

FACULTY MEETING

Faculty Meeting Minutes Tuesday September 2, 2008 Dickey Hall Auditorium

President Ivory Nelson called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM in Dickey Hall Auditorium.

President's Report:

Dr. Nelson was very pleased with the reaction to the return of football to Lincoln after 48 year absence. He was pleased with the coverage it got in the Daily Local News, USA Today, and in an insert in the Philadelphia Tribune. Over 85% of the student body stayed on campus over the Labor Day holiday as well. The reason we brought back football and upgraded Lincoln in athletics to Division II was not about the sports itself but to create a well rounded atmosphere for the student body. Be on the watch for notices of excused absences for our athletes. They should tell the teachers in advance of their absences. There is a requirement for study hall and that all of our athletics must maintain NCAA eligibility standards in order to play. He is also pleased with the Marching Band. There are lots of hours of playing in advance to produce a good performance at half-time.

University has 4 goals now:

- 75% retention rate by 2011
- 45% graduation rate by 2011
- Rank in the top 20 HBCU's by 2011 (U.S. News and World Report Annual Survey)
- Meet the Middle States Monitoring Report, April 2010 on Assessment

We as a faculty and administration must work together to meet these goals. Over the past few years we have noticed numbers of students do not select a major by their junior year and are wondering around campus aimless. We need to make sure that our entire students get adequate advising that will help them graduate on time and not stay here longer than necessary. That is why beginning this year we are requiring all freshmen to select a major within the first month so that we can guide and monitor these students throughout their university experience. They need a home and some roots. Majority of our freshmen are the first in their family to go to college and most them are 17 to 18 years old and this is the first time they are away from home. Graduates from Pennsylvania high schools are poorly prepared in Mathematics. We must address this now so we can have a higher retention rate of students. Significant numbers of our students are on academic probation. Majority of the title III money we received this year from the federal government will go to address retention and assessment.

Action Items:

A. Minutes of the April 29, 2008 were approved as submitted.

B. Report of the Nominations Committee: Dr. Susan Safford, Chair

Dr. Safford reported that we have 5 openings to fill on faculty standing committees. We are seeking nominations from the faculty. This is a good opportunity for new faculty to start serving. The openings are on: Athletics, Faculty Development, Lectures and Recitals, Research and Publications, and Writing. If you are interested please contact Dr. Safford by email. A slate will be presented at the October faculty.

Discussion Items:

A. Retention, Academic Advising Center and Assessment

A summary of the discussion in general follows:

The discussion focused on two documents distributed: *Academic Advising Reorganization: the royal road to student retention and success* (green) prepared by the Office of Academic Affairs and *Retention Strategy Update: factors linked to student performance and retention* (yellow), which lists the ongoing effort between the divisions of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management and Academic Affairs: Retention factors, Milestones in Progress and Projected Milestones.

These two documents focused on the early years (freshman and sophomore). Dr. Button pointed out the effort in upper years done by the Humanities concerning writing which should be included on the yellow document.

Dr. Venerable, who prepared both of these documents, pointed out that they are a work in progress and will expand and improve as we worked together.

We need to come up with a systematic assessment approach which will address our needs with Middle States which we can use to improve our curriculum and meets the needs of our students so we can improve the retention and graduation rates of our students. Assessment could help us improve the core curriculum and what the majors are offering. Goal is to insure that entire student body graduates on time.

There was considerable discussion on the need for freshmen to declare a major within their first semester here. Majority of the students are young and not focus on what they will be doing and many would be working in jobs that they are not actually educated for in the future. Many of the faculty who are doing academic advising now pointed out that the academic advising handbook needs to be updated. We need to update the core curriculum to address these needs. Faculty need to adopt a student who they will help out not just academically, but carefully monitor and guide them. We need to insure that all our students are being properly advice by faculty and staff so that they can meet the proper graduation requirements. There have been instances where students receive conflicting advice and we need to avoid this in the future by having better communications between faculty and staff at the Advising Center. The staff at the Advising Center and faculty advisors needs to get better training. This would help improve retention of our students.

Majority of the faculty who participated in the discussion were not sold on the concept of declaring a major by freshmen because most freshmen do not know what their interests are and many will change their major either in their second semester as a sophomore or start of their junior year. The administrators and the deans feel very strongly that the students need a home, so declaring a major early is important and essential for the students to succeed here.

Announcements:

1. All-University Convocation to take place on Thursday September 11, 2008 at Manuel Rivero Gym at 3 PM. The President will give his annual address to the university and Student Government officers will be installed.
2. Constitution Day Program on Wednesday September 17 in the Chapel from 4 to 6:30 PM featuring presentations on the U.S. Constitution and citizenship prepared by FYE classes.

Respectfully submitted,
Albert M. Bryson
Faculty Secretary

Appendix A: Academic Advising Reorganization (Green)
Appendix B: Retention Strategy Update (Yellow)