

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

January 13, 2011

In attendance:

Paul Abegg (PA)

Brad Barry (BB)

Georgine Bills (GB)

Varlo Davenport (VD)

Jerry Harris (sec.) (JH)

Jie Liu (JL)

Munir Mahmud (MM)

Shane Prine (SP)

Ed Reber (ER)

Dennis Wignall (DW)

DW: The minuts from our last meeting have already been posted – is there a need to approve them?
We have ER back – hooray!

ER: I'm on the Accreditation Committee; Louise Excel wanted to give notice that the Northwest Commission will be here on Friday, Jan. 28 for most of the day; she invited us to attend as many of those meetings as possible. We will have to look at what the Senate's aims are and how they fit with the college's mission statement. There is a continental breakfast from 9-9:45 on that day that we're invited to; then, from 10-12, they'll review the progress of the Accreditation Committee to date (themes, objectives) and give recommendations for moving forward. This will all be in the Taylor Building. Faculty at large will be invited to come to the 10-12 meeting. E-mail me with questions.

DW: Is there a vote of who can come?

ER: Breakfast is what we need a count for.

DW: (counts) Five or so. Great! Now...I think we have the list of candidates for the RTP appeals committee and nominations for chair of committee, including VD. I need everyone's votes, and I'll send an e-mail reminder for that again.

MM: In the Business division, there are 3-4 full professors that have never been on any of these committees...

DW: Some folks have strange barriers between teaching and campus service... Today's primary goal was to hear from committees. Oh, by the way: we're having a meeting today; we'll also have a meeting next week to get back onto our regular schedule. JH will check on the availability of funds for lunch for this month.

ER: Was there a movement in my absence to raise dues?

DW: We've been talking about it. The bulk of the casual vote so far is that it'd be OK to raise dues as long as there's a lunch in it. I couldn't attend a meeting that USHE had to discuss where higher education in the state is now and where it is going over next 5-10 years – there's a thick file they put out on the details. Soderberg and others were there, as well as many of the Regents. Something is clearly going on, but I'm not getting any communication from anyone there, so I've asked for Leadership Council to fill me in, and I'll get back to you when I learn something. That council meets on this campus in March – when I attended the last meeting up there in November, they dithered about where to meet (which they do twice a year), so I offered Dixie. I suspect we'll vote on presidential turnover, and I could rotate out at that point, making PA president. That's just to keep y'all up to date. I wanted to hear from subcommittees today. BB?

BB: (hands around copies of a document) This is Round Two of the document we've been working on concerning people without terminal degrees teaching upper level courses – we're looking for ways to get this approved to make things easier for many departments. The biggest change from the prior draft is page 3 – a colleague mentioned that our plan to require that a faculty member being investigated to teach a class produce a portfolio that the entire department could view felt like having to do a job application all over again. The colleague suggested a form instead, which avoids having to put the person before the whole department.

SP: That makes good sense in departments that have people with widely disparate specialties.

DW: That's true, but having people from other specialties approve a person could also create a sense of validation – it would create support for a decision to allow the faculty member to teach at the upper level. My feeling is that we need objective data, rather than opinion, and such data can be identified in a portfolio; this avoids people getting approved just because they're liked in a department.

BB: Does this form satisfy that?

DW: I'm leaning that way.

BB: Did the portfolio mean the existing one that everyone has to have, or something else? My colleague resented having to do something that other faculty don't have to go through.

ER: I talked to Donna about this awhile back, about people with Masters degrees at research universities; she hopes that that's where we'll be, and to achieve that we might have to kowtow to the Board of Regents for a while. We established the Teacher of Record thing to do that, but that it would go away after a while. This (form) may be a very good way to show the Board of Regents that we are accommodating exceptions and have a method for to do so.

DW: I'm seeing that, on one hand, it creates objective evidence to enable some faculty without terminal degrees that have been teaching upper level classes to continue teaching the stuff they've been teaching. I don't think a course portfolio would have to be a whole position portfolio. This allows them to demonstrate their professional status. It allows the professors with terminal degrees to make decisions about people without terminal degrees but that have sufficient, applicable life experience to teach upper division classes, and it gives the people making that decision the strength of that objective data – it says "We're the people with the experience and we feel this person can teach this course."

BB: Based on what's here, would it be reasonable to have the portfolio be the syllabus and assignments? That would create objective data that documents that the person is not walking into class blind.

MM: Unless the person submits something, how would I know what they're going to do?

DW: With that sample syllabus, there's a question of whether or not the faculty member is implementing it well – perhaps a class visit or two to see how the syllabus is being implemented...? We have a new peer review form about to be approved, and a blank on this form could be created to cover that, too.

BB: That would make it mesh, but we have to avoid having a person have to endure any extra peer reviews.

ER: This gets back to the question of if there is a person that would work as a Teacher of Record, that's a simple process – I've done it. I think what we're talking about is that we're concerned about places where there's not a Teacher of Record with proper training.

DW: I see this as opportunity to make the Teacher of Record position go away. We're recognizing professional qualifications of people without terminal degree.

ER: But a review of a syllabus and visits by someone not qualified to teach the course they're visiting would also be offensive. In our area, there are people trained in writing, not literature, and therefore more competent to review people in their own specialties.

DW: How about this: the individual anticipating teaching can choose either to be made a Teacher of Record *or* go through this system? Rather than create blanket system...

BB: I'm inclined to agree that eliminating the Teacher of Record position is good – I'm overseeing someone doing this right now, but the person doing the teaching is more of an expert on the subject than I am.

SP: Another consideration is: is this an on-going thing? If someone is permitted this year, are they permitted in perpetuity?

DW: I think this covers both instances: for a person in one course and a yearly review.

SP: What if content for a course is rapidly evolving, like computer science?

DW: There's a block in here for determining if they're keeping up-to-date on new developments (doing professional development). I see this as very workable.

GB: When you talk about current faculty Teachers of Record – is the Teacher of Record the supervising faculty or the person doing the teaching?

DW: It's the supervisor.

GB: What is the "demeaning" piece?

PA: It stems from our growth from a community college to a four-year college toward a university – there are people that were hired early in that evolution and have been teaching upper level classes, but under the newer requirements for being a four-year college says that they can't teach those classes anymore because they lack terminal degrees. This is to give them credibility in new system.

GB: I get that, but if there's someone qualified to teach the class...

DW: Here's an example: in our department, we have a person that designed curriculum and taught upper-level courses but doesn't have terminal degree. Now he's been removed from teaching them in the new system, and now a new hire has to come in and becomes Teacher of Record for the course(s).

ER: The important question is: would the process where there's no Teacher of Record be acceptable to the Board of Regents? If not, this new form means nothing. We'll have a method for dealing with exceptional cases, but not a policy. If the Board of Regents says it's OK to get rid of the Teacher of Record system because there will be another system, then fine.

DW: I think the Board of Regents is supportive of what faculty do about faculty concerns within an acceptable range.

ER: That's the question – what's the range?

DW: Meeting with some Regents, my impression is that if you make a cogent argument, the Regents tend to be supportive because they'll look good coming out of the process. Regents won't have looked at the issue in as much depth as we have before it's presented to them; plus, it costs them nothing. If it is framed as movement forward, they tend to be supportive.

GB: The other part of this that I'm not sure of is: in our division, we have lots of people who don't have and don't need a Ph.D. in their professions, plus continuing education requirements.

PA: That's part of it – to define what is a terminal degree in any program?

DW: When we go to university status, if departments over there want to have a Masters program, faculty *will* have to have a Ph.D. – licensure won't satisfy that.

GB: What I keep processing is that the usual standard is that faculty only have to be at a higher level than the degree they're conferring. So for bachelor-level degrees, faculty only have to have a Masters – that's what concerns me. Right now, I just got done teaching two classes I'm not qualified to teach under this policy. I want to make sure that there's an understanding of that on campus – not all of us are interested in developing Masters programs.

DW: That's exactly the communication that's gone through. We don't have licensure certification for communication; we have very well trained people with Masters being told they can't teach the upper level courses they developed! This policy is intended to iron out at least some wrinkles. I'd like to see our people, in our department, that developed and have taught courses in the past gain recognition from the college that they are indeed qualified; right now they're not. It's just a by-the-book

application of policy to satisfy accreditation. This new policy would give administration objective leverage against accreditation questions.

ER: Is there a standardized procedure for what a Teacher of Record is?

DW: Good question.

ER: Is it necessarily an onerous duty?

DW: I don't know – I suspect departments think of it as a rubber-stamp thing. But the accreditation agency is supposed to seek out lack of support for a policy; we're filling that gap. Right now, every department deals with this differently.

ER: If there is a sense that faculty have a way of approaching this, and the Teacher of Record approach is not onerous, and if it works... I understand the position the college is in, though, so my question is whether or not we are going to a more difficult process...? Will that be less demeaning? What are the gains? I think it's great in places where there isn't anyone with expertise.

DW: That's why I was suggesting a choice – a person could choose to either go via the Teacher of Record route or this form.

MM: That will also be agreeable with the Board of Regents – it's adding *to* something rather than replacing it.

DW: Sometimes when a change is proposed, it has to be done in gradual steps rather than as total overhaul. This new policy would create objective support for the faculty member in question, the rest of the faculty to make a decision, and administration to acknowledge the procedure and result; the only cork in the bottle is the Board of Regents. They just have to have it demonstrated that both paths wind up at same place.

MM: In the Exceptions section, I like the case of what to do about last-minute decisions – if a committee decides an appointment is not qualified after such an appointment, the chair should be penalized, but the ability should not take away procedure from subsequent chairs.

BB: I agree – can you recommend a new phrasing?

MM: (does that).

DW: I wonder if that section could be a "Disqualification" or "Not Qualified" section? Someone is going to look at this and look for the threat; if we label it, it's up-front. We do make decisions to put someone in front of students in the Fall; if evaluations at the end of the semester are not good, but the person was hired on a 1 yr. contract – what happens? If the person is determined to be not qualified, but a Spring class still scheduled, it can be taught with closer supervision – this releases the burden from the chair and provides the summer, rather than the shorter Winter Holiday break, to find someone for the following Fall. I see this policy as great and a process of evolution. For next time, I'll ask everyone to look at this and ponder it; show it to other faculty without terminal degrees and get their comments, too.