



Faculty Senate Newsletter September 11, 2007

Welcome to the start of the 2007-2008 academic year. To those of you who are new to Penn State, the University Faculty 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 all matters that may affect the attainment of our educational objectives. It also provides a forum for the exchange of ideas among the members of the University faculty.

Senators are elected by their peers at each academic unit at a ratio of one senator to 25 faculty. The Senate meets three times in the Fall semester (9-11-07, 10-23-07, 12-11-07) and three times in the Spring semester (1-29-08, 3-18-08, 4-29-08). I will keep you informed about the activities of the Senate through this Senate Newsletter that will be sent out the week prior to each Senate meeting.

This summer the Senate leadership worked with the committee chairs and vice-chairs to establish committee priorities for the coming year. Committee priority forms and meeting minutes are posted on the Senate Web site.

The Senate officers visit campus locations in the fall and University Park colleges in the spring. On these visits we have meetings with students, faculty, and administration. These visits are extremely important avenues of communication and often help us to identify relevant issues for the Senate committees. We will be visiting seven campuses this fall: Erie, September 13; Shenango, September 14 (morning); Beaver, September 14 (afternoon); Lehigh Valley, October 16 (morning); Berks, October 16 (afternoon); York, October 17 (morning); and Mont Alto, October 17 (afternoon).

Penn State Altoona hosted a faculty governance meeting on August 15. The meeting was attended by 27 representatives from 12 campuses and Senate officers. Topics discussed at the meeting included essential functions for campus faculty governance, curricular issues, and facilitating communication between the University Faculty Senate and campus governance organizations. Vice President Romano made brief comments at lunch and stood for questions. The Penn State Schuylkill representatives offered to host the faculty governance meeting next August.

Student senators will meet for the first time on Tuesday for a Senate sponsored luncheon to discuss the possibility of forming a student caucus. Past chairs Jamie Myers and Joanna Floros will provide mentorship for the group.

The University Faculty Senate will meet on Tuesday, September 11, 2007, at 1:30 p.m. in 112 Kern Graduate Building. Following is an overview of the meeting agenda.

John Harwood, Senior Director of Teaching and Learning with Technology, has arranged for 300 Personal Response System clickers to be donated to the Senate for use in voting on legislative and advisory and consultative reports. Using this system will provide a precise count for each vote taken. Many of you will remember the January 2007 Senate meeting, when a hand count was taken on the First-Year Seminar legislation. There was a four vote difference between the ayes and the nays. The clicker system provides for accuracy and precision in tallying the vote count. It also allows for confidential voting and gives immediate results.

The Senate will review a recommendation from the Senate Committee on Committees and Rules to amend Article III of the Senate Bylaws, Election to the Senate. Because this report is an amendment to the Bylaws, the Senate will not vote on the report until the October 23 meeting.

The Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education is proposing revisions to Senate Policy 42-50, Credit by Examination and Proficiency Examination. The revisions are intended to add greater clarity to the policy.

The University Planning Committee will sponsor a presentation on the University Park Master Plan.

The Joint Committee on Insurance and Benefits report focuses on healthcare rates and coverage, wellness initiatives, dental coverage, long-term care plans, and TIAA-CREF.

The Faculty Rights and Responsibilities' report will provide a summary of the cases considered in 2006-2007.

The NCAA Faculty Athletic Representative report on academic eligibility and athletic scholarships will be presented along with a report on campus athletic programs from the Penn State Athletic Conference Faculty Athletic Representative.

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 September 11 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. Senate meetings are also available through streaming video at <http://live.libraries.psu.edu>.

Finally, I encourage all faculty members to get involved in governance issues by attending meetings of your local faculty governance organizations, by contacting your 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 at http://www.senate.psu.edu/curriculum_resources/guide/contents.html. The August 28, 2007, Senate Curriculum Report is available at http://www.senate.psu.edu/curriculum_resources/bluesheet/bluex.html.

Thank you and best wishes for a productive academic year!
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