

## **ACADEMIC SENATE MEETING February 16, 2012**

In attendance: Julia Norrgard, Ilir Ibrahim, Brian Bowen, Albina Balidemaj, Edmond Muhaxheri, Besnik Bislimi, Shpend Ahmeti and Taulant Ramabaja.

### **I. Call to Order**

JNorrgard called the meeting to order at 12:00.

### **II. Welcome/Rules for Guests**

JNorrgard welcomed guests and senate members to the meeting. JNorrgard also went over rules for guests.

### **III. Prior Meeting Minutes (January 13, 2012)**

Motion set forth to accept the Minutes of the January 13, 2012 meeting by EMuhaxheri, seconded by ABalidemaj at 12:04.

Motion carried.

### **IV. Comments by Vice President, RIT Academic Affairs Bowen**

BBowen had no general statement or comment to announce.

### **V. Old Business**

**National Holiday observance:** SAhmeti informed the senate that he had arranged a meeting to discuss the list of acceptable holidays, but the meeting was canceled due to the poor weather and snow. Therefore, the senate postponed the motion to a later date.

**AUK Tenth Year Anniversary Update:** JNorrgard discussed several points regarding AUK's upcoming 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. She proposed that the first event, which would be held as an external celebration in August, would consist of Alumni and incoming freshmen. The point being that it would bring together the beginning and the end of a decade.

The second event would be an internal celebration that would most likely be held in October.

In February, CHall has commissioned several artists to create oil portraits of the founders of AUK. CHall also hired a photographer to take photos of other major contributors/benefactors. This particular event is still very fresh and will need further thought as we get closer to the anniversary.

The fourth event will be focused around the long lasting faculty and staff who have distinguished themselves as contributors to AUK's success.

Finally, JNorrgard expressed CHall's request that there be a book of memoirs and/or pamphlets dedicated to telling AUK's story. Since AUK doesn't want to suffer from media fatigue, it should

be spread out throughout all the events. A photomontage with a narrative would be another option that could be used to spread awareness of the events.

These options were discussed but nothing was completely finalized or decided upon. Motion will be postponed as an ongoing senate discussion.

**Faculty Retreat:** BBislimi noted that approximately 23-25 members are currently in attendance for the retreat. That number is subject to rise. EMuhaxheri remarked on the weather being horrible at the moment. JNorrgard informed them that carpools would be better transportation for getting through the snow and ice. It was suggested that the committee should look into finding transportation so as to encourage attendance.

**Grading Policy:** BBowen stated that we have all become aware of high grade inflation at AUK and that has prompted a serious evaluation of the grading policy. The faculty, in Unit groups, has put together three short summaries reflecting their views on the matter. He stated that these ideas had been taken into consideration. The actual proposal, as distributed by BBowen was discussed. The new policy would require each academic unit to create their own grading rubric to be adhered to by the unit. There would be an expectation that A grades in any course would be in the range of 10% to 30% and that 35% or more would require some justification. The current description of grades as defined by RIT is a part of the proposed. This is the specific range of points/percentile that makes up each grade letter. BBowen also made it clear that the letter grade, A, should represent "excellence," although, the interpretation of "excellence" should be discussed in more detail so that everyone is on the same page. BBowen proposed to accept this change, but there was concern regarding the wording in the document.

BBislimi asked if the grading policy was going to be fixed or flexible? BBowen said that it would be flexible. He expressed that the sole purpose of the policy was to establish a standard so that there wouldn't be any discrepancies between professors. SAhmeti asked to have the proposal's approval pushed back to March so that the Senate members could further examine the contents of the proposal.

TRamabaja expressed his concern that currently the grading is not rigid. He was curious to know whether there was any exact definition for the percentiles. There was no consensus on the grade percentiles as of yet. Also, TRamabaja noted that many students who are graduating with poor grades are hurting the overall reputation of other graduates. Some students who receive constant low grades such as D's and C's are passing when they shouldn't be. JNorrgard informed him that the various disciplines need to establish what a particular letter grade represents. ABalidemaj informed TRamabaja that students can't graduate with a grade point average below 2.0. This prevents poor students from receiving a diploma. BBislimi made the important point that many professors are harassed by students begging for grades near the end of the quarters, in hopes that they can claim a better grade. He noted that if these students are falling behind early on then they should be notified of their impending fate before they are allowed to become seniors or juniors.

SAhmeti asked to postpone this decision to March. All agreed to push the proposal back.

There was further discussion regarding the document that was brought up by TRamabaja. He wanted the summary of the grading policy to be posted to students through media outlets so that they can be aware of the proposed actions and implications of this policy. JNorrgard said that it was SG's job to inform students, on their own, of these proposals and that it would not be right to post a document that was not completely finished yet. She suggested that TRamabaja inform students through the Student Government.

BBislimi suggested a project that would look at the non-declared concentration students' GPAs and their eventual choice of major. He wanted permission to look at the data so that he could make a comparison between students and their major choice. This would be interesting, except that it then becomes an ethical dilemma regarding concentration choices. ABalidemaj said that Student Services could not release the GPA of students with their names attached. If he was to acquire the permission to run such a study then he would have to respect the privacy and confidentiality of students' grades. BBowen asked if it really matter whether or not your concentration has better students than another concentration. He went on to say that it seemed to be a touchy topic considering concentration decisions should be based on the students' preference and love for that concentration rather than the assumption that they would have less competition in that particular major over another.

Due to time constraints the discussion regarding this study would be discussed at a later date.

### **FT Appointments 2012/13 Academic Year**

BBowen went forward to request approval of the five points in the distributed Memo 1 regarding Full Time Appointments for Academic Year 2012/13. After reviewing the five points, Senators discussed the wording in the document. BBowen noted that his previous suggestion of 40 hours a week of student contact (or availability) had been modified to 24 hours. ABalidemaj made the point that currently RIT enforces a 50-60 office hour requirement in comparison to AUK's 40. SAhemti proposed a change to point two in the memo, which would change "part-time" faculty to "full-time". Also, the wording regarding how many equivalent courses a full-time professor should have should be looked at because it was unclear in the memo. JNorrgard told the senate that they would take another look at the language within the memo. BBowen agreed to rewrite the language in the proposal.

Discussion will be carried over to next month's meeting.

### **VI. New Business**

**Procedure for Grants, Research Proposals, Awards, ect:** BBowen discussed the need for the transition toward a more channeled financial approach regarding proposals and grants so that the finance office could have better documentation. This change would help coordinate proposals and streamline the grants process to one channel. He stressed that they should start this as soon as possible. Ilir Ibrahim stated that CHall and he were currently discussing the grants procedure. They were working on a policy to present to the Senate that would follow these same guidelines. The proposal would have grants, proposals, and awards go through the finance office so that there would be proper documentation. Also, this would allow the finance

office to encompass all financial aspects of AUK. This change was not ready to be voted upon so it was postponed until the next meeting.

BBislimi said that it was degrading to economic professors, who are in search of grants, to have to go through the finance office when they are more knowledgeable than those who work within the finance department. He stated that the professors themselves are more capable of finding suitable grants and should not be subjected to this approval process. He went on to state that this would help promote competition between majors. BBowen countered this statement by reiterating that the whole point of this proposal was to channel all requests toward a central point so as to have documentation of financial assets. BBowen said that AUK doesn't want grants or proposal money floating around without any oversight on where it's being used. Also, he addressed BBislimi's concerns by saying that the finance office is not there to determine who gets approved or not, so much as they are there to document transactions. In contrast, CHall's job is to determine which grants are acceptable or more prudent than others, not the finance office.

JNorrsgard requested that there be more discussion on the mechanical aspects of this change and a re-wording of the document. This was agreed upon and the motion was moved to next month.

## **VII. Additional Business**

**Names of Professors Responsible for Class Cancellation and Grade Inflation:** BBislimi was concerned about class cancellation and grade inflation. He asked for the names of those particular professors whose grades were inflated. Their names should be revealed so that the issue can be addressed more directly. He said that this was an important step in tackling the grade inflation issue because currently there is no consensus on which professors are specifically creating this inflation. The point would be discussed at a later date.

## **VIII. Call to Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn the meeting by SAhmeti, seconded by EMuhaxheri at 12:45.

Motion carried.