The 754th meeting of the Faculty Senate will feature a packed agenda because opportunity to hear an address and timing of a significant presentation converged to put two important items on the same day. Thank you for your patience as we work through the unusually heavy agenda.

Address by UMass President Martin Meehan

We will be hearing first from President Meehan. I do not have any information about what he intends to say; it is reasonable to expect that he will discuss the condition of the UMass system, how we as the Flagship fit in, and the current thinking about higher education and financial provision for it in the Baker Administration and the Legislature. An opportunity for questions will follow. Board of Trustees Chairman Victor Woolridge will also be present, but not speaking.

Presentation on Information Security

Vice Chancellor Buehler will moderate a panel consisting of Matthew Dalton, our recently-arrived Chief Information Security Officer plus Steve Brewer and Ryan Wright, two faculty members very experienced in this area. If you noticed today’s announcement of a serious cybersecurity training grant to the campus (http://www.betaboston.com/news/2016/01/22/feds-bankroll-4-2m-umass-program-for-cybersecurity-training/) you know that this is an important concern, not just for financial institutions, companies, and government agencies, but also for universities.

Announcements and Question Period

In January, the Rules Committee approved a new routine for organizing the Announcements segment of Senate meetings. The Secretary now asks everyone on the announcements list whether they have an announcement ahead of time so that the Presiding Officer will not have to go through the whole list at each meeting. We expect this to permit the meeting to flow more smoothly. Because of the tight agenda, we have asked announcers to defer any announcement they feel can wait until February, but I know that some have items they desire to convey to us now.

Senate Confirmation of Rules Committee Actions taken in January

Section 6-3-1 of the By-Laws, in subparagraph l, provides that the Rules Committee may “When necessary, appropriate and expedient, act for the Faculty Senate in routine matters (such as course approvals recommended by the Academic Matters Council or Graduate
Council) during the summer months and January break, provided that any such actions shall be reported and confirmed at the first regular meeting of the Faculty Senate following such action by the Rules Committee.” The Rules Committee used this authority in January to complete course approvals for four courses needing approval before the term began so they could be offered as anticipated and needed by the departments concerned and is submitting the action for Faculty Senate confirmation as required.

New Business: Consent Agenda 1

As always, any Senator may request that an item on a consent agenda be separated out for separate discussion and consideration. It would be helpful if anyone seeking a separate discussion notifies the Senate Office before the meeting, but this is not required.

This consent agenda deals with revisions to four programs, a name change for a program and a major, permission to suspend a minor, a new graduate certificate, and a new school within a college.

The Nutrition Department is requesting permission to suspend its minor. At present, there is very strong student interest in the major and very little interest in the minor. Being stretched thin in their effort to provide quality instruction and guidance to their majors, the faculty are asking permission to focus on them for a time.

The School of Earth and Sustainability is intended to highlight the wide range of environmental sustainability teaching, research, and practical activity occurring on campus. Enhancing sustainability is a campus goal, and an area where it already has a considerable reputation. The School will permit better intellectual cooperation and more effective dissemination of information about ongoing work in this area.

Old Business

We have two items of Old Business that are not consolidated into a consent agenda because they each amend a different previous motion (hence what appears to be an odd numbering of the motions on the agenda). The first amends the document creating the Joint Task Force on Student Success learning Outcomes to remove one word from the charge which was felt to narrow it unduly and to add a 13th member. In the initial discussions, this did not appear to be a topic of strong interest to the graduate students. After a discussion sparked by the Student Government Association leadership, the Graduate Student Senate leadership indicated interest in participating. The Rules Committee and the Administration immediately agreed, and, hence, we are formally revising the document to include a graduate student. The second item of old business concerns additional nominations to Faculty Senate Councils and Committees.

MJ Peterson
Secretary