

FACULTY SENATE COMMUNICATIONS REPORT | 3 March 2016 meeting

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OVERVIEW

The 2015-16 Faculty Senate held its twelfth regular meeting on 3 March 2016, from 3:45 to 5:35 pm in the Riggle Room of ADUC. A report from the Provost was anticipated, but he was unfortunately unable to attend this meeting. Aside from a brief report from the Faculty Regent (summarized below), this meeting was entirely focused on discussing and fine-tuning a list of specific budget-related suggestions to be forwarded to the Budget Task Force (BTF). To be clear, all suggestions on this list came from faculty as solicited by the Executive Council. Given the sensitive nature of this discussion, and the fact that no official actions were taken (i.e., the final list is not a resolution), this report will not include any details of said discussion. Rather, the final list forwarded by Chair Adams to the BTF will be distributed alongside this report without further comment. One specific point worth noting, though, is that Senators once again expressed concern about staff and how they will be impacted by the present crisis. Ultimately, it seems likely that significant effects resulting from this budget situation will be felt broadly across campus.

REGENT REPORT

Faculty Regent Berglee provided the Senate with a budget-focused report. He addressed several concerns, beginning with the issue of the entirely internal \$2.6 million tuition shortfall contributing to the present crisis. As he put it, there seems to be a disconnect between the early enrollment numbers, plus other aspects of enrollment projection, and the budgeting process for the corresponding year. This concern was clearly shared by many Senators. One remarked about the oddity of planning for flat enrollment when the trend line is clearly pointing downward, while another expressed belief that the budget office had access to a realistic enrollment projection but chose to use a more optimistic value instead. In general, there seemed to be a great deal of discontent with this particular aspect of the problem being of our own making.

Another concern raised by Regent Berglee was the limited ability of faculty to have input in the process of addressing the budget crisis. As he reminded Senators, there is only a single faculty member on the BTF, and faculty have no official role to play in negotiations with state elected officials. On a related note, Regent Berglee also spoke of the climate of fear and anxiety gripping much of the faculty, and staff, community. While across-the-board cuts in personnel have not been initiated in response to previous budget shortfalls, there has certainly been plenty of talk about how the university will not look the same on the other side of this crisis. Regent Berglee encouraged the Senate in its work to come up with potential faculty-driven solutions, although he also pointed out that the Board of Regents is very favorable (unanimous support, except for one vote, as he put it) to whatever the President puts forward.

Finally, Regent Berglee (and several other Senators, it seems) had hoped to raise the issue of the numerous Information Technology positions currently advertised as open on the university employment webpage. Specifically, Regent Berglee had hoped to ask the Provost about this particular issue, particularly given that, with benefits included, those positions could add up to nearly a half-million dollars, and be roughly equivalent to hiring the same number of tenured full professors.