11/09/09 Faculty Senate Meeting


Absent: J. Browning, A. Christopher, D. Simcoe, E. Ahumada, J. Bishop, B. Prins.

Guest: J. David

Jim Buchholz opened in prayer.

New information was presented regarding the CCL conference from the English Department and concerning their request for funding from the Faculty Forum Funds. Discussion took place regarding funds for the keynote speakers. Issue was tabled until more information from the Faculty Forum funds guidelines is researched and information from the English department regarding CBU faculty accessibility to the activity.

Motioned was discussed and passed to send a letter regarding the 403B reimbursement issue (attached).

Meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.
November 9, 2009

Dear Dr. Ellis and CBU Trustees,

We appreciate your leadership during this troubling economic season. We know that the administration has had to make some very difficult decisions this fiscal year (for example, the suspension of merit pay and the reduction of faculty development funds). Although the university did not reach its desired growth target, we are encouraged that enrollment is up from last year. It also appears, thankfully, that the general state of the national economy may be stabilizing. Hopefully through strong fiscal discipline and good management during this year, the university has been able to increase its reserves to establish a better cash management position. Like each of you, we love our university and share your vision to make it a strong and vibrant academic community that can more fully live out the Great Commission. To that end, we are completely behind Dr. Ellis’ vision of 8080 by 2020. That is why we are concerned by the decision not to provide matching funds for the retirement of faculty and staff.

Since July 1, 2009, we have had no contributions made to our 403(b) retirement plan by the institution. Although schools such as Vanguard, Hope International, and Masters College eliminated a small (2-3%) matching of contributions, it is noteworthy that institutions in our geographic region which CBU particularly aspires to be competitive with in the CCCU – such as Biola, Azusa Pacific, and Point Loma – all continue to match 403(b) accounts at the 8% level. As a result of this disparity, we sense that our beloved institution has a competitive disadvantage with regard to attracting talented new faculty as well as retaining our most capable faculty, both of which are necessary for us to continue to grow numerically (expanding majors, and pioneering new ones) as well as to continue rising in the academic ranks (e.g., U.S. News and World Report ranking).

Our institution’s goal of reaching 8,080 students by the year 2020 requires our attracting and retaining high quality faculty (including some who will help pioneer new Masters- and Ph.D.-level programs). We recognize this goal as significant to our living out the Great Commission as a Christian institution of higher learning (as well as achieving economies of scale). Consequently, the Faculty Senate of California Baptist University respectfully recommends that the University reinstate the university’s 403(b) contribution as soon as possible. Specifically, we request that the Administration inform the Faculty as to the status of this benefit for the next fiscal year prior to contracts being signed in the Spring, so that informed decisions can be made by current and prospective faculty.

Respectfully submitted,
The Faculty Senate of California Baptist University