

Summary of Important Academic Staff Council Issues

April – June 2009–10

Chancellor's Reports

In April Chancellor David Wilson talked about UW-Extension's role in UW System's Growth Agenda, given that Extension doesn't grant degrees. Extension can develop the pipeline to higher education. The 4-H program demonstrates to young people the value of education. Extension's Family Living programs foster healthy and prosperous families, who are more likely to send their children to college.

Wilson reported that Extension is in good shape. "Carry-forward" dollars have more than doubled since he became chancellor. The IT backbone has been improved. Wilson praised CEOEL as an innovator and significant revenue generator.

Among future challenges will be buildings: The Lake Street building needs to be replaced, and the Research Park and Regent Street leases will lapse soon.

At the May meeting, Chancellor Wilson reported that a new trend in state university systems is strategic finance. He gave the example of Ohio, which is moving toward providing funds on the basis of educational outcomes rather than the number of initial enrollments. Campuses that increase the number of students graduating after four to six years of work would be better funded. Wilson said that UW Colleges and UW-Extension should be aware that the Board of Regents is looking at this funding model.

Regarding the upcoming state budget, Wilson said that Governor Doyle used stimulus money to cushion UW System so that its cuts were proportionally less than the overall state deficit. Without more stimulus money, would the next governor be willing or able to protect UW System in the 2011–2013 budget?

Wilson said that the Inclusive Excellence effort in the UW System is falling short of its goals. The Regents will likely give more weight to progress in this area when evaluating chancellors' performance.

Wilson reported that UW-Extension's relationships with the other System campuses are good, but we need constantly to demonstrate our value to them so that their chancellors don't look at our GPR funding and argue that they could spend it better.

The Academic Staff Council thanked Chancellor Wilson for his service to UW-Colleges and UW-Extension, and his commitment to shared governance.

Appointment Letters

In May BAMI Director Malcolm Brett talked to the ASC about the rationale for using fixed-term, terminal letters in his unit. Brett said that BAMI switched from fixed-term, renewable letters to fixed-term, terminal letters in 2002 when the trend in state funding for public broadcasting started to look unfavorable. He gave additional reasons for the switch:

- Donors look very carefully at public broadcasting's budget. Long notice periods make it appear that managing to budget could be difficult.
- Fund-raising personnel need to be easy to let go if they aren't raising sufficient funds.
- Fixed-term, terminal appointments allow BAMI to hire employees for new, experimental projects that BAMI would otherwise not be able to undertake.

Brett said that he knows the letters are harsh, but he was not allowed to soften the language. It was unclear who told him that the language could not be changed.

He was asked whether in difficult times employees with fixed-term, terminal letters could expect to be laid off first. He said that the criterion for retention is relevant skill sets.

In discussion after Brett's visit, the ASC concurred that supervisors need to communicate more clearly to employees the circumstances of budget and types of appointment letters, and the meaning of the language in the letters. Work will continue on Chapter 10.06 to address this issue.

Definition of Scholarship

The scholarship debate continued. One ASC member (from BAMI) said that academic staff must go beyond the traditional notion that their function is to support faculty. Another member (from CEOEL) said that in some positions supporting faculty is what academic staff do most of the time. The ASC appointed a subcommittee to look into questions about and definitions of scholarship.

ASC Election Results

At the May meeting, Greg Hutchins, Secretary of the Academic Staff, reported that there were approximately 230 votes this year. Last year there were about 130. Bev Phillips, Jerry Clark, and Lisa Nielsen Agnew will serve a second term on the council. Rosamaria Martinez from Milwaukee County Cooperative Extension will be the new member.

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