

SEC Associated Faculty Leaders (SECAFL)
Report to Southeastern Conference Academic Consortium for 2009-2010
June 1, 2010

The SEC Associated Faculty Leaders (SECAFL) held its annual meeting October 1 – 3, 2009 in Lexington, Kentucky. David Randall (University of Kentucky) served as chair of the group for 2008-2009. Kevin L. Cope (Louisiana State) was elected at the meeting to serve as chair of SECAFL for 2009-2010. Representatives from Alabama, Arkansas, Auburn, Kentucky, Louisiana State, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Vanderbilt were present.

The group had the opportunity to hear from several administrators from the host institution. Dr. James Tracy, Vice President for Research at the University of Kentucky, spoke about the challenges of academic governance and leadership based on his experiences at the University of Wisconsin and at Kentucky.

Neal Hutchens, assistant professor of higher education at the University of Kentucky, gave a presentation on academic freedom: “How Free is Academic Freedom? A Dialogue Considering the Increasingly Precarious Status of First Amendment Protection for Faculty Speech.”

President Todd spoke to the group about the role and importance of faculty governance and engaged in a conversation with the faculty leaders about a variety of issues about higher education. Connie Ray, vice-president for institutional research and effectiveness at the University of Kentucky, spoke on the role of the faculty in accreditation.

Kumble Subbaswamy, provost at the University of Kentucky, spoke with the group about the role of shared governance and about the request to be affiliated with SECAC. He explained that the SEC provosts were skeptical about creating parallel or redundant bureaucracies or usurping the power of the individual provosts. Each institution contributes \$20,000 to the SECAC. (By contrast, the Big 10’s CIC is supported by \$100,000 annual contribution.) He discussed those initiatives that have been started, such as increased interlibrary loan among SEC institutions and shared recruiting and job placement. The affiliation of SECAFL as a group within SECAC was discussed including what would be the most productive relationship. The idea of looking at what the CIC is doing with their senate group.

Amber Stegelin-Falluca, a Ph.D. student in higher education at the University of South Carolina, presented about her dissertation study on faculty senators and their knowledge and perceptions. She gave an overview of her dissertation proposal and solicited feedback on the questions she would ask in her survey. Amber also asked if the faculty senate leaders what the best way to get the survey to their senators would be. Several mentioned that they would be willing to cooperate. It was moved that the group endorse the survey, which was passed unanimously.

Additionally, the faculty senate leaders from around the SEC benefited from the opportunity to informally share ideas and concerns dealing with faculty governance.

The group accomplished several important tasks at the fall meeting:

- It was decided that the group needs a web site where a roster, meeting agendas and minutes, presentations from meetings, and other information can be stored. Christian Anderson, executive secretary, was asked to find a site that would be easily accessible and useable.
- The group decided to seek out additional financial support for the organization's operations, particularly to pay for the travel expenses of the executive secretary.
- The idea of a spring meeting was discussed and what purpose such meeting might serve. It was suggested that initiatives could be pursued in the spring and business conducted in a fall meeting. The idea of working with provosts on issues was suggested. Others reminded the group that the faculty should be the guardians of the academy and while it is not necessary to be antagonistic with administrative officers, it is important to take a stand in defending the academic mission of the institution. One issue that faculty leaders mentioned they felt they needed to work on is how to re-engage faculty, especially junior faculty. The importance of training for department chairs and other administrators was discussed and whether SECAFL could work with the SECAC provosts' group on assessing the quality of training for department chairs. The idea of creating training for department chairs was also suggested.
- The constitution was approved unanimously.
- The fall 2010 meeting will be held at the University of Arkansas.
- Kevin Cope, Louisiana State University was elected as president and Karen Steckol, University of Alabama was elected as vice-president.