

**NSU Faculty Forum - January 13, 2009**  
**Net Tower room, 2-3:30 pm**

Faculty were welcomed by Craig Clifford, Faculty Association President.

**Study Days:** The mid-week start date affects once a week classes. Last semester and this semester these classes have been one or two sessions short of the 16 needed to make a full semester. This semester it is Monday classes that will lose a class period, also due to holidays. The first week of school is a problem. Since it is a partial week, many students do not attend. The essential question is student performance. In math classes, Bell has observed that lower level students do poorer on tests since they have not had recent reviews of the content. Some are studying. The idea of two days to study before finals may give the impression that cramming is OK. Learning should take place all semester. Is data available concerning student performance? Another question is: what should faculty be doing during those days? Do we keep office hours? Another problem with starting during a partial week is that labs are tied to meeting twice a week and miss one half of the week.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Start semesters on Monday. Take the Friday before finals week off. Many students skip this day anyway.

**Enrollment Caps in Online Classes:** Landry reported on his class which is a test class in his area. He currently has 73 enrolled and has been assigned one Graduate Assistant. His question is quality. He has a major group project and has had to increase the number of students in each group. The proposal is that with forty students you get one Graduate Assistant. In History, Davis has a class of 63. It is a junior level class with research. Instead of a Graduate Assistant, overload pay can be used. In Personal Health, Hixon uses graders (not Graduate Assistants). There was a question about consistency in grading students in one class with different graders evaluating. This works better with well defined rubrics. There is a difference in pay – Graduate Assistants earn \$3000 per semester and graders earn \$600 per credit hour and have limited functions. The level of the class will make a difference in how much help a Graduate Assistant can be. There was a comment that online universities have thousands in one class. It was also observed that it is mostly our students taking online classes. We get a few from other states, etc.

**Online Class Evaluations:** There is a need for student feedback for these classes. Clifford reported that this is the first semester to use trial software to do these student evaluations of instructors.

**Office Hours:** The change in requiring every day hours was discussed. Hours are up to the Chairs discretion. VP Bigbee agrees with what is reasonable. It was noted that the handbook needs changed.

**TIAA CREF vs. Lincoln:** The form to withhold funds for January is due January 15<sup>th</sup>. There was some discussion about the reliability of Lincoln given the current financial climate. RUSO has a company that will evaluate Lincoln and Lincoln is not a fund but a fund administrator.

**Cell phones in classes:** There was a concern raised about the problem with cell phones and texting in the classroom. There was a request for a campus wide policy to address this. There was discussion about what a policy would involve. Faculty should put their own policies in their syllabi. It needs to be enforceable – such as not during tests. There were also comments that we don't have policies on weather, etc. readily available on the website.

**Oracle progress:** There were questions about when Oracle would be available for various faculty functions. One person had heard spring 2010.

**Regents' request:** The 80 million dollar regents' request does not include raises. The contingencies of the proposal were discussed.

**Campus Read:** Archer brought up an idea she had seen of a book that all students read and is used in every discipline for discussion. Some other ideas were to use a common book for some of the core Gen Ed classes to tie them together; a lectureship series; a book club that involves faculty and students; tie this to the American Democracy Project and the New York Times.

**Harrington Benefits:** Harrington Benefits is not screening claims for HealthChoice since January. Matzen wondered if an audit of that company had been performed due to the large amount of premiums paid versus the allowed claims.

**Bookstore:** There are again problems in the bookstore. Availability of texts for classes is a problem. There are discussions ongoing about outsourcing. Also, not having an Auxiliary Director complicates this problem. Food Services is doing better.

**Faculty Development:** There were comments that faculty would welcome more workshops. Something about collaborative institutions would be welcome. It was noted that the new workshops for Blackboard were offered during finals week. Some better planning about timing would be appreciated.

**Faculty Involvement:** With new initiatives toward retention and recruitment, there will be planning and tasks for many to do.

**Branding:** Some thoughts on our uniqueness: we give personal attention to students. Some are concerned about losing that value. The Enrollment Task Force has suggestions about promoting student/faculty interaction.

Clifford thanked faculty in attendance for good feedback and noted that we should do this again.

Meeting Adjourned.

Linda West  
Faculty Council Secretary/Treasurer