Faculty Senate President’s First Semester Summary

As we prepare to tackle second semester issues, I would like to reflect on Fall, 2010. Items of special note that the Senate has addressed include:

The Domestic Partner Benefit Resolution

The Resolution recognizing the dedication of those implementing the new PeopleSoft system

The Google-Ads embedded in our UNK web-page

The Joint Committee of General Studies and Faculty Senate

The Proposed Future of WI Courses

Bookstore Issues

University Contracts—exclusivity

On-line Course Offerings

The Budget

The Domestic Partner Benefit Resolution

While wording differs between campus resolutions, all four campus faculty bodies are supportive of Domestic Partner Benefits. University Chancellors and the Board of Regents are aware of this support, and the issue will be considered again. Results of the discussion and possible actions will be communicated to UNK faculty as they emerge.

The Resolution recognizing the dedication of those implementing the new PeopleSoft system

This resolution is public and those recognized have been invited to the February meeting for personal recognition. It is important that a natural, enthusiastic, and perpetual appreciation be developed and maintained between faculty and staff at UNK. We are all interdependent in our efforts, our successes, and our challenges.

The Google-Ads embedded in our UNK web-page

It is important that everyone understand the complexity of this problem. There is an inconsistency, yet a reoccurring presence of such ads on UNK’s web-page (even when the toggle for UNK-only is engaged). At the last Faculty Senate Exec and Administrator’s meeting, those in attendance explored the issue with computer access during the meeting. It was frustrating, amusing, and insightful. University Relations has a better understanding of the problem now and is seeking resolution.

The Joint Committee of General Studies and Faculty Senate
Members of this committee fulfilled their responsibilities and their recommendations are helpful to the unfolding of this new approach to general studies. The Senior Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and the Assessment Director are moving forward with suggestions. The on-line issues are being addressed, and a suggestion of a rolling review of GS courses for faculty expertise is under consideration. The Faculty Senate appreciates and commends this committee for a job well-done.

The Proposed Future of WI Courses

A long time coming, the discussion to end the required WI coursework has begun. While it has been a measured, intentional, developmental process to get to this point, it is essential that the elimination of this requirement be preceded by a thorough and measured explanation to constituents—especially since the release of the recent study on the “lack” of impact of college on student learning.

Bookstore Issues

A better understanding of exclusivity and contracting obligations sheds some light on this subject. It may still be necessary to do a deliberate “de-bunking” of myths that exist across campus about this.

University Contracts—exclusivity

As with the previous topic, the required use of Chartwells for university meetings has been clarified, but still presents challenges in the “grey” areas.

On-line Course Offerings

A general agreement is emerging that both quality control and assessment focus is needed as we continue to create and implement new course and program offerings on-line. There have been many references to “horse and barn” analogies in this discussion. Processes currently in place to monitor course and instruction quality need to be engaged and used diligently to that end. Guidelines, incentives, and best practices are essential to the future success of UNK’s on-line offerings.

The Budget

There are so many unknowns about both the budget and the possible impacts of budget cuts. The proactive planning that has already taken place has been a very positive step. Regardless of actual budget allocations, the cupboard has been inventoried and plans are in place. I have been especially pleased with the efforts at all levels to educate faculty, staff, and the community about the budgeting process.

Here’s to a productive and successful spring!

Tami James Moore

Faculty Senate President