Officers’ Musings

31 August 2017

Welcome back faculty, staff, and students. It’s the start of the 2017-2018 academic year, campus looks beautiful, the Health and Human Services (HHS) Building construction is well underway, and we’re looking forward to the upcoming renovation of the Fine Arts and Commerce Building.

The Faculty Senate’s first meeting, August 24, 2017, was brief. Last semester’s passage of Section 305 to the University Handbook was the focus. President Bradley, as had Provost Licari at Tuesday’s Senate Executive Committee meeting, warned the faculty that, as difficult as it was to pass 305, the hard part was really still to come. We’re now all tasked with implementing the new 305 at the department and college levels and, ultimately, changing the culture at ISU surrounding promotion and tenure. The changes, President Bradley said, shouldn’t make it more difficult but, rather, easier for some to be promoted. He encouraged all of us to work through our department and college documents quickly so the changes can be applied as soon as possible.

President Bradley emphasized the importance of maintaining high standards as we go through this year’s biennial review process. Materials are due by September 20, 2017. Contact your Chairpersons with any questions about the process.

Enrollment at ISU is up, which is great news, as is the retention rate. The only negative on the student front is the dramatic drop in international enrollments. Had they held steady, ISU’s enrollment figures would have been even higher. Instead, students from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, India, China, and Korea are not enrolling. In the case of Saudi students, they are now opting now to attend US colleges and universities not for all four years, but just the last two. The political climate may be a contributing factor as well but the evidence isn’t in yet to draw any substantiated conclusions.

There are several important issues coming up this year that will occupy the Senate, its standing committees, and the faculty at large:

1.         The Presidential Search

2. Biennial Review

3. Revisions to the Promotion and Tenure Documents at the College and Department Levels

4. Changes to some IT procedures

5.         A Possible Partnership with Pearson

Senators elected Brian Bunnett as Parliamentarian for 2017-2018.  They approved the slate from which the President will choose a representative to the University Athletic Committee. For the benefit of the many new Senators serving this year, several stayed after the meeting adjourned to discuss the role of the Senate in general and procedural policies.   The next Senate meeting will be held at 3:30 on Thursday, September 21 in HMSU Dede III.

We would like to remind everyone that the Wellness Program is happening again this year.  Please remember to sign up for your wellness check to avoid a $50/month surcharge for your health insurance.  You should have received a letter at your home address about how to sign up for the wellness checks.  These checks must be completed by October 6.  If you need more information regarding how to sign up, please go to <https://www.indstate.edu/human-resources/wellness/wellness-discounts> .

You can find information about the Faculty Senate, including standing committees, Executive Committee and Senate minutes, meeting schedules, etc. at the Faculty Senate website:  <https://www.indstate.edu/services/facsenate>.   There is also a Faculty Senate Blackboard Site that all faculty may access.  You will find it in your course list as COM-ISUFACULTY: University Faculty.  Your Senate officers for 2017-2018 and their contact information are:

Chair: Liz Brown, Professor and Chairperson of Mathematics and Computer Science, Liz.Brown@indstate.edu

Vice Chair:  Timothy Hawkins, Professor of History, Timothy.Hawkins@indstate.edu

Secretary: Lisa Phillips, Associate Professor of History, Lisa.Phillips@indstate.edu

Please contact one of the officers or your Senate representative(s) with any questions or concerns.