Senate Elections
The Faculty Senate received an update on the election progress.

Academic Schedule and Faculty Meetings
Mark Hewitt and Malcolm Watson joined the Senate to discuss the concerns regarding classes overlapping the faculty meetings. Many faculty have expressed disappointment at their inability to attend faculty meetings due to their teaching schedule. In 2008 the Block Schedule Committee was formed to adjust the block schedule. The committee was well represented by faculty and students as well as members of the registrar’s office. The major issue addressed by this committee was the unequal distribution of classes across the week. Under the former block system, there were no Thursday afternoon class blocks, as this time was held for meetings, most notably the Faculty Meetings. However, in some cases, departments did schedule Thursday afternoon classes during this time. Friday afternoons contained class blocks, but were generally not scheduled by departments. The addition of the Thursday blocks not only addressed the unequal distribution across the week, which is more evenly distributed under the new block system, but also provided more efficient use of limited classroom space.

Another goal of the committee was to create more classes that would meet in a twice a week schedule, at the urging of the faculty. In February 2009 recommendations were brought to administration, faculty and the faculty senate. The major push back came from the suggestion to hold MWF classes. Therefore, the schedule adjusted to maintain the MWTh schedule from the old system. The new block schedule that was approved contained scheduled blocks on Thursday afternoons and no scheduled blocks on Fridays after 2:00pm. The Committee recommended that faculty meetings be held Friday afternoons at 2:00. However, this was not a popular adjustment, and the decision was made to keep Faculty Meetings on Thursday afternoons.

Hewitt brought in data that demonstrated that the new system has provided a more even distribution of courses across the week. There was a discussion of moving the meetings to Friday afternoons, floating between Thursday and Friday, as well as the possibility of holding morning meetings. The Senate discussed all of the possibilities and decided to suggest moving the Faculty Meetings to Fridays at 12:30 next year for a one-year trial period. They will reexamine the issue at that time to determine if this schedule will continue.

An issue raised by IBS faculty was also discussed. This issue involved the possibility of teaching a course under two different numbers, one for undergraduates and one for graduate students, that
would be taught at the same time, but would hold different expectations for each. The request would be to have the same course listed as both a 100-level course and a 300-level course. Hewitt expressed concern over this plan, as this could create false impressions of courses either by students or by future employers examining transcripts. Similar arrangements occur in other departments, however, these courses meet under separate 100-level numbers and include additional meeting times for the graduate course number, which the IBS proposal did not include. The members of the senate who are involved in these types of courses confirmed that these arrangements are often a result of having too few faculty to cover the necessary courses in the undergraduate and graduate programs.

The members of the senate felt this was a larger issue for discussion, especially as the strategic plan is calling for more involvement of undergraduates in graduate courses, creation of interdisciplinary programs, and new graduate programs. The Senate will create a subcommittee in the Fall that will delve into this topic and help determine best practices in these matters.

**Strategic Planning**

A subcommittee of the Faculty Senate has been working to draft language for the strategic plan that address the major concerns raised at the last Faculty Senate meeting. Primarily:

1) What is the role of the Faculty Senate in implementing the strategic plan.

2) Better affirmation of the excellent teaching and scholarship that currently goes on.

3) An addition to the view of the meaning of “diversity” when it comes to our hiring policies and resulting burden on faculty, especially junior faculty.

4) Explicit development of structures of support faculty as they constantly seek to “master the art of teaching”.

The Senate members felt that it was important, as the elected representatives of the faculty, to play a substantial role in the implementation phase of the plan. The Faculty Handbook does require consultation with the Senate for significant changes through the Senate Council, but does not expressly provide the Senate a role in approving or revising changes. The suggestion was made that in implementation, the Senate request that the Provost bring these changes to a full Senate meeting, not just to the Senate Council. The Senate Council currently meets monthly with the Provost, but could request that the Provost join a full Senate meeting once every semester.

Chasalow will continue drafting the suggested changes to the Strategic Plan and will submit these changes to the Provost on behalf of the Senate.

**The meeting adjourned at 2:00pm.**

**Addendum:**

The Faculty Senate members met on May 8th and were joined by the incoming members of the 2013-14 Faculty Senate. The group discussed several items of business. Among them were the current status of the Strategic Plan. The plan now includes language that specifically addresses the role of the Faculty Senate in implementation. The Senate will shortly be asking the faculty to vote on the proposal to change the day and time of the University Faculty Meetings. There was a continued discussion of the block system and the practice of cancelling low enrolled courses. A subcommittee to consider further block-system revision may be formed in the fall. The Senate
will invite each of the members of the senior administration to attend at least one full Senate meeting each year in order to brief the Senate on matters of concern to the faculty.