

# FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

## BUSINESS MEETING

September 5, 2014

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*In attendance:*

*Brent Albrecht (BA)*

*Curtis Larsen (CL)*

*Clint Buhler (CB)*

*Matt Morin (MM)*

*Alex Chamberlain (AC)*

*Erin O'Brien (EO) (President-Elect)*

*Timothy Francis (TF)*

*Sandy Peterson (SP)*

*Jim Haendiges (JH)*

*Samuel Tobler (ST)*

*Jerry Harris (JDH; secretary)*

*Don Warner (DoW)*

*Linda Jones (LJ)*

*Drew Wilcox (DrW)*

EO: Before we get into the agenda, does anyone have any new business? (Prior talk about continuing confusion over RTP process.)

JH: Could you explain what this means? People are freaking out about it. It's a check-up or an extra thing, and I'm thinking that an explanation would help.

EO: Yeah, that's all it is. We'll wait for others to get here because maybe this is across departments. AmiJo (Comeford) was part of this because she was on the Faculty Excellence Committee, and they worked with the Retention, Tenure, and Promotion (now called Faculty Review) Committee on this, and the problem was trying to get through everything. These days there are more and more portfolios going through, and people don't have enough time to get through all of them with the deadlines we've been working under. They passed that policy last Spring to move up and to set in stone these deadlines to make it easier, and didn't let anyone know until we had all left for the semester, which is probably what I think caused all the problems.

TF: It wasn't put into policy officially until the 28<sup>th</sup> or something...

EO: Yes, and people weren't e-mail about it until June and not checking e-mail. So all that changed is that some deadlines are firmer and some are earlier than they used to be. In order to anticipate the workload, they now ask that you let them know the Spring before that you'll be doing this. That's the only change.

TF: It's the letter that will cause people trouble in the future if they're not warned, because it has to be in so much before the portfolios.

EO: It just changes when people have to start paying attention to it. This year everyone gets a pass—they have to get the letter in *some* time; we asked for it to be during the week of meetings when we knew where everyone was going to be anyways. This year its not such a big deal, and now everybody knows that you have to write the letter the Spring before. A lot have asked if Human Resources could notify people; that doesn't seem too onerous, but the dean's secretaries have lists for their schools. Every dean's secretary maintains them. We could ask deans to take care of this; there are many levels at which this could happen.

SP: Before we get started, I'd like to ask a clarifying question about the office hours. Is that just the honor system or is it still 4-5 hour/week? Or where are we?

EO: Last meeting, (Faculty Senate President) Nate (Staheli; NS) mentioned the office-hour change. (Past-President) Robert (Carlson) modified the faculty handbook to be more vague intentionally, and it passed. So it currently says you must have sufficient hours to meet student need—something along those lines. At some point, it said something like 1 per three-credit class you're teaching, or one per day, there are lots of interpretations, and different deans were enforcing it differently.

SP: Our chair showed us a document this morning and said that 4-5 hr was required.

TF: That's the old document.

EO: The Faculty Handbook is technically not policy; there is that component of it. The office hours I believe technically is not in spelled out anywhere in policy. Basically, if you're not holding office hours you're going to get into trouble. If you have one per week, you're going to get into trouble. But if you have 3-4 that are officially scheduled and have open door policy, or have them by appointment, that's OK—that's the impression I've gotten from everybody. No one seems

to be questioning it. If we need to make it part of the Faculty Rights & Responsibilities policy, maybe it needs to be spelled out to *some* extent, but it makes sense to keep in some degree of flexibility.

CB: If we need to say anything, I'd rather it say that you must have office hours, but leave it to the departments to determine how many they need.

JH: The subtext I always thought was that as long as you're not getting complaints about availability in your evaluations...

EO: And even if you are!

DrW: In my program, I have two cohorts of 16 students each—the numbers are pretty low compared to some of you, and they all have my e-mail, cell phone, they have Canvas to get ahold of me, and I still get complaints sometimes that I'm not available!

EO: When you get those kinds of course evaluations, just spell out your policies, hours, etc. in your self evaluations, and that you don't know what else you can do to make yourself available, and everyone will understand. You just have to show that you noticed there was a complaint. OK, really quickly: approval of the minutes from last time—JDH sent them out.

JDH: I have an emended version—I changed one word.

EO: Can we approve them now, then? (LJ moves, TF 2<sup>nd</sup>.) All in favor? (All ayes.) OK, following the agenda: NS and I spoke with (Academic Vice-President) Bill Christiansen last Wednesday about a number of things that seem to have come up. One thing that we asked him to do was to e-mail everyone about the Master's degrees—hopefully everyone saw that e-mail. There was a discussion that followed that. What came up was what Bill Christiansen kind of spelled out: we're not picking one Master's degree over another at this point; they're concerned about political changes in the wind that we need to get one Master's degree in and done. They've also gotten the impression that with the new president we've got some goodwill right now with the Board of Regents, so they might be more disposed to approving a Master's degree. So they want to run with what looks like an existing opportunity. The rough guesstimates are two-ish, and Bill surveyed the deans to see what they wanted to propose based on discussions with faculty. Some got back within seconds; others wanted to sit down and talk about it. There might have been some misunderstanding about the process because Bill was just generally optimistic about all of those e-mails he had gotten. He asked for anyone, as he said in his e-mail, who is willing to put together a proposal for a Master's degree—you can do this collectively in your departments or whatever. He wants lots of options on the table so he can put forward the ones that are best and most likely to be approved. He doesn't want to just put up anything that was thrown together for the sake of throwing one together because of how it might reflect on the institution. There is concern that we might be held back from getting Master's degrees if we don't move forward, but we also don't want to give anyone ammunition to hold us back because we send them bad proposals. That's the political situation now.

LJ: Deb seemed to think it was the accreditation board, not the Trustees that will be turning us down.

EO: We got in trouble with accreditation in the past, I believe, because we added a Bachelor's or minor and we hadn't gone through the appropriate notification with them. I'm not sure they have to *approve* it, but we have to notify them—there's a back-and-forth with the accrediting agency as well. We may have thought things were exempt in the past, but her concerns are valid that we include them in the process. That's where that stands. We also met with President Williams and again talked about some of this. He gave a little bit of background on the Master's degrees. He's been very proactive about tracking NS and I down to talk, which is promising. Moving on to old business: the Faculty Constitution & By-laws: we need to finish these to not get into trouble with administration. The good news is that some of this is pretty straightforward. However, of the people here, only LJ and myself have provided feedback.

CL: I gave mine to NS.

EO: I apologize—he explained that but didn't copy-and-paste it in. A couple things to discuss about this, and I'll bring them up random order because some are more or less important. I'm going to add the workload auditing component of Faculty Senate in here somewhere, not necessarily as our purpose, but the Constitution and By-laws are protections. When we have these in our By-laws, and administration wants to change something on us, it's a degree of protection—we can say "You can't do that because it's in our By-laws." It's apparently been an effective defense in the past. Things we want to make sure don't go away are in here. That's why there are some committees in here. NS proposed adding new committees to it: Faculty Excellence is in here, the new Faculty-Orientation Oversight component is in here; he'd like to add Professional Development to protect that, and to establish as a subcommittee of FSEC an Elections Committee so that things like what happened with the chair of the Faculty Review Committee—we had problems with that where there was no chair for a variety of reasons, and we don't want that to happen. So he'd like a small committee to help with that. If you have a problem with that or discussion...?

DoW: We're adding these committees to protect ourselves from the administration ever saying "you can't do that," and we can come back and say "it's in our by-laws so we can."

EO: Yes, basically. The same way that the administration got rid of the Workload Committee—possibly a good idea, possibly a bad idea; it remains to be seen—they did it to some extent unilaterally. It might be a good thing, but there are certain committees we feel it would be really bad if they went away, such as Professional Development. We want Faculty to have a say in those, to have a say in how we're evaluated and represented. That's why those are in there.

LJ: How is this different than the Rights and Responsibilities policy that's been on the backburner? That'd be a policy versus By-laws. So some of these committees technically could be in the Rights and Responsibilities policy rather than in by-laws.

EO: We have to check with some folks to find out what the most legally correct place is for them. NS has been talking to people and understood that this is a higher level of protection—even if it's redundant, having them in here is very important. He'll talk about that next time we meet. But I agree, otherwise.

DrW: Is this telling administration that we want control of these things?

EO: We already do, and we want to keep it. That seems to be low-key in terms of changes. A bit more dramatic is that NS is proposing a restructuring of the Faculty Senate in general. He's viewing this in terms of future growth of the institution and that if we have people on the Executive Committee from every single department—depending on how you read in here, it's either three members per division/school or it's one per department (there's a little bit of contradiction)—if we have one per department, we're going to become a massive group over time. Which is OK and doesn't mean we shouldn't have a group with representation at the departmental level, but it's unwieldy in terms of getting work done. So he wants a multi-tiered system with a department-level group that meets less frequently, and a smaller subset of representatives from every school. Only one department-level representative from a school would be on the smaller committee and report back to the larger one. I'm not saying we're *going* to do this; he'd like to open this up for discussion during a working meeting (held from 1:30-3:30 on the fourth Mondays of each month; the next one is Monday, Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>). So we'll go over potential modifications to structure then. He'd like us to vote right now on whether we're open to discussing these kinds of changes.

ST: Would this be just the Senate, or also the addition of the committees in the by-laws?

EO: I'm mainly asking for a vote on the restructuring of the Senate, not the committees. If there's more discussion about the committees, let's get into that with NS. This is something we can resolve fairly quickly.

LJ: What would be the purpose of having one per school? A smaller group? They'd go back to who?

EO: The whole group would meet periodically, but one in the group would go to more regular meetings and report back to representatives who are not present in the smaller meetings, and also to their schools as a whole. We also need to spell out things like exactly what constitutes a need for a new representative, how big does a department have to be to justify having a new representative—is a department of two people enough to have a new representative on the executive committee?—that kind of thing. This was triggered by confusion by the use of the term “Faculty Senate”—by calling all Faculty part of the Senate is confusing—some faculty don't realize that and think that the Senate is composed of people we've elected. In essence, he'd like to have the bigger body be the Faculty Senate, representing the faculty as a whole, and the Executive Committee be the smaller group.

TF: It's a renaming, so we'd have the general faculty, then the Senate, which is representatives of the faculty, and then the Executive Committee, which is executives just from the Senate.

EO: Right. And he's kind of spelled that out in this draft.

JH: My concern is that the needs or scope of, say, English is different than that of Psychology, but we're lumped into one Humanities division. We commend our deans because they have to herd together a bunch of disparate people, but that's what I'd be afraid of. If I was to be a representative of Humanities, I wouldn't necessarily know how to represent the other portion.

BA: So the motivating force behind this motion is that, at some point, the school will grow so much that *this* committee will become enormous...?

EO: He's concerned that, the way it's worded now, we'll become *immediately* enormous because we have so many departments that are not technically represented here.

BA: How many are we talking about at present would be on the Faculty Senate if every department was represented?

DrW: Well, I can tell you that I'm the only one here from Health Science out of 12 departments in the whole building—I'm the only one that comes—I represent *all* of Health Sciences. So just from Health Sciences, we'll double our numbers.

CL: You mention that the Executive Committee would meet more—I'd view it as just setting the agendas and goals for actual votes for the larger group.

EO: I'm just asking if people are willing to discuss this. We conceived this realizing that a lot of organizations have an advisory board that votes on everything and dictates what happens, and a steering committee that's tasked with actually making that happen. So the smaller Executive Committee would be the steering, and the larger group would determine what needs to happen. So representation on the Executive Committee would be *from* the larger group—the agendas would be set by the larger group. It'll just be too large a group, perhaps, to function, and we'll have an inertia problem with more and more people. It's easier in a smaller group.

AC: When a topic continues to come up, I think it'd be something for discussion.

EO: Yes. Are people comfortable with at least discussing it? I'm not asking anyone if they're comfortable with his proposed structure. Any dissension?

BA: I'm not sure I see the reason for this at this point in time just because we haven't yet grown to the size where it'd be impossible to continue. I'm willing to discuss it; I'm just surprised that this has been an issue that's been discussed in the past. I don't see us as so large a group, even if we bring in more people.

EO: It's worth discussion and establishing our Constitution in such a way that we try it with our larger size and see how it functions, and if it doesn't we revisit it.

CB: One thing about expanding the existing group is that it'd be easier to form subcommittees. Instead of having an Executive Committee, just form subcommittees.

BA: I just don't see a larger group being dysfunctional or having inertia problems by default—that's something that's in the premise of this that I'm not sure I agree with. A small number of people can be effective, and so can a large number if done the right way.

EO: NS was seeing this as: we spend a lot of time in meetings. By separating things out, the number of people that actually spend time in meetings could be dramatically cut down, freeing up peoples' time for more things like subcommittee work.

CB: But then the Executive Committee would have doubled workload in exchange for fewer people. Not only would they be responsible for reporting to their departments but also for distilling down *all* that they do to *all* their departmental representatives.

EO: That is true.

BA: It's worth discussing.

EO: Can I have a motion to table this, but approve it for discussion perhaps during the working meeting and/or at a future FSEC meeting? (Moved.) Everybody in favor? (All approve.) We'll work out the details during the next working meeting. Please look that over. Some of the comments we have so far are in a Dropbox so you can see them if they were done there. Make notes. We've also got a couple of issues also with regard to the Constitution & By-laws with regard to administrative members who came from the faculty, so NS has added a section on the first page: they can be members with voting privileges in suspension in case they come back to faculty. Some these administrators come back, and they don't lose their memberships; they just don't get to vote while in administration. Also cannot participate on faculty-run committees according to the definition. They *can* be excluded from the general meetings or these meetings, but they don't have to be, and they can't hold office in the Faculty Senate. Basically, if we want them here, we can have them. A particular issue that needs to come up is that we have some people that straddle the administration line, such as our (Biology) department chair who is also the Assistant or Associate Director of the Honors Program, so he has release time for overseeing two different groups, and that release time equals half time. The current language says "someone whose responsibilities are primarily teaching." He doesn't have 51% of his time teaching; therefore, the problem in there is "primary." How we deal with people like that needs to be decided. Chairs are generally allowed to be members of the Faculty Senate and to vote. Does someone doing double duty cross the line or not?

DoW: You'll have to put a cutoff: if you're primarily faculty, then our chair doesn't qualify.

EO: It's just a question; there may be others in this category. What might make sense is that we know of this one example, so please go back and check and see who may be impacted by this, and might not know that they're technically not part of our Senate according to our Constitution. Let's get a sense of what kind of people are going to be impacted. Is it then appropriate to set it at 50%, or be more accommodating?

JDH: Individuals could just be voted on.

EO: We could put that in.

CB: An individual that's below 50% could petition to have voting rights? That seems like a good catchall for that; then we don't have to worry about accounting for everyone.

EO: Anyone have a problem with that?

DoW: I do. You could then up playing favorites with that kind of a situation. I think you need a specific number to say whether or not you're faculty or administration.

IJ: But if we put it on them, that they have to petition...

DoW: But say they do, and they're not liked, and someone that is liked is granted and the other person is denied. The number is needed to say "this is it, you're either an administrator or faculty."

CB: Is it really that powerful a position that anyone really is going to be that heartbroken by this? That we'd be on a vendetta by taking away your vote on Faculty Senate? I feel like it'll depend on every situation, and it'll be impossible to lay that out. There are some administrative positions, like perhaps the Honors Program, that don't really have a voice within the administrative process, and we could say that because they're not represented *there*, they can be represented *here*.

EO: Deans and up are right out because we want to have some degree of freedom to discuss issues when they may be causing problems without fear of reprisal. Chairs may not have enough significant power to hinder those kinds of discussions. Or maybe chairs should be excluded as well.

MM: At no point would a decision like this affect the designation of faculty status? That'd be a completely separate issue, right?

EO: Correct.

MM: That'd be a dicey political slippery slope if we start drawing strict lines. That designation would affect people heavily because we have lots of Faculty that don't teach 50%. If they were ever to look to be hired at another institution and they weren't designated "Faculty" here...

EO: Like the librarians—they're considered faculty, and while they teach LIB 1010...

IJ: All of us are required to do that, but it's not 50% of our time. But all librarians are faculty.

EO: So that only way someone becomes non-faculty is being appointed to dean or higher level. I believe tenure is treated similarly: when you decide to step out of a tenured position, you still have it when you come back. But if you don't have tenure and make that move, and then you get fired, that could be messy—you lose tenure protection. I don't know of any situations where anyone stepped down and continued the tenure process, and how the tenure clock worked in those situations, but it's obviously also an issue.

IJ: And then there's people like Martha (Talman), who is Faculty but doesn't teach.

EO: So not just our chair is affected by this. This may be worth another discussion.

DrW: If we draw a line, we have to stick to it.

EO: And in the past, that line would have excluded one-third of our librarians right there.

CB: I don't foresee how we can predict all of those situations, and write it all into our By-laws. We have to have an "out" clause, or else we'll re-go through this whole process every year when someone comes up with an example, rather than just putting a vote on to an individual. I see the problem with the possibility of favoritism, but maybe I'm more optimistic...

EO: Perhaps we can come up with a compromise where there's a die-hard line of "sure, you dabble in teaching," which deans sometimes do (teach one three-credit class per year), and I think we can all agree that that doesn't constitute "faculty," but between that and the 50% level...we'd have to put in the kind of vote too, is it by the majority of people on the FSEC? peers? the person's department? the full Faculty Senate?

AC: Has this been an issue? Not having it defined beyond "dean level and up"? It's starting to feel "can of worms"-y.

IJ: The problem is with the new faculty designations in that other policy...

EO: The professional folks.

IJ: ...that's the reason why this is a weird situation because we have some people below a dean having these issues.

EO: So people hired to do things like work on the TV station that might be mentoring students, but their workload is different than tradition teaching. So are they voting Faculty? They're not really administration. Do we involve them or not?

MM: On Monday I'll be in meeting with other UT systems administrators and I'll ask how they do it and report to you.

ST: I'm curious: in the new structure and re-calling the Faculty Senate, with the Executive Committee and everything else like that—will that also play into wording of this, that we're now talking about?

EO: The draft actually changes the wording (reads).

ST: So since we're eliminating that prospect that if you're Faculty you're automatically on Faculty Senate, and the Executive Committee is defining what faculty actually is...is that our slippery slope to help or hinder some people in the tenure process because we're putting in our By-laws that you may not be a Faculty member—if the terminology is close enough that it could be interpreted that way.

DrW: We're just saying that they're an administrative member of the faculty and they're not allowed a vote in the Senate.

EO: I'm not sure if we have the authority to say who is and isn't faculty—just as far as voting rights are covered.

DrW: Then we should just say who has faculty voting rights, not who is and isn't faculty in any sense.

BA: Doesn't Human Resources determine who is faculty?

EO: Yes. But our chair would be Faculty per Human Resources; does he have voting rights or not? Perhaps we need something in here about who gets to vote in addition to who gets to vote.

TF: We could name the group of all faculty, such as Faculty Association, and have people that are Faculty but not necessarily members of the Faculty Association, which is represented by the Faculty Senate. (Murmurs of agreement.)

EO: Several people have proposed the name change. So clearly when it comes to the Constitution, it looks like people have opinions. Look this over and give feedback about the membership categories. Right now we have Faculty Members, Administrative Members (basically associate deans on up), Directors of Human Resources, Public Relations, and anyone else we say qualifies, and then associate members—adjunct, part-time Faculty. Speaking of which: NS requested that people interested in sitting on the Executive Committee as non-voting adjunct members just to have adjunct voice let him know, and he has received two names from people about this to be considered for that. I have no idea where this process stands. I know he was wondering about opinions of having 1-2 people...? (Lots of "it's a good idea.")

DrW: With many departments on campus, are adjuncts more than one semester at a time?

EO: Some have been here longer than I have.

TF: We have a couple of adjuncts that became full-time.

DoW: What about one adjunct per school?

EO: We could, if we had enough people willing to do that.

CB: We could say “a maximum of one per school.”

DoW: Because some adjuncts have different interests depending on where they are.

BA: That seems reasonable.

EO: Can I get a motion for up to one per school? (Moved and seconded.) All in favor? (All ayes.) We’ll allow those that have expressed interest to come and we’ll check with deans about others. I think that covers the old business. New Business: the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities: we gotta do it. We’re getting harassed now by all levels of administration about this because it will hinder accreditation. Previously, it’d been done by a committee, and perhaps it felt like too much to take care of in one group, so nothing ever really seemed to happen. NS has proposed an alternative. This is a policy that basically has been written down—it exists. It doesn’t require coming up with anything from scratch. Martha and various others have pretty much borrowed this from other institutions, and cobbled something together. What we really need is for people to go through it.

IJ: The committee went through the first half, and Martha tweaked it based on our comments. The second half never got done.

EO: Do we know what the first half looks like with regard to the feedback? There’s not great paper trails.

IJ: It was on Dropbox.

EO: We need to know what the feedback was and how she incorporated that, and if we’re OK with that. That should be a subcommittee in and of itself—it’s a length of text, but hopefully doesn’t require a lot of work. Maybe take the second half and divide it into two subcommittees because it divides quite nicely (reads four sections). Parts A and B got covered?

IJ: Up through sections 1 and 2, I think. I’ll have to check.

EO: In light of that, we need to suck it up and do this, and everyone has to pitch in a little bit. That way nobody is “stuck” trying to deal with all of it.

CB: In procedure with this, there’s revisions, we debate those revisions...I’d rather just vote on the revisions, and if it’s a majority, we just move forward.

EO: We don’t have revisions on second half—there’s no feedback, and we have to get it. (Discussion of the history of the first half.) (Some volunteering to work on particular sections, and rearrangement of policy parts.) We’ve got to focus on the Constitution & By-laws at the working meeting, but this will come back to haunt us, so in October, I say we set up two rooms and sequester everyone and pound through this—just get it done.

CB: Can we be sure to mix newer and older faculty on those?

EO: I’ll send around the attendance sheet, and put down “old” or “new” based on how much about this you know, and remind me of who you represent so I can make sure we’re well mixed. Is there anything else? (No.)