

Minutes of the Winter All Faculty Meeting

February 6, 2018

CBEC 2228

Chair Rod Rice called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm. President Rankin and 35 faculty members attended.

Dr. Rice introduced Dr. Rankin and asked him a lead-off question.

Lead off Question: We realize that you've only been here for a short time, but could you tell us about your general plan in leading this institution forward? As our new president, where would you like to begin your journey in keeping this university relevant in the face of regional, national, and global challenges?

Answer: Dr. Rankin attended SD Mines 44 years ago. His general plan for leading SD Mines into a new era is still being developed. He is meeting with each Department and discussing issues with various stakeholders. An important initial area, carrying on from Interim President Puszynski, is raising money for scholarships and assistanceships. Currently, SD Mines has ~2,400 undergraduate students. Previously, the goal was to raise this number to 3,000 students. An audit was conducted that indicated that there currently is sufficient classroom space for this number of students, but it was not clear if this included laboratory space, SD Mines currently has 350-400 graduate students, which is about 20% of the number needed to be a research institution. To get good students, competitive stipends are needed and this also ties to the research student to faculty ratio.

It costs the average student \$10,400 for tuition at SD Mines not including room and board, books, etc. If the expected family contribution is greater than \$5,000-6,000 graduation rates start to drop. The legislature is considering taking over the setting of tuition rates, which is fine if they would raise the rates to keep up with inflation, but that may not happen.

\$17 Million is needed to renovate the Mineral Industries building. In addition, Surbeck Center is in need of some renovation, and the business incubator is going to be transitioned back to the school. Clearly considerable fund raising is needed to keep SD Mines up to par.

The South Dakota State Legislature is considering a free speech bill related to off campus groups using SD Mines facilities. SD Mines has a policy concerning such use that with three-day notice off campus groups can use The Arch, The Grubby Statue area, and the McLaury (Surbeck) parking Lot. Some legislators are also discussing ending tenure, making a \$10,000 degree option at every state university, and having teaching faculty only do teaching, with no research.

Question: Collective bargaining and faculty morale. Current legislation is afoot to ban collective bargaining at South Dakota universities. What are your thoughts on this phenomena in light of the fact that in South Dakota our salaries are among the lowest in the country and that removing

collective bargaining could seriously impact not only faculty morale, but also the recruitment and retention of quality faculty?

Answer: Dr. Rankin believes in shared governance, however, he does not feel that we necessarily need collective bargaining to increase faculty salaries.

Question: Faculty relations. How might you define a successful relationship between you and the faculty? What approaches might you take to work effectively with faculty?

Answer: Dr. Rankin is in the process of visiting each department to understand the campus community better. The Senate Chair is now a member of the Executive Committee. These efforts are aimed at developing a good relationship with the faculty and finding approaches to work effectively with the faculty. Dr. Rankin believes that we need faculty voices to be heard to get the best out of the university. While he is still learning about the school, Dr. Rankin thinks getting his message to the Faculty and input from the Faculty, is perhaps best achieved through the department heads, and that individual faculty may want to have their department head with them when visiting the President so that the department head knows about issues of concern.

Recently, there were some intrusions by the President into Faculty matters, particularly curriculum. Dr. Rankin is still learning about the curriculum procedures. What about new fields for students that don't have the wherewithal or desire to be an engineer? Currently, they have to transfer, but new fields might keep them here. Some possibilities mentioned include sales, cybersecurity and e-sports, if appropriate resources can be made available.

Question: Faculty workload model. A few years ago, a taskforce was formed that gathered feedback and arrived at a university workload document that was very broad and allowed for flexibility for departments to implement distinct models. However, it appears that only one restrictive type of worksheet has been approved as a supplement to the workload document. Many faculty are wondering what is gained by using this spreadsheet as a management tool.

Answer: Dr. Rankin is not too familiar with the workload model, so has yet to develop an opinion concerning these issues.

Question: Strategy for Research: What is being or can be done to help faculty get research funds? The campus has developed four main research priority areas, where would you like to see the university go in terms of priorities for research?

Answer: Dr. Rankin thought getting faculty to Washington D.C. and developing seed funds would be useful. He also wondered whether the Office of Sponsored Programs could be more efficient. It takes a while to get into a groove, but faculty should be aiming at 3-5 proposals submitted per year rather than just one. Interdisciplinary research is particularly important at a school such as SD Mines. Industrial research could be higher, although many companies hate working with Universities. It is costly and intellectual property issues are often contentious.

Dr. Rankin is evaluating the question about the research areas, but does think it is OK to perform research outside of these areas.

Question: Graduate Education: Do we have too many Ph. D. programs? What about the accelerated M. S. programs and distance learning?

Answer: Dr. Rankin has yet to consider the issue of number of Ph. D. programs. The accelerated masters programs may stretch the faculty even thinner as there has been significant interest in such programs particularly with respect to non-thesis options.

Are we missing some opportunities in distance learning? Probably, SD Mines has the lowest enrollment of all state schools in South Dakota, but the third highest number of on campus classes. However, our resources are already stretched considerably, but perhaps some money could be found to help faculty and departments to develop more online courses.

Dr. Rice adjourned the meeting at ~4:55 pm.