A special meeting had been announced for this date by Chair Filler in accordance with Faculty Senate bylaws, the only agenda item to be discussed being the UNLV budget for the upcoming biennium.


Single Meeting Proxies: Kendall Hartley for Patrick Carlton; Katherine Howard for Marcia Ditmyer; Charles Moseley for Greg Ginn; Mary Bondmass for Sally Miller; Janice Klaassen for George Pales; Stacey Hardy-Desmond for An-Pyng Sun, Phil Burns for Cheryl Tillotson,

Absent: Wolfgang Bein; Carolyn Hensley; Rebecca Nathanson; Matt Pedersen; Shannon Sumpter.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Filler at 12:15 p.m. in the Student Union, room 208. Additional seating was made available for the anticipated campus staff, students and faculty who wished to make statements and ask questions. Passage of the higher education budget has been a much agonized and dreaded decision for this institution. On May 12, 2009, the Board of Regents for the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) held a special meeting, reductions in the general operating funds of each campus were proposed. Although NSHE must absorb a budget reduction of 12.5% from the State of Nevada, UNLV will experience a larger percentage reduction to its operating budget of 15.35%. The BOR will not declare a state of financial exigency and has directed a task force to study possible responses to the system-wide 12.5% state budget cut. The faculty at UNLV permanently lost one-half year of merit pay during fiscal year 2009.

How the campus intends to survive this latest budget reduction was discussed by UNLV President Ashley and Provost Smatresk. Senators and interested campus employees seated in the audience asked questions, offered advice, and in general, wanted to know where the Regents stood on some of the issues: how UNLV faculty and staff jobs would be affected; will it be worse next year; will other institutions be treated equally; will programs be cut, if so, which; and if there are any potential sources of revenue?

Overall, President Ashley and Provost Smatresk tried to be honest, but reassuring. The initial concern was if this budget crisis can be handled without the Regents declaring a financial exigency? Classified employees are already scheduled to lose 4.6% salary; the governor may now reconsider allowing a furlough day equal to the reduction. However, it seems the salary reduction will now extend to the professional and academic faculty. By NSHE code, tenured
faculty cannot have their salary reduced. In that instance, increased workload may be considered. The Provost stated that any departmental hiring is being evaluated very carefully before approval. There were suggestions such as: increase class sizes; have vacant positions filled by PTIs to increase classes and tuition; some depts. are totally grant funded – especially outreach and should be treated differently because they create revenue; ask the Foundation to help with contributions to offset shortfalls.

A Sense of the Senate from UNR was read. Senator Fabbi said that her constituents wanted to be fair to classified. Others agreed. Senator Brown stated that other institutions have absorbed their classified staff already so that they may be considered employees of their institutions and more protected. He also hoped for a full review before any changes was implemented. Senator Spangelo moved to pass a Sense of the Senate, seconded by Senator Richards. By a vote of 31 yeas, 4 nays, and 6 abstentions, the Sense of the Senate was approved.

Sense of the Senate

“It is the Sense of the Faculty Senate of UNLV that a 15.35% reduction of the state general operating fund should be administratively processed with adherence to the following guiding principle. Cuts to academic and non-academic faculty compensation, mandated furloughs of faculty, and possible elimination of academic programs, should only be considered following a critical review of all administrative and academic programs according to the UNLV bylaws. Program review with an emphasis of protecting the curriculum and the quality of our academic mission must occur prior to any adjustment in faculty and professional staff employment condition.”

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m. The next anticipated Senate meeting will be Retreat in August.