

Rochester Community and Technical College
Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF) Faculty Shared Governance Council
Minutes for Tuesday, November 25, 2008 – 2:00 p.m. – AT109

Present: Administration Bequette, Cram, Hansmann, Supalla
Faculty Atwood, Guenette, Israelson, Marconett, Jessie Martinez, O’Bryan, Wright (Chair)
Recorder: Kingsbury
Guests: Engelmeyer, Weber

ITEM 1 (A) Search Update – Engelmeyer distributed a spreadsheet reflecting the status of the current searches.
ACTION: Information Only.

ITEM 2 (A) Biennial Budget Request – Supalla distributed a copy of the MnSCU Press Release regarding the Biennial Budget request for the system. ACTION: Information Only.

ITEM 2 (F) Tracking Grades – Wright questioned the purpose of tracking grades during academic program reviews. Bequette responded it would be for effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction in measuring grades earned at the end of a semester. Wright questioned how grades are a measure of effectiveness. Bequette responded it is not a single measure, but it is data that MnSCU has been collecting (usually in developmental courses, but available in all courses) and can be used in balance with other measures. Wright questioned if the use of grades in measurement could result in grade inflation and/or grade abuse. Bequette responded it is to be more of a measure of what is happening in a course from one semester to another (i.e. curriculum changes), and the grades would not be used to evaluate faculty, but rather used for individual departments and faculty to evaluate efficiency and effectiveness. Atwood disagreed with the need to track grades; the departments do not see the value in collecting this information as there is little that can be done to improve the outcomes from year to year. The classroom dynamics change and these changes have an effect on the student outcomes. Wright suggested a policy be developed that specifically states the information will not be used for faculty evaluations. Bequette disagreed that a policy should be implemented, but agreed to having a statement that indicates the data is for faculty use and not for administrative use. Bequette responded mechanically grades are a measure of outcomes, but it is just one of several data elements a department assembles for reviews. ACTION: Bequette will share the faculty concerns with the Teaching and Learning Leadership Team for further discussion/consideration.

ITEM 3 (F) \$100 Bonus AND ITEM 3 (A) Referral Incentives – Bequette presented a pilot proposal that creates an incentive for students in select programs to encourage new students into the programs. The incentive includes a waiver of the \$20 application fee and a \$100 bookstore voucher for students making the referral. Wright questioned the guidelines for a program to utilize the pilot. Bequette responded program leaders/division coordinators/lead faculty can make recommendation to the appropriate Dean for referral to the Leadership Council, but the specific guidelines have yet to be defined. ACTION: Information Only.

ITEM 4 (F) Cost for Online and Land-Based Courses – Wright requested a cost analysis of online and land-based courses. Hansmann responded a calculation would be difficult because facility expenditures would need to be calculated into the land-based costs. Wright noted a subcommittee of Academic Affairs and Standards Council investigated a year ago the possibility of increasing online class sizes, but ultimately recommended the online class sizes not change, noting an increase would be detrimental to the quality of the courses. Supalla questioned whether the cost analysis was for course by course, or by different delivery methods. Wright responded faculty believe online enrollment is where it should be, but if further discussions are held to increase the class size, the faculty request more information to better understand the “why” for an increase. Wright suggested that the correct balance between land-based and online courses be considered locally and not by the Governor. Wright also stated other considerations should be made, including whether there are courses not suited for online instruction, what the parameters are for proctoring tests for online classes, and what studies have been done on the ethical questions of online courses. Supalla responded, although some colleges have a belief that everything should be online, RCTC has no intention of going to that extreme. However, Supalla added there is obviously a demand for online instruction and the College will not ignore that need. Marconett stated at one time administration calculated a 27-1 average class size ratio for a fiscal breakeven for a course, and questioned whether that calculation still holds true today. Supalla responded course breakeven points vary from course to course, noting some courses require a 10-1 ratio, while others operate at a 40-1 ratio. ACTION: Administration will further investigate an average class-size ratio for a fiscal breakeven on courses.

Adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: January 27, 2009 – 2:00 p.m. – AT109