

LETTERS AND SCIENCE
FACULTY SENATE
9 November 2009
to be considered for approval 15 March 2010

Dean Sandefur (Chair)

1. Announcements, Questions, and Updates. Dean Sandefur welcomed members to the meeting, reviewed the agenda, and invited conversation on the following:
 - a. In a brief overview of recent budget discussions, Sandefur noted that L&S had not been asked to take additional budget reductions in the biennium, but that cuts would be likely in the next biennium.
 - b. The administration of the state-mandated furloughs is complicated by the number of employee groups. One senator observed that requirement that all employees take furloughs is illogical for employees paid on grant and other funds. GS noted that this view had been shared with the state, but that state leaders insisted on the need for all employees to take furlough.
 - c. Associate Dean Nancy Westphal-Johnson provided an update on university preparations to manage a possible pandemic. She thanked Senators and their departments for the excellent cooperation in preparing departmental plans, and noted that the illness seems to be most evident in “rolling absences”, but absenteeism had not caused significant problems.
 - d. The outcome of the April 2009 Higher Learning Commission Comprehensive Visit for Institutional Accreditation was successful. The university easily satisfied the criteria for accreditation, and Sandefur thanked the many L&S Faculty and Staff who worked on the self-study and on elements related to the criteria.
 - e. Sandefur noted that he is currently undergoing his regular five-year dean’s review. He expressed appreciation for the opportunity to reflect on his tenure as Dean, as well as to plan for the future.
2. Minutes of the L&S Faculty Senate meeting held 20 April 2009 were approved.
3. The L&S Strategic Framework was shared with you as L&S Faculty Document #280. Sandefur noted that the L&S Academic Planning Council and L&S Senate, had recommended that the College develop an “L&S specific” strategic framework.. To that end, a retreat involving the L&S APC, the L&S Curriculum Committee, a group of department chairs and several others who had expressed interest participated in a half-day planning retreat that focused specifically on the distinct role of L&S at UW-Madison. Those discussions were developed into a set of guiding principles and goals that will serve us in the coming years. Sandefur asked for Senators' responses to the document, for ideas about how best to realize goals expressed in it, and how also to know those goals are being achieved. The following points were raised:
 - Departments’ ability to meet the needs of many students will be increasingly constrained by limited resources. Those limits also affect the ability to offer competitive graduate stipends. Addressing these issues will be important to maintaining the quality of education.
 - Campus priorities should address the need to recruit and retain faculty; it will be important to avoid relying too heavily on non-faculty instructors. This is particularly challenging since the largest proportion of the L&S budget is in instructional salaries. The college hopes to benefit from the Madison Initiative for Undergraduates, which will allow reinvestment in new faculty. It was noted that continuing faculty will also require some investment, to retain the best faculty and staff.
 - Language instruction plays an important role in supporting various campus priorities (e.g. diversity and global education); pressures to meet minimum enrollments may make this difficult. Departments work hard to balance balance teaching small and large enrollment courses. Language instruction in less-commonly-taken languages is essential to globalization, which was described as “a glory of the great University of Wisconsin”.
4. Madison Initiative for Undergraduates. Sandefur provided an overview of the L&S process that was

under way for reviewing and providing recommendations to the central campus regarding the 80 L&S MIU proposals received. That process was designed to ensure that every proposal was read and discussed by the dean's senior staff as well as by the Academic Planning Council.

5. Dean Sandefur led discussion of changes proposed in the Graduate School research enterprise. (Members of the University Committee attended this portion of the meeting.) He noted that this discussion was provoked by his interest in hearing “an L&S perspective” regarding concerns expressed about research administration, which had been discussed at several in public forums as well as in the university Senate. In addition, the Department of Sociology had presented a motion in the November 2, 2009 Senate meeting to endorse a plan to study the question more formally. In response to a request for observations that should be shared with the UC, several points were made:

- While the proposed changes may be appropriate for some departments, more study is needed to ensure that *all* departments and areas of study are served well by the proposal. Similarly, it is unknown how the change would affect the integration of research and graduate-level training, the extent to which new faculty members in all areas would be supported. Specific problems need to be identified so that they may be addressed.
- Current problems might be more easily addressed if the existing structure (RSP) had adequate resources and good management. There is broad recognition that there are problems (e.g., with respect to grant support), but the only solution proposed has not been presented with a compelling case that those problems would be resolved.
- An issue that seems not to have been addressed is support for research in the humanities, which seems not to have been well understood or represented by the first proposal presented. Serious concerns were expressed for the lack of support for (and education about) research in the humanities, and that establishing a structure that favors one of the divisions more than the others will be harmful.
- Ideas for what should happen with respect for research support: effective grants administration (finding opportunities, creating budgets, submitting proposals, administering funds); more orientation, acculturation, and transparency about the process; more information about research-related support (summer support); information appropriate to the variation in research and creative activity. Finally, it was noted that this issue came to the fore in response to urgent matters related to compliance with rules related to oversight of federal funding (which has become increasingly complex). Any solution must satisfy that requirements.

Ad hoc committees have been convened by both the Faculty Senate as well as by the Academic Staff Assembly. Those entities will study the issues raised and will develop recommendations for future consideration.

Dean Sandefur thanked members for participating in these important discussions.

The meeting adjourned at 4:36 p.m.

Submitted by Elaine M. Klein, Ph.D.

Secretary, L&S Senate

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