



Faculty Senate News

September 12, 2006

Greetings and welcome back to the start of another academic year. Although the University Faculty Senate activities will officially begin with the September 12, 2006, meeting that will be held at 1:30 p.m. in 112 Kern Graduate Building, the officers and I over the summer have been busy with committee charges and other Senate-related matters. This year the new Senate Committee on Educational Equity and Campus Environment (EECE) will have its inaugural year. The leadership and the members of EECE are busy shaping the priorities of this important committee. On August 28, 2006, a comprehensive curriculum workshop was held to address administrative and academic review and approval processes. This was the first such workshop to be cosponsored by the Office of Undergraduate Education and the University Faculty Senate.

I will keep you informed through the academic year on the activities of the Senate via newsletters. This is the first of the six planned communications. Each newsletter will be sent out the week prior to the full Senate meeting. Our other Senate meetings will be held on October 24, 2006; December 5, 2006; January 30, 2007; March 20, 2007; and April 24, 2007. The meeting place and time are the same (112 Kern, 1:30 p.m).

The Senate is the representative body of the faculty with legislative authority on all educational matters, including curriculum, academic policies, admissions, and graduation requirements. In addition, it serves as an advisory and consultative body to the President for matters that may affect the attainment of educational objectives and provides a forum for the exchange of ideas among the members of the University faculty.

One way that the Senate provides a forum for exchange of ideas among the University members is through the **fall Senate leadership visits to the campuses**. In September and October the Senate Officers will visit Abington, Great Valley, Delaware County, Harrisburg, DuBois, New Kensington, and McKeesport. I encourage faculty and students on these campuses to contact your Chancellors for details on meeting times and locations and please try to participate.

At next week's Senate meeting President Spanier will be in attendance to provide comments and stand for questions. If you have questions of keen interest for the President, be sure to contact one of your Senate representatives, so she or he can take this opportunity to have the University President address a specific issue.

Next Tuesday's Senate agenda includes:

An Advisory and Consultative report from the Senate Committee on Computing and Information Systems, **on Student Purchase of Computers**, will be presented for Senate action. The recommendations of the report pertain primarily on increasing student awareness of specific requirements for a computer and how students, including entering students, may take advantage of special student discounts for computing equipment.

An informational report **on Cooperative Extension** at Penn State and its role across the Commonwealth will be sponsored by the Senate Committee on Outreach. Daney Jackson, director of Cooperative Extension, will give examples of programs, funding sources, program impact, and implications for faculty involvement in Extension programs and services.

The annual informational report from the Senate Committee on **Faculty Rights and Responsibilities** will be presented. This annual report provides a summary of the cases considered in the last academic year.

The Joint Committee **on Insurance and Benefits** will present its annual report focusing on the following topics: health care rates; health plan issues and changes; Medicare prescription drug coverage; retiree dental coverage; wellness initiatives; Partners for Quality Health; and TIAA-CREF changes.

Renata Engel, chair of the Coordinating Committee on University Assessment, will provide an overview of the development and implementation of the Penn State's plan **for the Assessment of Student Learning**. This report will focus on 2006-07 assessment projects including a pilot study on selected general education goals. Discussion will take place on the role of the Senate in the assessment of student learning and curriculum evaluation.

The complete agenda for the Senate meeting is posted on the Web at <http://www.senate.psu.edu/agenda/index.html> and the minutes (*The Senate Record*) will be posted approximately three weeks after the meeting. Members of the University community are invited to attend any Senate meeting, and we have seats reserved for this purpose. Any member of the University community who is not a member of the Senate may request to speak on any item of business already before the Senate. Requests must be made to the Chair, through the Executive Secretary of the Senate, Susan Youtz (scy1@psu.edu), 814-863-0221, at least four calendar days before the Senate meeting. Senate meetings are also available through streaming video at <http://live.libraries.psu.edu>.

Finally, I do encourage all University members to be involved in governance issues by attending local unit meetings, by contacting the unit's Faculty Senate representatives, and by using the University Faculty Senate Web site at <http://senate.psu.edu>.

For information on submitting major, minor, option, or course proposals, the *Guide to Curricular Procedures* is available on the Web at

http://www.senate.psu.edu/curriculum_resources/guide/contents.html.

Senate Curriculum Reports are available at

http://www.senate.psu.edu/curriculum_resources/bluesheet/bluex.html.

Thank you and best wishes for a productive academic year!

Joanna Floros, Chair
University Faculty Senate

jfloros@psu.edu