

UNO Faculty Senate President's Report from Robert Woody

May 1, 2017

This is my last "Faculty Senate Report." On May 10th, I will begin serving as Past President, and as required by the Regents' By-laws, I will be cycling off of the Faculty Senate. I have found the last two-plus years to be demanding but stimulating. As I have said several times before, I encourage every faculty member to seek involvement with the Faculty Senate; just contact our coordinator, Sue Bishop (sbishop@unomaha.edu), for information.

In May, Dr. Laura Grams will become President for a year. As Vice President of the Faculty Senate for the past two years, Dr. Grams and I (and other members of the Executive Committee and Cabinet) have consistently worked together. Collegial leadership will be strong.

The new UNO Chancellor is Jeffrey P. Gold, MD. Given his proven competencies and history of distinguished service, his concurrent leadership as Chancellor for both UNO and UNMC will most assuredly result in enrichment of resources and achievements. For decades, UNO and UNMC have engaged in countless partnerships. From my several discussions with Chancellor Gold, I am pleased to report that he has strong commitment to shared governance (including with the Faculty Senate) and decentralization of decision-making. I respectfully encourage all people in our UNO "family" to join together in supporting Dr. Gold's endeavors.

The State's budget efforts continue to require critical decisions. Great appreciation is due to all concerned for heeding NU President Hank M. Bounds' recommendation to preserve and enrich higher education. As President Bounds has articulated so well, the strength of the University of Nebraska is determinative of many essentials within the overall State of Nebraska (e.g., employment of workers, a strong economy . . .).

Stancia Jenkins has been appointed Asst. Vice President for Diversity, Access and Inclusion for the University of Nebraska System. She has accepted our invitation to attend a UNO Faculty Senate meeting in the near future (stay tuned).

The Task Force on Adjunct Faculty has submitted a report to the Senior Vice Chancellor and the Faculty Senate for their consideration. Among other things, it stated: "Utilizing Adjunct Faculty expertise and knowledge enriches students' education and serves as one more method by which UNO's academic departments ensure that course offerings and learning experiences are relevant and aligned with community needs. Over the three terms of the 2015-2016 Academic Year, UNO's full-time faculty generated 57% of all student credit hours (SCH) and net tuition; Adjunct Faculty accounted for the balance, 43% of SCH and net tuition." A copy of the Report will soon appear on the website of the Faculty Senate.

For progress by the Digital Communications Executive Committee, Jason Buzzell (Associate Director, Digital Communications) reports: "Work continues on converting websites on some remaining old and outdated servers around campus, while several projects were completed in Spring 2017. These included updated MavLink Design, Nebraska Business Development Center and updates to the Public Safety website. An upgrade to the campus Content Management System backend is planned for July 2017. Training and communications will begin in May."

Regarding Canvas v. Blackboard, Dr. Jaci Lindberg (Director, Digital Learning) has reported on a Task Force for developing an evaluation, analyzing the feedback, and writing up the report. Although some questions may be raised about the adequacy of the sampling, it appears that the feedback gives greatest support to Canvas, quite likely for implementation fully in the 2018-2019

academic year. Dr. Lindberg states: “With the review of the 2016-2017 pilot complete, the Canvas Task Force and UNO Administration have recommended adopting Canvas as UNO’s official Learning Management System, with Blackboard being phased out Summer 2018.”

The Faculty Senate has adopted a resolution that recommends that faculty members on the Academic Freedom & Tenure Committee, the Faculty Grievance Committee, and the Professional Conduct Committee be compensated at an hourly rate comparable with what the university pays the other participants in the hearings when service on these committees extends beyond the nine month academic year. To date, the administration has not responded to this resolution.

Finally, again thank you for the opportunity to serve as your President for the past two years. Also, all members of the Chancellor’s administrative team deserve commendations. Without exception, the Faculty Senate has received cooperation and support from administrative personnel, demonstrating clearly that UNO, indeed, has appropriate shared governance. The administration deserves praise for its open-mindedness and recognition that the “academy” is quite different from certain other types of organizations.