Meeting began at 2:05pm

Approval of minutes was delayed due to a lack of a quorum.

S. Selig introduced the provost, Doug Knerr. He stated that it is an honor to serve as provost UM-Flint. The role of provost is to align the goals of the chancellor to the role and operations of academic affairs. Fiscal stability is a priority, as the ability to mature as an institution is dependent on financial stability. Strategic enrollment management and merit aid targeting top students will help the university achieve fiscal stability. The University’s financial future depends on delivering new and innovative academic programs in order to compete in local, national, and international markets. The provost expressed gratitude for innovation that is currently underway, especially in graduate programs. Innovation is at the top of his priorities, so that UM-Flint becomes a first choice university for prospective students. Another priority is community engagement, especially in areas of health and well-being, entrepreneurship, and education. Community engaged scholarship should be rewarded in the promotion and tenure process. The provost plans to enhance rewards for engaged scholarship in the academic departments and the Thompson Center for Teaching and Learning. Another priority is institutional coherence, with rationality and consistency of policies and administrative procedures being key. We must align academic affairs with the best practices of the Higher Learning Commission. The provost thanked those involved in the two ongoing dean. There needs to be a campus-wide conversation for innovation in academic programs and how this translates into community engaged scholarship. The provost thanked AAAC for the leadership they play in academic affairs and their partnership during the academic year in tackling challenging issues. The provost introduced Kristin Lindsey, the new Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement and Barbara Avery, the new Vice Chancellor for Inclusion and Student Life.

K. Lindsey added to the provost’s enthusiasm for the academic excellence and experience of the faculty at UM-Flint. The leadership team is committed to a vision for UM-Flint so that the university can excel into the next decade. Her work is to take the vision that comes from the institution and create the relationships that are needed for this vision to come to fruition. She also works with alumni to connect faculty and the institution with the alumni, and to find ways to partner with the schools to create relationships with students so they will be engaged alumni upon graduation. Alumni are important potential funding sources and there is a lot of room for the university to grow in that area. Another area of importance for her office is government relations. Elected officials need know about important the work UM-Flint does.
B. Avery expressed her excitement to be at UM-Flint and to be a part of chancellor’s vision for the university. Her focus is on student success and partnership with the faculty on this area. She created a student advisory group in partnership with the president of student government. She encouraged the faculty to stop by her office for coffee, tea, or lunch.

A quorum was reached. H. Wehbe-Alamah made a motion to approve the minutes from the last governing faculty meeting. Motion seconded by S. Meyers. Minutes were unanimously approved.

An update for the Committee on the Economic Status of the Faculty (CESF) was made by H. Seipke. The committee is focusing on investigating the 50% attrition for new assistant professors. CESF cannot get information from Human Resources as to why faculty leave, so they are investigating the concerns of the existing faculty via a faculty survey. Detailed results from the survey will be given in the CESF report at the end of the year. This year, the committee will focus on realistic, workable solutions to address these concerns, which include the “time crunch” associated with the new initiatives at the university and service obligations, and the uneven distribution of these burdens.

Q. Mazumder asked if would be possible to get data on the faculty members who have left by speaking with their former department chairs. H. Seipke replied that it difficult to get this anecdotal data in a sufficient quantity to get a solid answer to the attrition question.

J. Sanders asked about the approved 2014 motion by the governing faculty which states that the university is adversely affected by faculty turnover and the replacement of tenure-track lines by part-time lecturers. The motion called on the central administration to take appropriate action to address this problem. How did this problem get kicked down to CESF? H. Seipke replied that it is important to investigate issues related to time management and the distribution of time commitments across the faculty. J. Sanders said it was up to the central administration to come up with solutions to the problems addressed in this motion. S. Selig stated that the CESF will report to Faculty Council problems they discover, and solutions to these problems. These will then be taken to the central administration.

A. Lutzker pointed out that the two motions related to student voting on faculty standing committees are contradictory and neither passed, so the issue wasn’t resolved. L. Knecht asked for clarification that the current status that the student representative has a vote as part of the quorum. M. Andrews asked if the student representative would like to speak on the topic. A. Eidelsafy said that the faculty are here for the students, and taking away their vote on committees would take away their voice. S. Selig asked how student government could encourage student members to attend the committee meetings. A. Eidelsafy replied that student government member is assigned to a committee and held to an attendance policy. Pay is docked if this attendance policy is violated. The standard regarding student and faculty attendance should be fair, as a quorum would be reached if the student was absent but no faculty were.

C. Thomas inquired regarding the size of the problem associated with student attendance at committee meetings. S. Selig noted that she never sees students on the committees she is a member of. She stressed the importance of informed voting and the need for students to attend so they can cast an informed ballot. A small minority of faculty indicated that student attendance has been a problem on faculty committees they have served on. K. Shellenberg stated that for the three years, she was on the Scholarship, Awards, and Special Events Committee. The student representative never attended these meetings. There is a balance between students having a voice and the responsibility for students to attend the meetings. A. Eidelsafy said that finding the current meeting days and times of the committee meetings is difficult. R. Alfaro stated that the student representative as been a valuable member of AAAC. He said that student government members should know how important their attendance is and be taught them the importance of responsibility, otherwise their vote might be taken away.
H. Laube asked the committee meeting schedule is standard meeting day or time or if it is set ad hoc. If the latter, committees need to know who the student is before the meetings begin, so the student can be contacted before the schedule is set. S. Selig offered to meet with A. Eidelsafy to make sure Student Government has information regarding committee meeting days and times.

B. Jones inquired if we are holding the students to a higher attendance standard than we are holding ourselves, as evidenced by the shift towards an electronic ballot for motions made in governing faculty meetings, so faculty who don’t attend these meetings can vote. S. Roach expressed appreciation that Faculty Council is willing to work with students on this issue and that for the time being, we are keeping the current practice of students voting on committees. She stated that Faculty Council needs to investigate how much business in impeded due to a lack of quorum, and if there are any work-arounds to this problem (if indeed this is a frequent problem). G. Laurence said we should collectively recognize that committee business being impeded by lack of student attendance is only possible because of a lack of faculty attendance at these meetings. It is easy to skip meetings since a lack of attendance at committee meetings is not a big deal for the year-end report or for promotion and tenure. V. Robinson said that the committee she is serving on, the Student Affairs Committee on is working fine. She stated that the process can work with proper attendance policy. S. Selig said a problem is that a relative small number of faculty serve on governing faculty committees, and if more people would serve, it would spread out the workload which would improve attendance. She concluded the discussion by stating that the tenor of the meeting suggested that there was no interest to revisit the motions from last year, and Faculty Council will work with the students on scheduling to improve student attendance at faculty standing committee meetings.

J. Koonman asked if there was an update on the School of Nursing proposal. S. Selig stated that no update is available, but Faculty Council has requested an update from the chancellor and provost. Discussion regarding budgetary issues related to the proposal is ongoing with a desire to bring the issue to a close. H. Wehbe-Alamah added that Faculty Council has repeatedly, over the last two years, inquired about the status of the proposal with the central administration. Initially, there was supposed to be an external committee to review the proposal. It was later decided that the interim provost would review it, with a decision hopefully by May 2015. However, no decision was made. M. Andrews said she met with Jerry Glasco, who said there are no issues with budget. She said that in her opinion, the issue isn’t financial, it’s political.

A. Lutzker inquired about the external consultant reviewing the proposal. H. Wehbe-Alamah said the idea for an external consultant to review the School of Nursing proposal died. The interim provost was asked to review it to hopefully give a decision by May 2015. No decision was made. B. Jones said that students are starting to ask questions. C. Larsen said the proposal has not been discussed at CAS/BSP meetings. D. Fry said that she has raised the issue with the provost numerous times in meetings, but does not have an answer. S. Selig stated that there is a clear consensus in the room that a decision needs to be made. She said that the turnover in central administration both in Flint and Ann Arbor has contributed to the delay in making a decision on the SON proposal.

R. Alfaro said that AAAC has met with Nick Gaspar from OEL regarding the problem of low response rates from the online course evaluations. The committee received a list of recommendations to improve the response rate. R. Alfaro requested a governing faculty meeting early in the Winter semester to discuss these recommendations for possible implementation.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20pm