

**Radford University Faculty Senate
Meeting Minutes
September 17, 2009**

Members Present: Dr. Suzanne Ament, Dr. Mary Atwell, Dr. Moira Baker, Dr. Roann Barris, Dr. Paula Brush, Dr. Farrell Doss, Dr. Patricia Easterling, Dr. I-Ping Fu, Dr. Kim Gainer, Dr. Mary Gibson, Mr. Anthony Guest, Dr. Judith Guinan, Dr. Jim Gumaer, Dr. Vincent Hazelton, Dr. Maung Htay, Dr. Kay K. Jordan, Ms. Deborah McLaughlin, Dr. Douglas Mitchell, Dr. Garth N. Montgomery, Dr. Michael Moore, Dr. Stephen Owen, Dr. Richard Roth, Dr. Helen Roybark, Dr. Basel Saleh, Dr. David Sallee, Dr. Gary Schirr, Dr. Reginald Shareef, Dr. Laura Spielman, Dr. Jenessa Steele, Dr. Elizabeth Alteiri, Mr. Kevin Tapp, Dr. Lynne Taylor, Dr. Edward Carter Turner, Dr. Ed Udd, Dr. Erin Webster Garrett, Dr. Joe Wirgau, Dr. David Zuschin

Members Absent: Dr. Iain Clelland, Dr. Judy Niehaus, Dr. Alexei Orlov

Guests Present: President Penelope Kyle, Vice President Norleen Pomerantz

I. Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

1. Dr. Owen called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm.
2. The minutes of the September 10th meeting will be approved at the meeting on September 24th.

II. Reports and Announcements

1. None.

III. Old Business

1. None.

IV. New Business

1. Motion to suspend rules; motion carried
2. Motion carried by vote of 39 to 2.

On behalf of its co-sponsors, I move that the Faculty Senate pass the following resolution and that the Faculty Senate Executive Committee communicate this resolution, if approved, to President Kyle, Provost Stanton, Vice President of Student Affairs Pomerantz, and the members of the Board of Visitors, and further request that the President, Provost, Vice President for Student Affairs, and Board of Visitors take whatever actions they deem necessary to address this situation.

Resolution: The faculty of Radford University, while well aware of and concerned about the current economic constraints faced by the University, nonetheless wish to express their strong disapproval of the recent dismissal of New Student Programs staff. Whatever budget savings are claimed regarding this “reorganization,” the faculty are appalled by the sudden, insensitive, and brutal treatment of these colleagues of ours who have devoted years of service to the University. Having one week ago assured the Faculty Senate that all position changes or layoffs would be handled with sensitivity, respect, and compassion, the Radford University administration has, by its action, further undermined its credibility with the faculty. The behavior of the RU administration in this instance is a public embarrassment. Be it resolved, therefore, that the Radford University faculty strongly condemn that behavior and those administrators involved in this incident.

CO-SPONSORS OF RESOLUTION

Dr. Suzanne Ament, Senator At-Large Department of History

Dr. Mary Atwell, Senator At-Large Department of Criminal Justice

Dr. Moira Baker, Senator At-Large Department of English

Dr. Gwen Brown, Senator School of Communication

Dr. Paula Brush, Senator Department of Sociology

Dr. Tricia Easterling, Senator At-Large School of Teacher Education & Leadership

Dr. Kim Gainer, Senator At-Large Department of English

Dr. Judy Guinan, Senator Department of Biology and Chemistry

Dr. Mike Montgomery, Senator Department of History

Dr. Reginald Shareef, Senator Department of Political Science

Dr. Laura Spielman, Senator At-Large Department of Mathematics and Statistics

Dr. Skip Thompson, Senator Department of Mathematics and Statistics

Dr. Edward Udd, Senator Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

Dr. Rick Van Noy, Senator Department of English

3. Statement by Dr. Kim Gainer

The resolution before us addresses not why the Office of New Student Programs was disbanded but the manner in which it was disbanded, so I will not ask why, in a year that retention is more important than ever, a successful retention program was disbanded.

Nor will I ask why, given that Mr. Dunn and Mr. Jacobsen will continue to draw salary and benefits for six months, the administration chose not to make use of their expertise during a period of orderly transition.

However, given that the Faculty Senate was assured only a week ago that separations would be handled humanely, with sensitivity and professionalism, I would ask why a gentleman with twenty-four years of service, a gentleman who built the Office of New Student Programs, and another gentleman who had a record of ten years of dedicated service to the university, were abruptly informed that they were being relieved of all duties.

I would ask why, in spite of the fact that they were to remain on the payroll for another six months, these gentlemen, who have served this university for a combined thirty-four years, found all their accounts frozen within minutes of being told that they were being put on administrative leave. Did they represent a peril so great to the university that they could not be permitted access to their RU Express and faculty meal plans for even one more day? Would there have been some danger to the university if they had been allowed unbroken access to the computer files that they will undoubtedly need in order to begin the process of seeking employment at universities that, it is to be hoped, will be more appreciative of their contributions than this one has been?

Why were Mr. Dunn and Mr. Jacobsen initially told that they had to clear their offices by 5:00 p.m. Monday? Why were they given only seven hours to remove all traces of, in one case, twenty-four years of service, in the other case, ten?

Why was it necessary for someone to confiscate Mr. Dunn's computer and office keys at 5:00 p.m. on Monday? After twenty-four years of trusting him with our freshman students, had he suddenly become untrustworthy?

Why was it necessary to deny Mr. Dunn the opportunity to meet with his UNIV 100 students, even if only to take his leave of them? Was this fair either to Mr. Dunn or to his students who have had their introduction to this university so abruptly interrupted?

I believe all of the above questions can be rolled into one. With apologies to Joseph Welch, has this administration no sense of decency?

In this instance, I believe that the answer is no, and for that reason I ask you to join the co-sponsors of this resolution in voting to condemn the precipitous and disrespectful treatment accorded to two individuals who have served the university far better than they have been served themselves.

4. Statement in Support of Resolution by Dr. Moira Baker

My fellow senators, I strongly support the resolution we have before us. I respectfully urge you, my honored colleagues, to do the same.

This is an unprecedented moment in the history of our University. We are being asked to consider what kind of university we are becoming—what kind of university we want to be. The manner in which Mr. Dunn and Mr. Jacobsen were dismissed calls into question the very character of our university. It tears at the moral fabric of our community. And, I believe, we cannot let it stand without rebuke. We have an obligation to try to reclaim the reputation of the University that has been sullied by the way in which these decent men were treated. This resolution makes the first step in that direction.

There is no way to undo the profound damage done to Mr. Dunn, Mr. Jacobsen, and their families. There is no recompense for the harm done to their professional reputations by dismissing them in this way.

Despite the shame and moral outrage that many of us feel because our administration has chosen to act as it has toward Mr. Dunn and Mr. Jacobsen, this event presents an opportunity to define the quality of moral leadership we demand. It presents us with an opportunity to demonstrate to our students and to citizens of the Commonwealth the principles of human conduct for which we, as a faculty, stand.

This resolution demonstrates that we demand more of our leaders. We may never know who knew what and when about the plan to dismiss these two colleagues. And that is not the point—at least not today. The facts about the manner in which they were dismissed are not in dispute. And these facts illuminate, it seems to me, a stunning failure of humane leadership that should emanate from the President and shape the behaviors of her leadership team.

If ever a person embodied the principles of humane leadership within an academic community, it was Mr. Dunn. If ever a person embodied the commitment to students, reverence for teaching, and respect for colleagues that we would like to characterize our University, it was Mr. Dunn. I refer you to the resolution of appreciation passed by the Board of Visitors on Feb. 26, 2003, in recognition of Mr. Dunn's extraordinary contributions to his University, our students, and his profession. I request that the Board's resolution be read into the minutes of this meeting.

What have we said about the character of our university, if we allow the treatment of these decent and humane colleagues to go unrebuked? What have we said about our own? I urge you, honored colleagues, to vote yes on the resolution before you

5. Below are the minutes from a Board of Visitors Meeting on Feb 26-27, 2003, when a Resolution was passed commending Mike Dunn and the New Student Programs Office. Minutes are available at <http://www.radford.edu/bov/minutes022703.html>

Resolution in Appreciation

WHEREAS, Mr. Michael A. ("Mike") Dunn has served Radford University with distinction since 1985 — since 1993 as Director of the Office of New Student Programs; and

WHEREAS, he is the articulate and passionate voice for new students at the University, continually reminding everyone that the academic, social, and personal welfare of our students, especially those new to and therefore unfamiliar with RU, must be kept at the forefront of the University's mission; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Dunn has served as the creative genius and driving force behind the implementation of effective programs and services to benefit first-year students, including Quest, UNIV 100, freshmen learning communities, community service days, the "Success Starts Here" seminar series, the "FIRST" and "SORTS" retention programs, and other activities; and

WHEREAS, he has served as an inspirational mentor to hundreds of student leaders who have assisted with the delivery of these programs; and

WHEREAS, he has shared his expertise about first-year students with numerous faculty and staff in workshops on the RU campus and with high school guidance counselors and others beyond Radford University, so that others might facilitate the success of first-year students; and

WHEREAS, Radford University's freshman-to-sophomore retention rate has increased by approximately fifteen percent in the ten years since the Office of New Student Programs was established under Mr. Dunn's leadership, improvement that can be attributed both to him and his staff and to the many individuals and offices who have enthusiastically collaborated with New Student Programs' initiatives; and

WHEREAS, in 2002, in recognition of the quality of RU's initiatives to serve new students, the Policy Center on the First Year of College at Brevard College recognized Radford University as one of only 11 national semi-finalists among institutions of its size in their project to identify "Institutions of Excellence in the First College Year"; and

WHEREAS, on February 23, 2003, Mr. Dunn was recognized by the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition at the University of South Carolina as one of ten national "Outstanding First-Year Student Advocates," the most prestigious award bestowed upon individuals in his profession; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Visitors of Radford University commends Mr. Dunn upon his receiving this significant honor which brings credit to him and to the University, and expresses its sincere gratitude for his exceptional leadership of RU's efforts to invest in the lifetimes of first-year students; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this resolution be made a part of the official record of Radford University, and that a copy thereof be presented to Mr. Michael A. Dunn.

V. Announcements

1. None.

VI. Adjournment

1. The meeting was adjourned at 5 pm.