Chair Teal called meeting #19 to order at 3:32. After a request to correct a misspelled name in last week’s minutes was accepted as a friendly amendment, the minutes from the February 16th meeting passed without objection.

Chair & Provost Report: Chair Teal did not have a report and recognized Provost Wiencek. Provost Wiencek mentioned the “internal hiring memo” that recently came out. He thought the memo was fundamentally heading us in the right direction. Provost Wiencek noted that V.P. Foisy is currently conducting a search for a new HR Director. There are good candidates in the pool and they are hoping to accelerate this search. The person hired should be able to focus on moving towards a market-based compensation system realizing that we have a recently developed classification system. Ultimately we want to have a system driven by the market with a focus on getting our average salaries up to market. The Strategic Plan has been updated as we near the final draft. They have received a significant amount of feedback that has been incorporated in the most recent draft. Dale Pietrzak has been working on data definitions for the metrics. The targets are being updated. The feedback has been mainly supportive. There will be a poll sent out to select the mission and vision summary statements.

In other developments the Provost noted that JFAC has approved the proposed 3% C.E.C. (change in employee compensation). Enrollment estimates change from week-to-week. Thus far it looks like we are slightly up with non-resident students and marginally down with in-state students. The key is to get students who have been admitted to enroll.

Chair Teal asked the Provost about the emphasis being put on obtaining Carnegie I status and what this means for professional degrees and M.A. degree’s. The Provost stated that we would still offer master’s degrees and terminal degrees even if some of these don’t affect the Carnegie rankings. Obtaining Carnegie I status is a good aspirational goal which helps focus our attention on moving to a higher level of research. We are thinking of other metrics that are important such as increasing the number of faculty engaging in research. In response to another question about the metrics, the Provost stressed that developing these measures has to be part of an ongoing dialog and the metrics will need to be adjusted as we proceed.

Asked about why we seem to be down in in-state students when we have been putting emphasis on recruiting in-state through initiatives like direct admission, the Provost stated that it was difficult to know but we were working to determine which students haven’t filled out applications and what we might do to increase the percentage of those accepted arriving on campus.

The Provost was asked if there had been discussions about how the 3% C.E.C. might be distributed. He stated that HR had made recommendations, but no specific determinations had been made. He suggested we invite Brian Foisy to discuss this.

FS-16-039 (UCC-16-033d): CNR—Environmental Science. This is a proposal to drop the Environmental Water Science Graduate Academic Certificate. Chair Teal invited Professor Bob Mahler to speak to the
Professor Mahler stated that the certificate was being discontinued because of low enrollment and their external review team had recommended that the certificate be eliminated. The proposal passed unanimously.

**FS-16-040 (UCC-16-033e): CNR—Environmental Science.** This proposal sought to drop the Environmental Contamination Assessment Graduate Academic Certificate. Similar to the previous proposal, Professor Mahler stated that the external review team had recommended dropping the certificate for low enrollment. The proposal passed unanimously.

**FS-16-041 (UCC-16-033f): CNR—Environmental Science.** This proposal is to add a Biophysical Science Option via distance education. Professor Mahler stated that all the courses in the depth areas will be available online. The program will be targeting those who come out of community colleges. He thinks this program will aid the university in meeting its distance education and enrollment goals. Faculty from five different colleges will be offering courses in the program.

Several Senators raised questions about the availability of labs within this option. Professor Mahler stated that students will have taken lab courses in pursuing their community college, or other lower division courses. The courses at the 300-400 level requiring a lab experience are developing “labs in a box” which should help provide the same type of research experience. Asked specifically about the requirement for a senior research project, Professor Mahler commented that each student would have an academic advisor to guide them and many of these students could satisfy this requirement through our off-campus programs in environmental science.

Another Senator asked about assessing the program and how we will know that the courses meet the same quality as courses on campus. Professor Mahler stated that the distance education program has developed a good set of metrics for quality control. The Provost commented that our distance education courses are assessed through a standard set of rubrics called “quality matters.”

Another Senator worried about the complexity in the advising needs for this program. Professor Mahler assured the Senate that they had considered the advising needs for the program. The proposal passed without objection.

**FS-16-028: FSH 2700 – Student Evaluation.** The Chair welcomed Professor Jennifer Johnson-Leung, chair of Teaching & Advising, back to the Senate to discuss the latest version of the student evaluation of teaching forms. Professor Johnson-Leung presented two forms. The first is a transitional form to be used for a limited number of semesters before we go exclusively to the second form. The transitional form includes questions from the current form and will be used to help determine the correlation between the current form and the new form. Professor Johnson-Leung also presented an example of norming data that we could ask to be included with the evaluations when the summaries are sent out. Finally, she pointed out that while the FSH does require that we use student evaluations of teaching, we might want to consider other methods of evaluating teaching. She noted that it was probably dangerous to be overly prescriptive about what other methods to use, however, it might be wise to suggest that some other methods to evaluate teaching be used.

While Senators expressed general approval of the new forms, there was a variety of questions that arose:
- There was a question about why we couldn’t continue to use the bank of additional questions to customize the forms. Professor Johnson-Leung commented that the committee had not
expressly considered the additional set of questions, but didn’t see why they couldn’t be made available.

- There was a question about the difference between the transitional form and the new form. Which are we voting on? Why is there a different scale between the new form and the questions included from the previous form? Professor Johnson-Leung responded that she intended us to vote on both forms. We are using the transitional form which includes questions from the current form in an effort to demonstrate the validity of the new form. This was thought to be necessary to justify the shift from the current form to a form that didn’t include a numerical scale. Hopefully the shift would only take a couple of semesters.

- There were questions about the norming data and what the spreadsheet was supposed to demonstrate. It was suggested that the norming data would provide an ability to make different distinctions. It would provide “performance categories” to help show distinctions.

- Does the new form adequately take online courses into account? Professor Johnson-Leung stated that they had tried to make the questions general enough to apply to all types of courses, including online courses. There was some discussion as to whether the proposed new form was better or worse than the current form for online courses.

- Are there systemic biases (like gender) in student evaluations? Professor Johnson-Leung acknowledged that there are systemic biases which is why we should be careful about what inferences we draw from them.

In general Professor Johnson-Leung emphasized that any student evaluation form will be limited in its ability to tell us a great deal about the quality of instruction. They can provide a course measure of instructional atmosphere, but if we try to read much more into them than it becomes problematic. When an institution tries to put too much emphasis on student course evaluations, it is engaging in “institutional sloth.”

After acknowledging that we have been debating various versions of these forms for several years, the Senate decided we should bring this to a vote. The proposal to pass both the transitional form and the new form passed 13-4-2. After considerable confusion about whether to accept the “norming proposal” the Senate voted 1-9-9, thus rejecting the use of the norming scheme.

**Adjournment:** A motion (Stoll/Chung) to adjourn at 4:45 passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Crowley
Secretary to the Faculty Senate and Faculty Secretary