

## **Academic Affairs Committee Minutes**

July 13, 2016

Approved September 7th

- 1. Roll Call (12:03 pm) Members Present:** Walter Archuleta, Peter Buchanan, Craig Conley, Todd Christensen, Gloria Gadsden, Geri Glover, Robert Karaba, April Kent, Kerry Loewen, Brooks Maki, Carlos Martinez, Kristie Ross, P.J. Sedillo, Kathy Jenkins proxy for Ruthy Watson  
**Also in Attendance:** Brandon Kempner, Carol Litherland, Michael Raine, Elaine Rodriguez, Eric Romero, Mary Romero, William Taylor, Steven Williams  
**Absent:** Judy Barnstone, Carol Linder
- 2. Approval of the Agenda**  
The agenda was approved.
- 3. Approval of the Minutes**  
Approval of the minutes of May 04, 2016 were tabled.
- 4. Decision/Recommendation Items (reordered)**
  - a. Oil/Gas Concentrations**
    - i. Dr. Bill Taylor presented the rationale for the suspension of the concentrations. The Oil and Gas program is a very costly program with very low enrollment.
    - ii. Questions and discussion included how a suspension will be noted in the catalog, the history of the program, the funding of the program, the problem of relying on adjuncts to teach an entire program, the problem of offering a program that serves only a very specialized field, and how the current students in the program will be served. As noted in the memo on the suspension, the students already in the program will be provided with reasonable substitutions that will allow them to finish the program.
    - iii. Motion to  
approve the suspension of the Oil and Gas Concentrations for the Bachelors of Business Administration and the Masters of Business Administration.  
(Loewen/Gadsden)  
Motion passes (12 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions)
    - iv. Mr. Michael Raine noted that the department will have to notify both undergraduate and graduate admissions to stop admitting students to this concentration, and to work with the Oklahoma institutions with whom Highlands University has an articulation agreement. Dr. Bill Taylor and Dr. Mary Romero will follow through with these steps.
  - b. Spanish and History/Political Science Department Split**
    - i. Dr. Steven Williams presented the rationale for the department split. He noted that the decision to combine the disciplines in to one

department was made by the administration without faculty input. Dr. Williams also noted that conglomerate departments are problematic both at Highlands University and at other universities. Dr. Williams said that in his opinion separate departments organized by discipline are essential for moving the university forward.

- ii. Discussion and questions included current job announcements, input from the Faculty Association, the number of faculty in each proposed department, the issue of the chair of the proposed Languages & Culture department and how this position will be established, the lack of tenure line faculty in the proposed Languages & Culture department, the history of the language department, the work load for the departmental administrative assistant (she is part of the staff union so a change in work load is a bargaining issue), the possibility of converting visiting or term Languages & Culture faculty lines to tenure track lines, the importance of a strong language department for Highlands University, and Faculty Handbook issues with having a dean as a department chair as this is not covered in the handbook.
- iii. The Faculty Handbook states that in certain circumstances, the interim department chair can be a non-tenure track faculty member.
- iv. The split is supported by the departmental faculty, the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the interim Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- v. Motion to  
support the separation of the Department of History & Political Science/Languages & Culture into the Department of History & Political Science and the Department of Languages & Culture with two recommendations: 1) that one of the term or visiting faculty from the Languages & Culture department be recommended to the administration as the interim chair with this faculty member selected at a meeting of the Languages & Culture faculty and the Faculty Senate chair and 2) that there is quick recruitment for an open rank chair.  
(Loewen/Buchanan)

Motion passes (12 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions)

**c. Academic Calendar Revisions**

- i. Dr. Brandon Kempner reviewed the history of the recent academic calendar changes. The main issue for the committee today is the start date of the spring 2017 semester. The start date approved by the faculty and the Board of Regents is January 11, 2017. The start date that is publically posted is January 18, 2017.
- ii. Questions and discussion included the legal issues with the Faculty Association, how financial aid disbursement would be affected, how student plans may be affected, how campus offices would be affected, and the future of academic calendar planning.
- iii. Motion to

accept the January 18, 2017 start date for the spring 2017 semester with the rider that faculty be accommodated if they cannot attend commencement and a rider that the recommendation be sent to the Faculty Association and the administration in light of the prohibitive practices complaint.  
(Loewen/Gadsden)

Motion passed (12 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions)

- i. Motion to recommend that the Faculty Senate place academic calendar issues including whether a start date of Monday or Wednesday is preferable, whether to start before or after MLK day in the spring semesters, and how to have concrete plans for creating a four year academic calendar on the agenda for the first General Faculty meeting of the fall 2016 semester.  
(Kent/Ross)

Motion passed (11 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstentions)

- ii. The academic calendar will be on the agenda for the August 24, 2016 meeting of the General Faculty. The Faculty Senate will send out an email survey about calendar issues prior to this meeting.

**5. Late Additions to the Agenda (minor items only)**

- a. The first Academic Affairs Committee meeting is September 7, 2016. There will be no August meeting. Please send agenda items to Mr. Kerry Loewen, Chair, Dr. Gloria Gadsden, Vice Chair, and Ms. April Kent, Secretary.

**6. Adjournment** Meeting adjourned at 01:19 pm