Faculty Meeting Notes
October 3, 2012 Faculty Meeting
Kit Otto, Faculty Observer

A lengthy discussion concerned a report from the faculty welfare committee summarizing the outcome of a faculty forum held 9/12. The purpose of the forum was to discuss several possible models for implementing a salary equity plan to bring PSU faculty salaries up to the mean levels of PSU comparator institutions (over time). The faculty who attended the forum made a recommendation for the Provost about the model they thought was best. Questions arose however, because the faculty welfare committee recommended using a different model than the one that most faculty members who attended the forum preferred.

In the face of questions about whether enough faculty had attended the faculty forum, whether more needed to be done to communicate the results to the rest of the faculty, and whether the faculty welfare committee members acted appropriately when they chose to “exercise [their] own judgment” on this issue, Gary McCool—more than once—gently chastised his colleagues: “What do you want? In the absence of a union, we have no authority over salary issues. The Provost did ask for our input and attended the forum and heard all the discussion. She has the report of the faculty welfare committee. But it in end, it is up to her to decide.”

A motion was then made to “empower the Provost” to “make a decision” based on the information she had received. This motion was discussed and defeated, not so much because faculty were against empowering the Provost to make the decision, but because they realized she didn’t need to be empowered any more than she was already.

Other academic motions discussed and passed:

An adjustment was made to the academic severance policy as it applies to students on their second academic severance. The change opens the possibility of a shortened wait time for highly-motivated students on their second severance. (BTW, three severances and you’re out!)

The academic affairs committee brought a motion to require students to declare a major no later than the semester they complete 60 credits, which is typically the 4th semester.

Finally, a motion passed to add a paragraph to the academic catalog about Certificates: “An academic certificate consists of specific courses with a practical, applied focus intended to enhance one’s professional credentials….” Positive observations included comments that certificates are an appealing option for students of all ages. Having a certificate might make undergraduate students still working toward their degree more employable in the meantime. As one faculty member put it, “This is not a bad bandwagon for us to get on.”