

JSCC Faculty Council Called Meeting Minutes
Nelms Classroom Building #214
March 31st, 2010

Present: Mark Walls, Stacey Dunevant (proxy for Jayne Lowery and Roger James), Donna Johnsey, Nell Senter, Amy Wake, Belinda Higgins, Tim Britt (proxy for Kim White) Claude Bailey, John Koons, Gerald Graddy, Carol Norman, and guests Mary Wadley, Jerry Gilbert, PamXanthopoulos, and Kim Warren-Cox.

Mechel Camp began the meeting at 3:05 p.m.

Agenda:

1. Approval of 03-17-10 Council Meeting Minutes

The following MOTION was made, seconded, discussed, and approved:

The JSCC Faculty Council approves the March 17th, 2010 Faculty Council minutes.

2. Dr. Blanding's Changes to the Council Constitution and By-Laws

Mechel Camp reiterated that prior to the regular March Council meeting Dr. Blanding specified changes to the Constitution and By-laws (which had been approved by the Council on February 10th, 2010 and by the faculty body later that month). Blanding's changes before March 17th were (1) a reduction of representatives from seventeen to eleven, (2) the administrative appointment of an Assistant Dean to the Council, and (3) new limits on Council member service: a single two-year term followed by four years of ineligibility would replace the existing policy that permits a second two-year term (by election) followed by two years of ineligibility.

Camp explained that after the March 17th Council meeting, she had spoken with Dr. Blanding at the Council's request to convey its several concerns about his changes, including (1) the imposition of these changes after faculty had approved the Constitution through a process defined by its By-laws, (2) the reduced representative capacity of a smaller Council, (3) the loss of faculty experience and perspective through terms that could no longer be extended by popular faculty vote, and (4) the requirement that an administrative appointee (assistant dean) attend all Council meetings. Camp explained that Blanding had then proposed to allow the seventeen Council representatives the faculty originally had approved and to withdraw his requirement of an appointed Assistant Dean to the Council *if* the Council would accept a six-year period of ineligibility for representatives following just one two-year term of service.

Generally, Council representatives and others expressed a range of great concern, frustration, and objection to this development. There was some advisement to just accept the new requirement. It was stated that the benefit of defending the Council's

approved constitution wasn't worth the negative impact to faculty that contending the change would create and that a continued debate about this issue was unlikely to produce the desired changes. A related view was that these changes did not mandate specifically who could be on the Council and who could not be.

However, among the Council more widely, Dr. Blanding's requirement was regarded as (1) a violation of the defined, accepted process by which faculty determine their representative, shared-governance body, (2) a clear move to restrict and control the Council's membership, and (3) a further diminishment of faculty roles in college decision-making on issues connected to faculty interests. A question was asked whether such limits had been imposed on faculty councils at any other TBR institutions. Chair Camp responded that such limits did not exist for the other schools she had checked with. At the time, it was not known whether other JSCC employee councils had such extreme limits on membership and service.

It was stressed that the Council did not need to appear to agree with this problematic change to the Constitution however the Council might respond to it. It was argued that the Council should not appear to have participated in this alteration of its by-laws or to have accepted it; it was stated that if the faculty wished to limit how ineffective its Council would be regarded in the future, the Council should insist that it would not be a part of diminishing the role of faculty as professionals. The Council agreed that it had to assert its obligation to support the faculty's expressed will with respect to the legitimately-approved Council Constitution and By-laws. Seeking a direct faculty vote to reject or support Dr. Blanding's altering of the constitution was considered; however the Council agreed that, already, faculty had voted for the constitutional terms it wanted during the long and careful process of vetting and, last month, of approving the constitution. It was emphasized that the Council had no constitutional mechanism for accepting or implementing the change Dr. Blanding was directing that it make to the Constitution and By-laws. It was noted that if Dr. Blanding had a mechanism for forcing that change, then he would need to exercise it, but the Council could not institute the change he was requiring, nor should it.

The JSCC Faculty Council then drafted the following statement in reply to Dr. Blanding's offer to require, if the Council would agree to accept it, a six-year period of ineligibility for Council representatives rather than (1) a four-year period, (2) a required Assistant Dean presence at meetings, and (3) a reduction in Council membership from seventeen to eleven.

Statement:

The Jackson State Community College Faculty Council is bound by its Constitution and Bylaws and is governed by the will of the faculty it represents. The defined process for changing the Constitution and Bylaws has been followed. The entire faculty discussed and voted to ratify the new Constitution and Bylaws. The Faculty Council is bound by the process and the faculty vote.

The following MOTION was then made, seconded, discussed, and approved:

The JSCC Faculty Council approves the statement drafted in response to Dr. Blanding's offer to modify his original requirements.

Following the motion's approval, the Council discussed sending the statement to Dr. Blanding, issues of eligibility for the next Council chair, and proceeding with the vote for new Council members.

FOLLOW UP:

On Thursday, April 1st, Council Chair, Mechel Camp met with Dr. Blanding and Frank Dodson regarding the "Council's position that faculty cannot make changes to the Constitution without full faculty consent, and that the Council has already followed the process required by the Constitution." According to Camp's report to the Council,

Dr. Blanding sees the Constitution as available for negotiation, and he said he would have preferred to negotiate, but if not, he'll go with the changes he originally proposed. Mr. Dodson will amend the Constitution to reflect the changes: (1) A reduction by one in representation for each section . . . a one-for-every-ten faculty ratio, preserving the overall proportionality voted on by the Council/faculty but reducing the overall number to 3 members from Arts, 2 from Sciences/Math, 2 from BIC/Allied Health, 2 from Nursing. The At-large representatives will be reduced from 4 to 1. (2) An assistant dean will be on the Council each year for a one-year rotating term. (3) Faculty who rotate off the Council must be off for four years before returning.

Camp reported that Vice-Chair Stacey Dunevant would proceed with distributing the ballots for new Council member elections. Camp explained that Mr. Dodson's office will post the finalized Faculty Council Constitution on line when he had finished amending it. Dr. Blanding said that he would be happy to talk with the Council about this matter if the Council would like to have that happen.

Mark Walls, Secretary
JSCC Faculty Council

Mechel Camp, Chair
JSCC Faculty Council