Report of Ad Hoc Faculty Committee to Study Rules for Discussion in Faculty Council

The following motion was passed at the Faculty Council meeting on April 24, 2007:

The Faculty Council appoint an ad hoc committee of three or more members to study and evaluate the existing rules which regulate discussion and other matters in Faculty Council. The information developed by the committee should be used by Faculty Council, along with information gained from the upcoming survey, to ensure that members are encouraged and enabled to discuss matters brought before the Council.

Professor Potchen identified the following members at the ECAC meeting on May 1, 2007: Professors Hughes, Powell and Corby, with Professor Wright as ex officio member.

The committee met over the summer and members acknowledged the fact that Council had been trying to get as much input as possible during the past year, which led to the granting of voice to many non-members, not identifying the time period for speakers or the number of times or topics one could speak to after being granted voice. Often non-members entered into the debate with Council members and debates occurred between individuals rather than commentary being directed to the Chairperson. Many of the issues identified seem to highlight the lack of faculty members understanding of Robert’s Rules which have been adopted for all meetings in Academic Governance as stated in the University Bylaws. The need to clarify basic Robert’s rules for Council members seemed to be in order.

The time period for members to speak on an item is clearly stated in Robert’s as ten minutes, unless the assembly wishes to modify as a special rule. The issue of granting voice is less clear and may be an area to be clarified by Council members, such as under what conditions is voice granted to non-members.

Some consideration may be in order for the Council to consider establishing an open forum for a designated time period, i.e. 15 minutes, in Faculty Council meetings once a semester for non-member faculty, following the Board of Trustees format.

The ad hoc committee proposes the following motion:

Motion to establish a Rules Committee that consists of three faculty council members to be appointed by the chair with the Secretary for Academic Governance as an ex officio member. The committee’s charge focuses on the rules of procedure for Faculty Council meetings and deliberations. The committee will evaluate procedural rules and/or make recommendations regarding procedural rules as may be required by actions of the Council.