



Faculty Senate Newsletter April 29, 2008

The wear on my tires and the aching in my back tell me that my year as the Chair of the Senate is coming to a close. I'd like to thank my fellow officers Ingrid Blood, Pamela Hufnagel, and Joanna Floros for their hard work throughout the year. I would also like to express my appreciation to the chairs and vice-chairs of the 15 standing committees of the Senate who make shared governance a reality at Penn State. The Senate work would come to a halt without the work of Executive Secretary, Susan Youtz and the dedicated Senate office staff, Patty Poorman, Sherry Walk, Kadi Corter, Anna Butler, and Amy Shilling.

This year we have worked on several important initiatives and although some are on-going others have come to fruition. The outreach committee has revisited the UniSCOPE report and its impact on faculty outreach and public scholarship and made several important recommendations. A number of committees have discussed at length the issues of on-line education and its implications for faculty and students. We have struggled with the issue of high risk drinking on our campuses. We have addressed the issue of access and affordability for our students and established a Faculty Trustee scholarship which we hope will attract support from faculty across the University.

The First-Year Seminar committee has worked diligently to come up with a plan to solve some of the problems with the current first-year seminar and I would like to thank Kim Steiner and Patti Mills for their leadership. Please take a minute to go to the Senate Web site and review the report carefully and let your senators know your views before the April 29 meeting when we will vote on the proposal.

As I write this letter during the excitement of Pennsylvania primary election day, it strikes me how faculty members who are knowledgeable and engaged in the issues of higher education today are critical for the well-being of this great University. We must model for our students the skills of democratic engagement, by being informed, thinking critically, and expressing our views. Please encourage the very best faculty of your academic units to participate in shared governance whether at the local or the university level.

The University Faculty Senate will meet on Tuesday, April 29, 2008, at 1:30 p.m. in 112 Kern Graduate Building and we have a very full agenda.

The current First-Year Seminar (FYS) was legislated by the Senate in December 1997 as one of ten recommendations by the Special Committee on General Education. FYS has been extensively discussed and analyzed by Senate committees, a 2006 taskforce, and several student government surveys. This special Senate committee, authorized at the January 2007 Senate meeting, will present its final report and recommendations to the Senate for vote.

The Senate will receive the results of the 2008-2009 Senate elections for Chair-Elect, Secretary, Faculty Advisory Committee to the President, and three Senate committees including the University Promotion and Tenure Review Committee. The meeting also includes the seating of the new officers and comments by incoming Chair Ingrid Blood and me.

The Senate will also vote on the following: a revision to Senate Bylaws Article II, Section 2 (b) by adding a voting seat to Senate Council for a student senator; a revision to Senate Policy 47-70 Mid-Semester Evaluation; and recommendations for improving Penn State's Web presence.

The Student Life Committee will present a resolution on the escalating problem of binge drinking and alcohol abuse among students.

Presentations will be given on the Penn State World Campus and on Institutional Review Boards.

The Faculty Benefits Committee will give its annual report on faculty salaries with comparisons internally among units at Penn State and externally among peer institutions. An analysis of the recent Faculty Wellness Survey will also be provided.

Informational reports will be given on overload registration; the Senate officers' visits to six University Park units in spring 2008; and the strategic planning process and the University budget.

Members of the University community are invited to attend this meeting. Any member of the University community not a member of the Senate may request the privilege of the floor on any item of business already before the Senate. Such a request must be made to the Chair, through the Executive Secretary of the Senate, at least four calendar days before the meeting at which the individual wishes to speak.

The *Senate Agenda* will be posted on the Senate Web site one week prior to each Senate meeting. The April 29 Agenda is available at <http://www.senate.psu.edu/agenda/index.html>. Senate meeting minutes (*The Senate Record*) are also available at <http://www.senate.psu.edu/record/index.html> approximately three weeks following the Senate meeting.

For information on submitting major, minor, option, or course proposals, the *Guide to Curricular Procedures* is available at http://www.senate.psu.edu/curriculum_resources/guide/contents.html. The April 15, 2008, Senate Curriculum Report is available at http://www.senate.psu.edu/curriculum_resources/bluesheet/bluex.html.

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