

Senate minutes (draft)
November 23, 2009

Senate called to order at 2:02 p.m.

Minutes from October 26th and November 9th meetings were approved.

Announcements:

1. We will meet on December 7th – to:

1. Approve strategic initiatives
2. Approve any actions from today's (11/23/09) meeting
3. Celebrate the end of a very difficult quarter

2. Need a faculty replace Sarah to serve on the PDL Committee. The PDL committee is a two year commitment and meets on Thursdays at 2:30..

3. Students from AFSC and De Anza will 'March on March' on March 4th 2010 instead of March 22nd, which is in the middle of finals week. AFSC is working with other colleges in the region to try to travel to Sacramento together in March, and have a presence as a region.

4. The Consent Calendar has three items on it, and was approved

1. Mary Thomas on College Skills
2. Accounting Instructor Hiring Committee
3. Transfer Center Hiring Committee

Regular agenda:

Resolution on composition of the senate, regarding reduction in the number of divisions and consequently senate representation, was approved. Two senators from LRC will rejoin Academic Senate as voting members. Language Arts division will need to appoint a second senator to join Rosemary Arca.

Strategic initiatives meeting – each of the three committees will forward their goals which will be sent out to senators to circulate among their divisions. The strategic initiatives are important (critical) in making decisions about funding and resource allocation. The senate will discuss 'Access into Action' on December 7th. A senator pointed out that the Governance Handbook still says draft on it.

Dolores Davison then set the ground rules for today's senate meeting (rules of order and time limits for

a faculty vote of no confidence would go forward, should faculty desire to take that direction. Dolores commented that she was copied on 18 letters from faculty to the board, 17 of which were in strong opposition to the dismissal of our Vice President of Instruction, Katie Townsend-Merino. During the previous several days, Dolores had also received email from almost a dozen faculty suggesting that Academic Senate go forward with a vote of no confidence in Judy Miner. Dolores further discussed her conversations with Ian Walton, the former president of statewide academic senate, regarding the sequence of events, and effectiveness, of a faculty vote of no confidence. Dolores further described three options for action the senate could follow.

1. A 'vote of no confidence' requires a simple majority of the executive senate, however we would need to suspend the rules, and action would likely be taken without full input from division faculty. A vote of no confidence must follow strict rules, and a hastened vote would not have real, if any, impact.
2. A vote of no confidence as a vote of all faculty (not solely senate executive committee members) would require an open election of all full-time faculty, and a formal written ballot.
3. A bill of particulars, which would delineate a list of concerns and actions compiled by the senate that the President must address to restore faculty confidence in the President to lead the college. This document, and list of items, must be sufficiently addressed/fulfilled by the president or else a vote of no confidence is automatic.

Without a unanimous or majority vote by the full faculty body, a vote of no confidence isn't really an effective tool. Dolores reiterated that 17 letters to the District Board from faculty had indicated a serious breach of confidence in the President's ability to lead the College arising from the VP of I's dismissal.

Dolores announced that the District Board will meet in closed session very soon to discuss this matter. Both Judy Miner and Board were invited to attend the academic senate meeting (today), but respectfully declined in order to allow faculty to speak freely.

Dolores read verbatim the letter from Katie Townsend-Merino to the academic senate. The letter spoke of the dedication of faculty to making the college a better place, and the importance of the work which we had done together, and continuing these efforts. Dolores then opened the floor to discussion.

The first question asked was if we, or the College, could clarify what facts were known which could be reported. In response Dolores recounted the chronology of the events.

1. Katie met with Cabinet on Monday (11/16) and was relieved of her (cabinet) duties
2. On Tuesday (11/17) Katie was told her last day on campus would be Friday
3. On Wednesday (11/18) news of Katie's dismissal began to leak out and faculty began to send

4. Very late on Thursday afternoon a campus-wide meeting was announced for Friday morning at 10:30 a.m. as an open forum for faculty, staff, and administrators to ask questions about the dismissal of the VP-I.
5. On Friday (11/20) President Miner held a campus-wide meeting and invited questions regarding the dismissal of VP-I, and shared her initial thoughts on reorganization of duties to the remaining cabinet members.
6. Dolores summarized that as we currently understand it, an interim VP-I will be brought in for the period between January 10th and June 30th. A hiring committee will be formed to fill the VP-I, the position to start June 30th 2010. In the meantime, three VPs will share the VP-I duties until an interim VP-I is selected.

The question was rephrased – why was Katie Townsend Merino released from her position as VP-I? The answer was paraphrased from an email sent to PSME faculty (senators) from Katie Townsend-Merino. That email was read verbatim. In it Katie

- remarked that she was completely blindsided by the dismissal,
- suggested that people that knew of her work – or worked directly with her – were not consulted in this decision,
- discussed what little she knew of the decision making process – or what it was that she [KTM] could have done which could be addressed and/or corrected,
- shared her ideas about what might have been part of the decision to dismiss her,
- expressed dismay that she had not yet been formally reviewed,
- mentioned that she may have been perceived as being too faculty centric.

The senate then discussed the forum on Friday (11/20), and how it was chaotic, and that faculty should reflect on the character of Katie Townsend-Merino. It was noted that the senate's perception is that during the last 11 months faculty had become more engaged on campus, and much more engaged in curriculum than they had ever been.

One student spoke out and shared that he felt President Miner has supported students. The student noted that these are difficult times (budget) and that we should pull together as a community to work on important college activities. The student further reflected that it was challenging not to know more about these series of events but that faculty could/should come together and work together to solve the important issues on campus.

A concern was expressed that when the president will ask in the future for faculty input, it would be very hard to give input as none of our (input) was solicited here. Trust has been damaged.

A faculty mentioned that even if the (rules) process of dismissal were followed this was not a strong leadership action/decision. Faculty spoke in high regard for Katie's abilities and additionally were surprised and shocked by this decision.

Faculty said they lacked confidence in leadership, to lose such a competent leader. A concern was expressed that the turnover of leadership, four vice presidents, is of **deep** concern.

Academic Senate president, Dolores, stated that she had received a number of suggestions to send a letter of support/acknowledgment to KTM.

A faculty said that in the context of all previous history of the college this decision completely blind-sided people who have worked with KTM. This faculty further spoke that this decision has damaged the institution. The key areas of concern are:

1. Accreditation
2. SLOs
3. Budget situation
4. Curriculum
5. Damaging to a new generation of faculty who have left the institution

Further, faculty were appalled that they were not involved in this decision. In decades of service (faculty) cannot make sense of this. Faculty spoke further about the damage to the reputation of the college.

There was a suggestion that Academic Senate create a letter of appreciation/resolution to state their appreciation for KTM (this was tabled to follow further debate).

Faculty serving with KTM on curriculum spoke about concerns for the ramifications of letting KTM go – what plan was in place to cover vital curriculum work, and even more, accreditation?

A concern was stated that no one in the college really understood (understands) the title 5 regulations around curriculum and this has the potential to cost Foothill a huge sum in the form of fines and repayment of apportionment.

Trust again was brought up. Who would want to work with or in Foothill management with this lack of trust?

The lack of work for the dollars of KTM salary was also an issue – wasted dollars – and the consequences of the decision were obviously not well thought out.

A faculty stated that it was very important to stand up and make a statement at this time - even if we were exhausted / tired. We need to stand up and make a statement.

Faculty talked about the work that was done by KTM and their shock and horror over how this decision was made (so quickly).

A faculty mentioned that it is important to continue our hard work in curriculum – and not lose our momentum. In the curriculum work we have done

Many faculty discussed that it is hard to imagine anyone wanting the VPI position, and that faculty are not willing to serve on (all these) committees.

Faculty continued to ask how this (personnel action) could be legally justified. Reasons for immediate dismissal were not apparent.

We need a real story, and we have lost faith, confidence, in this administration. This is an institution-destroying event and we cannot expect to attract and retain the very best faculty.

A faculty further spoke of the need to live by the values of our institution.

A vote of no confidence (in this administration) was suggested. Dolores stated that a vote of no confidence is a non-binding action, usually with little real/effective impact.

Some faculty feel that a bill of particulars won't be sufficient – a stronger statement needs to be made to the administration. Faculty talked about feeling lost and not knowing where to go next.

Other faculty spoke about Judy Miner's respect for faculty and that at this point a vote of no confidence would be extreme. "We have problems but we can work them out. We should not be a divided faculty".

Faculty discussed the significant and monumental work that KTM had done – her effort and leadership – and especially efforts which were not present in previous VPI positions. Faculty are terribly concerned about the void in administrative leadership in the curriculum committee.

Faculty further stated that even when they had disagreements with KTM she was receptive to feedback and would commit to working things out. There is a fear that there is so much work to do and no one to do it with KTM's level of competence and positive leadership.

Additionally a fear that people might start to disappear and we may not have a safe environment to work in as people fear reprisals. There is a real lack of people sitting down and working with each other.

There is a need that we need to build a culture of trust again and support our mutual development.

A faculty suggested that we continue the formal administrative review process for KTM. The Senate could do this work, and continue the formal work of administrative review.

A faculty voiced the feedback from their division not to do a vote of no confidence, and rather that we step up as leaders and continue to build the strength/reputation of the college.

One faculty member mentioned the support that KTM had for faculty. Their division had a polarized view of the events, and faculty retained some support for Judy Miner's leadership.

Dolores stated that in her research of a vote of no confidence, such a measure must be unanimous and

Faculty also continued the sentiment that we continue forward with our duties as faculty to support our students, and support the institution.

Faculty stated both that they loved /enjoyed being at Foothill College, but there was something terribly wrong in this decision. However, we should be mindful of who we are as faculty and continue our positive work for the college.

Faculty stated that KTM was the best curriculum administrator in several administrations and that the dismissal of KTM itself was egregious-and despite whatever reason was chosen to dismiss KTM that without KTM's leadership in curriculum we are in deep trouble.

Classified Senate desires to be helpful and supportive to Academic Senate but the calendar of meetings may be challenging (running out of time).

In further clarification, if a bill of particulars is not met, a vote of no confidence is automatic. Therefore a bill of particulars is the best route to take in both voicing our concerns and affecting positive change.

Faculty spoke about being personally devastated by this event, and their fear of reprisal to speak up on Friday. Faculty are not sure about which direction to go in next (with respect to direction of SLOs)

A faculty asked if this situation is resolvable. Dolores stated that KTM coming back is not an option (of solutions).

A faculty suggested a resolution to send a message of all the unintended consequences which may occur as a result of this decision. The timeline is to write a resolution quickly, by Wednesday, 11/25) – bill of particulars is most productive/constructive effort.

The bill of particulars goes to (President Miner) and or cabinet. A bill of particulars would give the president instructions on what the Academic Senate would like to have happen.

A resolution praising KTM will be written by Dolores and presented to KTM at a future date. The resolution was passed.

A resolution to develop a bill of particulars was passed.

Meeting adjourned at 4:15 pm.