resides, which offices might have them, what can be placed in a faculty member's personnel file and a general lack of clarity regarding procedures for requesting access to one's file. The Faculty Handbook is silent on these issues. There is currently a proposal on Dr. Aeschleman and David Larry's desks to be approved in March. See we have kept them busy too!

The Faculty Senate has, in the past two years, made several revisions to the Faculty Handbook concerning the composition of university committees and councils. In particular we suggested that in keeping with stronger faculty, and staff governance, each university committee is to be chaired by one, or in the case of co-chairs, two, of the elected members of the committee. We will be presenting recommendations to clarify the person, on each committee, who will be responsible to call the initial meeting and to initiate the election of the chair, or co-chairs.

Other task forces and initiatives that we as a faculty have worked on in the past two years are; Strategic Planning last done in 1997, and collegial reorganization explored in 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2001. As Dr. Aeschleman and I both observed a year ago a significant number of us participated in the Faculty Evaluation and Development Task Force, which I understand from Dr. Haney, might actually be coming to a conclusion since I believe the last committee that needed to do so is close to submitting a final report. We will see changes in the area of faculty activity reporting as a result of one of the sub-committee's work. Other changes will be forthcoming. The important work of the Chancellor's Task Force on Diversity is ongoing. A large number of us have been involved in this issue. A final report of this Task Force will be presented to the university community later this semester.

The final item I would like to discuss is the proposal before you today to restructure the Faculty Senate to provide for department or unit, rather than college or school, representation. This

issue, similar to others I have highlighted this morning, was investigated previously, most recently in 2001. A proposal was brought to the Senate at that time and narrowly failed. We looked at the concerns brought forth at that time and addressed them in the current proposal. The initiative we are considering today had its beginning in 2005 and has passed through the hands of three committees. Chip Arnold chaired the first committee whose charge it was to develop general recommendations for a reconstituted Senate. Jeff McBride chaired a subsequent committee charged with developing a rubric to address when each particular department or unit would be electing their representative. In addition, Senate's Executive Committee made recommendations, which dealt more specifically with questions of implementation and proposed language for the Faculty Handbook and the Faculty Constitution. These proposals have been presented to the Council of Chairs on two occasions and were passed unanimously by the Senate at our November 12, 2007 meeting. In keeping with developing a stronger system of faculty governance we believe that having department or unit representation would provide for clearer lines of communication between the administration, the Senate and the department or unit. In our investigation of this issue it became clear that the colleges didn't have regularly scheduled meetings to provide a mechanism for feedback or an exchange of information to and from the Senate. Our hope is that with the changes we are proposing today the issues brought to the Senate will truly be those of concern to you, the faculty.

In closing I would like to express my gratitude to each and every one of you. I have called on and cajoled many of you to become more involved on committees and task forces and I am amazed that you still answer my phone calls and emails. Speaking of which, we will be contacting you shortly to populate committees and some councils for next year. Please answer the call.

These past two years have been simultaneously exhilarating and exhausting. I'm sure that you have heard the term "herding cats". I'd like to modify that by saying that sometimes I have felt like I was "herding cats mired in molasses". Seriously though in looking at the record of the Senate for the past two years I hope that you will agree that progress has been made. I thank you for the trust you have placed in me and I am honored to have been able to represent you.