UNLV 2008-2009 Faculty Senate Minutes
December 9, 2008

The meeting was called to order by Chair Daneshvary at 12:15 p.m. in the Student Union, room 208 AB.


Absent: Matt Pedersen

Senator Nicol moved, seconded by Senator Fried, to approve the minutes of November 18, 2008. Senator Nicol asked for the distribution categories related to summer term money be appended to the minutes. The Senate voted unanimously to approve the minutes with the amended.

Congratulations were in order for Vice Chair John Filler who just found out he is cancer-free after months of rigorous treatment. Senator Paul Aizley was congratulated at November’s meeting for winning his district’s seat in the Nevada Assembly.

Chair Daneshvary welcomed today’s guest speakers: President David Ashley; Angus MacEachern, member of the PEBP Board; and Dr. Christine Clark, VP for Diversity and Inclusion. Also recognized was Judy Stewart, Compensation Council Committee Chair, CSN; and Greg Brown, NFA.

The BOR asked for a recommendation from the PEBP to find a $50.3 million saving. Briefly it proposed employees bear the brunt by higher deductibles and copayments, higher out of pocket expenses, as well as eliminate retirement health insurance for anyone with less than 15 years of employment. The Governor appointed the SAGE commission which has proposed even more drastic cuts.

Such drastic cuts will be not only a financial strain on current employees and their families, it will make it difficult to recruit and/or retain quality employees; and once cut, recovery of benefits is unlikely. Chairs of all the other Senates thought it is best to support the PEBP proposal. However, a letter of support is not ready to be drafted at this time. BOR Chair Wixom suggested waiting until after the new Effectiveness and Efficiency Committee has a chance to recommend additional ways to save money.

Dr. Ashley welcomed everyone’s attendance at a Town Hall meeting December 10 and again on Friday. He explained that Deans for over a year have been cutting their budgets by $2.9 mil in preparation. There were recently 98 notices of nonreappointment given, and 22 faculty have opted for early retirement. These steps have saved about $5.1 mil. These cost cutting measures and others have added up to approx
9% of the base budget. However, more is needed. UNLV is facing cuts of near 30% over the biennium. The next option being looked at is Program Review Elimination. By combining or eliminating programs, it is hoped that additional savings should be realized. Additional sources of revenue are not being overlooked. All suggestions are being considered including tuition increase and fee increase.

Mr. Angus MacEachern, Human Resources Director for Clark County Health Dept. and member of the Public Employees Benefit Program, explained that the PEBP was asked to recommend cuts of $50.8 mil over the next biennium. The PEBP is insurance administrator of funds authorized by the Governor and the legislature has proposed changes in deductibles, copays, and reductions in subsidies for retirees. These recommendations are different than any recommendations to be made by the SAGE commission to the Governor. Judy Stewart, Faculty Senate Chair from CSN, also spoke on some of the recommendations made by the Sage Commission and promised to get more info to the Senate Chairs.

Senator Shannon Smith addressed the Senate in a very poignant speech regarding how the increase in premiums, decrease in services, changes in providers (dental), and decrease in subsidies, will be born not only by UNLV faculty and staff, but by all state employees and their families. In addition, the cuts will have devastating effects on many of the underrepresented individuals in the state who cannot speak for themselves. Senator Smith expressed that most families can not bear the brunt of health coverage reductions in addition to salary, cost of living, and other budget cuts proposed in higher education. Senator Smith passed around a petition to be signed. Chair Daneshvary and Senator Aizley also suggested that everyone contact their state legislators to express their concerns.

Final guest speaker was Dr. Christine Clark, VP for Diversity and Inclusion, who distributed a policy that was prematurely included in the BOR agenda in December, but had yet to be discussed by the Senate. This was the Bias Incident – Hate Crimes draft policy. It outlined how such situations would be identified, investigated and handled on campus. Due to the lateness of the hour, Dr. Clark was invited to return at a future date with additional information.

**Action items:**

These items were postponed until the January meeting due to lack of time.

A. Deletion of New Undergraduate Programs Committee

B. Addition of Faculty Senate Graduate Programs Committee

**Future Action Item - none**

**New Business - none**

**Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m. The next Senate meeting is January 19, 2009, in the Student Union, Room 208 A/B at 12:15 p.m.