

**XXXVIII Faculty Senate
President's Report
02/14/08**

I represented the senate at the Creative leadership Council meeting on January 23. Discussions revolved around ways to develop creativity, and UCO's positioning in the state as a promising center of creativity. This is part of an overarching state goal to have Oklahoma recognized for leadership in creativity.

At the Handbook meeting on January 31st, discussions with Vice Provost LaGrow extended into the implications of the IDEA Project for faculty evaluations and the issues involved with Administration evaluations. I will speak of this more under New Business.

The Academic Affairs Executive Council meeting on January 30th covered many topics, a few of which I will note here.

The major topic was the legal situation as regards non-citizens and university hiring. Dr. Morelli, Jim Martin, and Jeanette Patton went over the implications of new federal and state legislation. There are many hiring restrictions and complications. All deans were present at the meeting and are now fully aware of these complications. I mention the H1B visa holders who must be paid the prevailing wage for the category of work hired for in the region of the hiring employer. This is problematic in terms of university pay structures. For both permanent resident and H1B hires, documentation must clearly indicate that there was no citizen qualified for the position, and that the position was widely advertised. There must not only be electronic postings of openings, but also print postings. All search committee members must be especially diligent in filling out the screening documents. Most troubling is the implication, being looked at carefully by legal council, that the legislation would forbid stipends to non-citizen speakers. It seems to be the case that non-citizens who do not have H1B visas cannot be paid. On the bright side, the university has outsourced faculty/staff immigration issues to an expert. On the depressing side, colleges whose accrediting agencies desire evidence of diversity cannot legally take diversity into account in hiring. Dr. Morelli emphasized again the importance of clear search processes and screening.

Dr. Cunliff and Dr. Montes spoke about the UCO Educational philosophy, and noted the senate endorsement. I added some comments, there was discussion, and the council voted unanimous support for the document.

Jerry Legere spoke about the better alignment of the UCO calendar with that of the Edmond school system. Dean Bernard spoke about, with examples, the new graduate program recruitment brochures.

Provost Radke noted the faintness of prospect for new state money, and the need for creative accounting, discussed the division of the College of Graduate Studies, as I mentioned last month, so that research is given full status rather than continuing to exist as a dependent of graduate studies. UCO has added three more memoranda of understanding with institutions in India.

Mitchell hall will be closed for significant restorations between May (possibly June) and December, the lack of performance space being somewhat relieved by the College of Liberal Arts providing Pegasus Theater.

Historian Hepner, Secretary Cooper, and I met with Provost Radke on Tuesday, February 12th.

As directed by the senate in January, I asked about both the appointment of Dean Bernard, and the costs of establishing the new Office of Research. There were two failed national searches. The 'best' candidates as determined by the two searches were simply too expensive: UCO is very much below average salary for graduate deans. There was a proposal by a few of the deans to convert Dr. Bernard from interim to permanent dean, and the rest of the deans agreed that this was a desirable outcome. This outcome accorded well with the provost's goal of enhancing both the graduate college and the to-be-established research office.

The costs involved in setting up the new research office are extremely modest. Dr. Bernard got a modest raise when converted from his interim status. Dr. Wilson also received a modest raise. There were no additional staff hired, nor any other expenses. In regard to money, not only has the transition cost been "almost nothing," but there have

been changes proposed that will increase funding: if the Regents approve, there will be a modest increase in the graduate application fee from twenty five to fifty dollars.

Again pending Regents approval, there will be an increase of approximately one million four hundred thousand dollars from increases in fees for on-line and correspondence courses: UCO has been very unusual in not charging fees for on-line courses and has had atypically low fees for correspondence courses. The correspondence courses may be shifted to residence credit and thus will be fully applicable to student's degree program hours.

Modest instructional fee increases will greatly aid campus plant improvements, and will not be overwhelmingly burdensome to the students, amounting to an estimated twenty five dollars a year.

The merit pay issue is still in process, with the expectation that we will see a document this month. However, there isn't much likelihood of our seeing money to feed into a system.

The provost told us that the financial projections for new state money have declined since last we met, and are now floating between thirteen million dollars and twenty three million dollars. Even if the higher figure were to eventuate, and even if all of the money went to higher education (there is, of course, no possibility of such a thing), after being run through the education funding formula, we would not receive even enough to cover our mandatory cost increases. There is simply no financial joy in this.

We spoke about the three bills to be introduced today, which I will say seem to accord with developing thoughts of the administration. This is promising.

There was discussion of FSP 01-R, Creation of Individual Faculty Accounts, which awaits comment by the deans, as well as a decision by the president.

There was a presentation of the mission statement of the Athletic Council task force, and discussion of the ongoing project.

Vice-President Hartmann spoke about the *Daily Oklahoman* article of February 2nd dealing with American Fidelity and the punitive damages award granted to the family of a former UCO faculty member for unannounced changes in coverage. The Vice-President will speak about this in his report.

With this, I conclude my report.