

**Commission on Faculty Affairs
Minutes
November 5, 2010**

Members attending: Debbie Smith (chair), Richard Sorensen, Alan Grant, Brad Klein, Jack Finney and Kyrille Goldbeck (rep. Bruce Pencek)

Agenda: Agenda for the meeting included three items: Research Leave resolution (Jack Finney), discussion of Policy 6330, and discussion of conviction checks for new faculty.

The minutes of the CFA meeting on October 29, 2010, were approved without change by email prior to the meeting.

Research Leave Clarification

Jack Finney presented the new language for policy on Research Leave for Faculty Handbook sections 3.8, 3.9, 4.9, and 4.10 on Study Research Leave and Research Assignment. The CFA was requested to approve the new changes. CFA members unanimously approved the resolution adopting the new language for sections 3.8, 3.9, 4.9, and 4.10 on Study Research Leave and Research Assignment in the Faculty Handbook with a recommended minor change. The resolution will be forwarded to University Council and the Faculty Senate will be briefed at their next meeting.

Discussion on Policy 6330

Debbie Smith brought to the attention of CFA members Policy 6330 that addressed classroom attendance and conduct of students. Dr. Gary Long had suggested that CFA take a look at the policy and to consider whether revisions were needed. The focus of the request was on the use of electronic devices in the classroom. CFA members noted that students frequently carry electronic devices such as laptops and cell phones into the classrooms and they may use these devices for non-class-related uses (e.g., games, Internet surfing, Facebook). The discussion concerned whether a policy change was needed or whether the current policy provided each individual instructor the authority to regulate student behavior in class. It was also noted that the devices are important for receiving emergency information. Policy 6330, as with most policies passed before August 2010, refer to specific sections of the Faculty Handbook that are no longer accurate since the major revision. No further action is anticipated by CFA, but Jack Finney will consult with University Legal Counsel about the issue of the need for updated policies.

Discussion on conviction checks

Debbie Smith briefed CFA members on the subject of conviction checks for all new employees, including faculty members, that had been discussed by Dr. Hal Irvin at the Employees Benefits Committee. Currently new staff hires and new senior management hires (e.g., dean, department head) are required to have a conviction check. CFA members were concerned with the reaction of future faculty employees who might object to the requirement of a conviction check. An individual may be victimized for a crime they did many years ago, for which they have already paid their debt to society. It was noted that many universities are now doing conviction checks as part of their employment policy especially after the serious incidents that have occurred on university campuses since 2007.

The proposal for faculty conviction checks raised many questions and Jack Finney will seek background information from University Legal Counsel and Debbie Smith will seek further clarification from Dr. Hal Irvin.

New Business

CFA members were informed that the Scholar site for CFA was already set up and members could now access it.

Recorder, Maxwell Awando