



Office of the Faculty Senate Chair

December 14, 2011

University of the District of Columbia

Office of the Board of Trustee

ATTN: Dr. Elaine Crider, Chair

Community College Committee of the Board of Trustees

Dear Dr. Crider:

On November 1, 2011 the Board of Trustees, Community College Committee charged the Faculty Senate (FS) with expeditiously considering the proposal for the creation of a UDC-CC Faculty Senate. The following is a summary of the process the FS utilized to come to our recommendation, the recommendation itself, and reasons for it, and dissenting remarks by two Senators. We have also appended several documents to this letter that informed our deliberations.

Process:

The process for expediting the proposal required several FS and committee meetings. The initial meeting involved the entire FS body, and the intent of that meeting was to inform the senators of the charge, its urgency, and to assign the proposal to a joint committee of the FS (the Community College Committee and the Charter and Bylaws Committee, chaired by Senators Patricia Myers and Robin Alexander, respectively). Following this meeting, the FS Chair contacted you to gain a clearer picture of Board members' knowledge of factors impacting the proposal; Chairs of the joint committee met with the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs to solicit her input; and the FS Chair met with the Dean of UDC-CC and the designated Chair of the UDC-CC Faculty Senate, Dr. Brenda Brown. Following these meetings, the joint committee held two

meetings (November 21 and December 6, 2011) for the purpose of reviewing and discussing the proposal.

The committee meetings were challenging to arrange and committee attendance was limited due to instructional demands required of faculty at the end of the semester. Nonetheless, committee members engaged in spirited discussion and, in an effort to allow those members who had not attended the meeting to comment, at the second meeting committee members were instructed to document their positions or concerns regarding the proposal and e-mail them to the committee chairs. Unfortunately, only one response was submitted. Using all of the information gathered during the previous month, the committee chairs drafted a final committee report and delivered it to the FS on December 13, 2011. The FS membership, having read both the committee report and the proposal engaged in a long and spirited debate before voting 13 to 2 to adopt the committee report.

Recommendation and Reasons

The FS recommends that the Board reject the proposal for a UDC-CC Faculty Senate as submitted.

The FS had several concerns about the proposal that lead to this conclusion. These concerns are listed below:

University Governance

It is the FS's opinion that the proposal creates a confusing and duplicative academic governance structure for UDC and reduces communication between flagship and UDC-CC faculty.

Specifically, we were concerned that:

1. The proposal has one representative from the FS serve ex officio in the UDC-CC FS and all UDC-CC FS actions go straight to the UDC-CC CEO, and on to the Board. The proposal states that even before the UDC-CC's transition to independence from UDC its actions will not be reviewed by the FS. This creates a University academic governance structure that is both duplicative, confusing, and allows for only minimal communication between the FS and the proposed UDC-CC FS.

2. The proposal does mention one instance in which the UDC-CC FS and the FS will work together. That section, listed on page three of the charter states: “Review and approval of shared programs and /or partnerships with UDC-CC and UDC will require joint approval and must be forwarded to the UDC Board of Trustees by the appropriate office of the institution of record (UDC or UDCCC).” This section, however, does not give a clear definition of what constitutes “programs and/or partnerships... require[ing] joint approval,” or lay out a process for cooperation between the two bodies.

Transitional Process

It is the FS’s opinion that the proposal does not take into account the changing situation of the UDC-CC. Specifically, we were concerned that:

1. If UDC-CC intends to remain a college of UDC, we do not believe that it requires its own FS. The UDC-CC is already amply represented in the FS with five members and a committee dedicated to its specific concerns. Additionally, we believe that creating an additional governance layer with UDC that does not have clear lines of communication with the FS would both slow and confuse academic decision-making.
2. If UDC-CC is in the process of altering its relationship to UDC (which it appears to be), we believe that the proposal should acknowledge and make provision for this change. Specifically, we believe that UDC-CC should have one governance structure for the time that it remains a part of UDC that allows for communication and collaboration with the rest of the University. When it becomes independent of UDC, we believe that UDC-CC should have an independent governance structure. The proposal neither acknowledges nor makes provision for such a transition. It assumes independence.
3. The proposal also assumes an internal organizational structure for UDC-CC that does not currently exist. The proposal states that departments and programs would elect senators, but the UDC-CC does not have departments and programs right now, it has "clusters." There is no process laid out in the proposal for how the transformation from clusters to departments and/or programs will occur or what units the UDC-CC faculty will elect representatives from in the meantime.

Workability

It is the FS's opinion that the proposal will not create a body that can function properly.

Specifically, we were concerned that:

1. The proposal gives the UDC-CC FS the power to write recommended standards and weights for tenure / promotion. This is typically a department and college matter. Currently, here at UDC, these issues are covered in the Union contract – whether one thinks they should be or not. There is no precedent, on or off campus, for these issues being senate matters.
 - a. The proposal gives UDC-CC FS committees other powers that are typically held by departments, colleges, and the Administration. For instance, the proposal holds that the senate will consider issues of grading guidelines, setting the academic calendar, and handling student grievances.
2. The proposal lists eight committees for what appears to be a fifteen member body. This is far too large a workload for the proposed membership to handle. Also, we should note that the proposed fifteen members will only materialize after the UDC-CC switches to a departments/programs organizational model. With the current cluster model, there would actually be fewer than fifteen members in the UDC-FS.

Recommendations for Future Action

While the proposal was not accepted as submitted, there clearly is the opinion with the FS that the faculty of the UDC-CC should be able to take the lead in the design of academic programs and standards to effectively serve their students and prepare them for matriculation into four year programs. The consensus of the body was that this process needs to occur in a manner that complements rather than undermines the current academic governance system. One possibility for achieving this end, recommended by a member of the FS, is to convert the UDC-CC FS to a curriculum committee that sends its proposals to FS for action like all other college of the University. Regardless of what is done with the sitting UDC-CC Faculty Senate, the FS recommends that the five UDC-CC member of the FS work closely with the FS colleagues to create a new proposal that addresses the concerns listed above.

Dissenting Remarks

A small minority of Senators dissented from the views expressed above and asked that their views be placed in this report. Respecting that request I am listing their views here:

1. The Community College representatives are all in favor of the Bylaws and Charter as written.
2. Dr. Brown reported that the Charter was not discussed, but the bylaws were, and some individuals may have been confused about writing comments, nonetheless, only one person responded from two combined committees.
3. There was a two – three day window for people to respond (with their comments) via e-mail.
4. During the meeting of the Committee of the whole (12/13/2011), there was an attempted amendment to the main motion (to approve the proposal as written) that suggested sending the proposal back to committee, but the amendment was not accepted.

This concludes my report; however, if you have further questions or concerns please feel free to contact me via either method indicated below. A hard copy of this report will be taken to the office of Mrs. Franklin.

Respectfully Submitted,

Connie M. Webster

Connie Webster,

Chair, Faculty Senate

Attachments:

Combined Committee Report

E-mail stream of Chairs contact (See shaded comments)

President's Letter (dated July 18, 2011)

Response to Committee (Senator Musgrove)