Minutes from the Regular Meeting of the USAO Faculty Association  

Tuesday, December 1, 2009

Signed in as present:


I. Call to order by President Dr. Steve Weber at 11:13am.

II. Approval of Minutes.

- Minutes of the 11/03/09 regular meeting of the USAO Faculty Association were delivered electronically on 11/05/09 and on 11/29/09 and were posted on the Faculty Association page of the USAO website. Without correction or amendment, a motion to approve by J. Bruce was adopted.

- S. Weber notes that the minutes do not reflect individual names in the sections that summarize group discussion. If individuals specifically want their name published with their comments, please announce this when speaking.

III. Treasurer’s Report

- C. Elder announces: the balance of account is $852.71.

- Plaques honoring each division’s distinguished graduate have been ordered and the receipts should post to the account shortly.
IV. Regent’s Report

- There was private lunch with the President and the Regents before the regular meeting this month. Others in attendance unknown. It is assumed that the meeting was a private session for the President to review our financial circumstances, explain recent policy decisions, and propose his lobbying plan.

- The regular meeting of the Regents was “choreographed” as usual. Discussion included the Audit, Financial Circumstances, the Foundation and Fundraising, and recognition of Faculty Concerns.

- Following the General Meeting, there was a private meeting of the President with the Board of Regents in Executive Session. Content of the meeting is unknown.

  o J. Bruce initiates a discussion among the faculty about the strategy to lobby for funding through the state regents as opposed to a direct petition of the legislature or the Governor. Discussion includes:

    - Several faculty members were visited by Sandy and were given a “spiel” that explained USAO’s financial position and plan more completely. It made sense.

    - It seems true that there is no advantage for State Legislators to give us special recognition. We wonder why. Who is the local representative who should be lobbying for us? Dorman? Justice?

    - We discuss the possibility of being given discretionary money through the Regents.

    - Why not try all avenues at once? Is this insulting to the Regents?

    - What happens next?

    - Discussion to be continued under Old Business.

V. Committee Reports

- Resources Committee: S. Weber hands out paper and asks faculty to make suggestions for improvement/addition of resources. Travel money for professional development must be re-instated. K. Bohannon mentions the embarrassment of hosting outside groups in Davis Hall when the
building is in such disrepair. General discussion about the need for repairs and renovations. “I use the new bathrooms”, (in Troutt, since the ones in Davis are so horrible). Everyone is encouraged to send email with more suggestions that will be complied into a list and taken to the meeting with the President.

- Convocation/Commencement Committee: N. Osborn announces that the design for the medallion is in process. Pictures have been taken. The next meeting will choose the building. S. Weber asks for feedback about the inclusion of a special music presentation at Commencement. General opinion is that we like it, especially when it can highlight the work of a graduating senior.

- Tenure and Promotion: No report.

- Handbook Committee: L. Hester thanks Dr. Brown for her suggestions for handbook revisions. He encourages others to do the same. He anticipates a productive meeting of this committee in the spring.

- IDS Committee: J. Long reports that the committee did not meet.

- Curriculum Committee: E. Guzik has nothing to report. S. Weber reminds all faculty members that curriculum changes should be submitted to this committee before the March meeting for consideration this academic year.

- Distinctiveness/Academic Rigor: D. Reigh not present. He sent word that the committee is still waiting for syllabi. Most of the work is on hold.

- Faculty Advisory Council: N. Osborn reports that she chaired the last meeting. A 2010 work plan was presented and representatives brought concerns to the Chancellor. #1 Complaint was salaries. #2 Complaint was that Administrators do not listen to the faculty. Attendance was poor. UCO will now have two representatives because they show up. There is an opening for anyone from USAO who is interested. Nancy will continue to serve since she feels our representation is vital. She cannot attend the next meeting, however, because she has been asked to work at Commencement. She talked with the Chancellor after the meeting and he seemed to agree with the tactic of lobbying the Regents.

VI. Old Business
- S. Weber opens discussion by announcing that one of the members of the Faculty Association Executive Council will attend all of the Administrative Council Meetings. Faculty members ask to continue to receive minutes from these meetings.

- We discuss responses to Faculty Forum on 11/24/09.
  - If there are going to be changes to the Summer Schedule at all, we want a voice in the decision-making.
  - We are pleased that N. Warden volunteered to be on the committee that reviews the Academic Calendar. We are concerned about a schedule (this is the second year) where we return from Thanksgiving Holiday to Finals.

- We are frustrated: our charge for this year was to take time to review programs, increase academic rigor, and raise standards, and with the recent developments, we don’t feel like we can focus on this.

- In the meeting with the President on November 6th, he promised another informational faculty convocation. He promised a letter outlining benefits (line items) as they stand now. We have had neither. Were the “office meetings” intended to take the place of this convocation? Why were select faculty chosen, instead of all of us? Was the strategy to “divide” us? We are concerned.

VII. New Business

- S. Weber announces the Distinguished Graduates for each division.

- The regular meeting of the Faculty Association scheduled for January 5th has been eliminated by the corrections to the spring schedule. In this time of uncertainty, we want to meet monthly. A motion by J. Johnson (2nd J. Bruce) to divide the Meeting Time on Jan. 12th passes unopposed. On January 12th, the Faculty Association will hold an abbreviated meeting at 11:00am. At 11:30am, the meeting will break so that each division can hold an abbreviated meeting. This will be announced to all faculty members by email.

- At the November 13, 2009 meeting of staff and faculty there was “griping and brainstorming” that resulted in some good ideas. K. Davis makes a motion that the Faculty Association request monthly Staff Association Meeting Minutes from the Secretary of the Staff Association. This motion is discussed and passes unopposed. We will happily share our minutes
with them if requested. We see great value in communicating well as an entire Employee Association.

- S. Weber asks if we want to share minutes with the Administrators. It is suggested that they already get them, as they are posted online and sent to the Faculty mailing list.

- K. Davis reads a letter from the President. The President has created a taskforce “to undertake a comprehensive review of all programs and operations in light of possible cost savings.” On this taskforce (among others) are the members of the Executive Council of the Faculty Association. Since these members, and the Division Chairs, will be the voice of the faculty on this important committee, Katie asks the Faculty Association if they have elected the Executive Council that they want for this representative function. “We were drafted in better times. If someone else wants this job, speak up.”

  - Everyone talks at once. “Call for an immediate hiring freeze. Examine all recent hires. Why so many administrators? Cancel Fall Graduation. Will this effect Tenured Faculty? I thought we were lobbying for more money? Don’t we expect to get it? It’s going to get worse. We should be ready. There has to be a published set of consistent criteria for consideration (for cut backs) that is open to review. Bring back all information to the Association.”

  - S. Weber explains that this is why we’re being given seats on this committee. We expect to have faculty input on final decisions. We intend to represent the concerns of the faculty. We will bring our reports back to the Faculty Association as meetings occur.

  - Advice: Make sure that the meetings are scheduled while the Faculty representatives are in town. Remember that December is our downtime.

  - No motion is made to change the membership of the Executive Council of the Faculty Association.

- K. Bohannon requests: please add discussion of the Academic Calendar to the Agenda for January’s Meeting.

VIII. Announcements

- K. Lamar announces the holiday Art Show in the Main Gallery all this week. Great Art for sale!

- K. Bohannon announces the Vocal Jazz Concert tonight at 7:30pm.
We wonder: will there be a reception at the President’s House? Will there be an Employee Luncheon?

See you at Commencement.

IX. A motion to adjourn made by K. Lamar was adopted - adjournment at 12:06pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

K. Davis