

# FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (FSEC) MEETING

OCTOBER 29, 2009

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*In attendance:*

*Paul Abegg (PA)*  
*Gary Cooper (GC)*  
*Jerry Harris (sec.) (JH)*  
*Dianne Hirning (DH)*  
*Munir Mahmud (MM)*

*Tom McNeilis (TM)*  
*Shane Prine (SP)*  
*Ed Reber (ER)*  
*Dennis Wignall (DW)*

AGENDA:

- Language on Policies and Procedures
- Flu, time off, make-up exams, etc. (H1N1 accommodations)
- Tim Bywater e-mails: asking about faculty sick days – we don't have any, per se

SP: What is the story behind this "bell schedule" (would make classes MW, TR, or FSa) – as far as we can tell, it is either to accommodate more classes over more time or offer more classes

GC: We need to find out what is reasoning behind this before we can have a faculty stance on it. (General agreement.)

MM: I heard about a proposed schedule change awhile back to have a 4-day schedule; this seems to be the opposite!

PA: On another issue, I've been thinking the way our Faculty Senate system was set up, and I'm proposing that we extend the positions of President-Elect and President to two years to give people more time to acclimate to what the positions entail – this is something to think about.

DW: That would mean that the position is a five year commitment – two years as President-Elect, two years as President, and one year as Past President, but it would give more continuity.

DH: A UALC committee I'm on had the same sort of discussion – at the end of a chair's first year, just when we were beginning to accomplish things, we had to hand the reins over to someone new!

DW: I think we get more substantive movement and completion of actions with longer-serving Presidents.

SP: Is that a bylaws issue?

DW: Yes.

ER: Robert Carlson and I have been working on two policies, neither of which require substantive changes, so I will send them out to the FSEC; it's only in handwritten form so far. I did put in most of the

concerns we had for 3-27 (Hiring Committee) IV – that administration can initiate position announcement leading to a search for candidates... so they cannot initiate a direct hire.

DW: They can still do that for at-will employees, but not full-time faculty under this rewording.

ER: Changes on other pages were just little words.

DW: Here's VI...

ER: ...for compliance with applicable employment law, including non-discrimination/equal opportunity, HR will train all department chairs or their designees; periodic training sessions will take place as needed.

DW: That's an effort to get rid of the entire block of text that talks about the formation of a Hiring Committee populated entirely by Human Resources people – if we train department people to perform HR oversight/compliance within departmental search committees, then those committees are comprised only of faculty from within the relevant department, not all over the place.

PA: What role does HR play at the U of U?

DW: My impression is that, for our needs, we can take the lead in our own policy-making – we don't have to take the same path as any other schools as long as we get to the same endpoint. Hiring faculty is strictly a faculty issue.

ER: This has to do with the mechanics of what we're doing – Randy Jasmine asked who gets this policy revision back -- who does it go to? Martha?

DW: No.

ER:...it should go back to you (DW) and the FSEC.

DH: Martha is currently 60% library, 40% policies, but that will be reversed, and she will report directly to Pam Montrallos.

ER: Donna said that so many policies need to be repaired before accreditation!

DW: Our job is to review policies from faculty empowerment standpoint, then to full Senate, then they go to Academic Council.

DH: if we're rewriting things, do we need to check them for legality?

DW: Academic Council will take care of that, but we have a lawyer available if we need to do that (through the Attorney General's office).

ER: I suggest that you (DW) go to Donna to let her know that policies need to come through us for the faculty perspective.

SP: PA's point about U of U: are you looking at it from a precedent standpoint (e.g., U of U doesn't do it this way) – should we be prepared to address that?

DW: Possibly, but we ARE our own institution, and we can establish policy for ourselves – not that we ignore other institutions in the state, but we can take a lead on many things and establish our own credibility – it's only way we're going to be empowered in the state!

DH: We DO need to know what they do – the first line of fire we could get on any policy revision is “Well, no one else in state does it THIS way...” to which we could then respond “We know that, but we feel that \_\_\_\_\_ is better for US.”

DW: To anyone that says “We've always done it this way,” that may be true but it doesn't mean “that's the best way to do it, at least for us”!

ER:...other two policies (last two): my and Robert's comments: I can get them to you by tomorrow, if not tonight...I don't think there will be anything in them other than word smoothing – they're student policies, and I don't know if we (faculty) have strong need to say how they go.

DW: We will have a General Senate (lunch) meeting next Thursday (Nov. 5, Cottam Room); if Ed gets us these policy revisions, we can go over them over the weekend and get back to Ed with any changes, then distribute copies at the lunch.

ER/TM: Send them out to full faculty BEFORE the lunch meeting, so all faculty can read them, too.

DW: I don't anticipate calling for a vote on Thursday; instead, I'll set up a SurveyMonkey site so that everyone can vote on line yes or no on each policy, and can only vote once. The site will compile results, and I will forward them to Donna, Martha, everyone else, etc.

PA: Will we distribute a hard copy?

ER: I suspect that if you e-mail everything, but then just print out relevant section (of 3-27) and have a few copies on each table...

TM: Can you put the policy up on a screen via computer? (Agreement that this is a good idea.)

MM: Does administration know at this point that we are proposing not having a Hiring Committee?

ER: Yes; I spoke to Donna last week about this, and sent her a copy; I told her what we didn't like about the Hiring Committee – going through someone outside; I told her we wanted the chairs trained, and she liked the idea. She also promised to send to faculty the agendas for Academic Council so we know in advance what they're talking about in each meeting. I also spoke to Martha Talman about our objections to the hiring committee; she said she's not married to any particular proposal.

DW: With Board of Trustees minutes, I get the sense that everyone already knows what they're going to vote on.

PA: Doesn't Marilyn take minutes?

ER: Yes; eventually, they want a repository at the U that would have all those from all state institutions; they could be accessed via an https log-in, but that might not be for a couple of years. For now, DW and PA will have to tell us what goes on in all those meetings.

DW: We need permission from Shandon Gubler to release info from those meetings, but I can't imagine that they would want to keep any faculty issues clandestine from faculty! We don't want more situations like the last Presidential transition, where no one knew what was going on 'til afterward, but it was obviously well orchestrated beforehand. Last Spring, I noticed that Board of Trustees meetings have a permanent agenda line item for Faculty Senate – the Board of Trustees will always ask if there is anything Faculty Senate wants to say to Board of Trustees. They HAVE to recognize our presence, which empowers us in Board of Trustees meetings.

ER: In the two different years that I was FSEC President, I was invited to Board of Trustees meeting only one time, so this is progress!

DW: It underscores the need for faculty to exert control over our policies and concerns! If we have no constituency voice, we'll just be dictated to, so we have a responsibility to create processes where our voices can be heard, or we'll all be second-class citizens, and little, three-person committees will dictate to the rest of us what policies are. I think this is crucial. For untenured people in this process, we will support your involvement completely – you need to be able to speak up and we acknowledge that. If an untenured faculty member has an issue that is really touchy and might threaten that faculty member's ability to get tenure, then a tenured faculty member should take responsibility and represent the idea as

his/her own so that the idea isn't muzzled by concerns about firing. ...OK, so no adverse reactions to the changes Ed mentioned? (No.)

MM: On behalf of the Faculty Excellence Committee: where are our 15 student evaluation questions – we need to vote on that!

DW: We can conduct that vote over e-mail. I will share those with everyone on the FSEC, then we make comments, then we can get the results to the full faculty. This can be made part of the SurveyMonkey thing, so it all gets done at once. ...Other discussion items: student absenteeism for flu?

MM: I am not penalizing students for missing this semester, but I'm not announcing it to students!

DW: I sent out an e-mail the other day in response to this: I have a rigid attendance policy (I do take role, I give points for each signature on role sheet), and that's clear for me, but a pandemic is a unique situation. Students undergo internal processes about wanting to attend class; now we have this external problem that affects that decision. I think we should be flexible; Donna sent out a long message recommending certain things.

ER: I think it allows us to be flexible.

DW: Agreed. My suggestion is to accept Donna's recommendations/accommodations and say FSEC supports Donna in this regard and that we have flexibility within that. There are a few faculty members that might need some help in deciding how to work their own classes; I'll stick a paragraph in saying that anyone that isn't sure what to do to should meet with Donna.

ER: Can deans be intermediaries, to avoid Donna being overwhelmed?

DW: I think it'll only be a tiny handful of people, so let's not have an intermediate step. Is there a motion to support this? (ER 1<sup>st</sup>, GC 2<sup>nd</sup>; passed.)

DW: Tim Bywater's message concerning faculty sick days – we've talked about students, but not faculty with regard to this. We could just as easily get the flu as students, so what happens to us? What I will do is send Donna an e-mail, or PA and I will talk to her, about having sick days for faculty so that some accommodation will be allowed.

MM: The problem with faculty is that if they are sick, then department head finds substitute, but if there's a policy, it will be harder to find someone to teach EXACTLY what I teach. So what does a "sick day" policy mean?

DW: It means you are not penalized (have pay docked) for missing a class because of the flu without having some substitute activity. There is sick days language built into existing policies already, so this seems hypocritical.

PA: Did this arise from a situation, or just a general concern?

DW: It was anticipatory. I haven't heard of any faculty that have had the flu, but the football team has its own pandemic at the moment. I've asked for medical verification of flu in every case as a blanket policy.

MM: But many students have mentioned that they don't have insurance and therefore are not going to doctors to get that permission.

DW: Almost any other state employee has contractual sick leave. I think this is vestigial from our being a small community college, and we just need to talk to Donna about it to see what comes out of it. Then I'll report back to FSEC what happens. If we need to embark on a faculty-initiated policy to deal with it, then we can do that.

ER: The college has been overly generous in past dealing with faculty illness issues, in terms of helping find/pay people to cover classes when faculty cannot be there for any reason, paying both missing and replacement faculty.

MM: That's what I'm saying: if there's a formal policy, it might limit payment to only X number of days and undo the current benefits.

PA: I think there's scheduling flexibility across the nation in teacher policies.

DW: OK, in summary: the information from Ed will go out tonight or tomorrow, so please read over them over the weekend and respond by Monday; I'll distribute finalized versions by Tuesday to all faculty in time for them to read over them before the General Meeting on Thursday. We'll only have one hour, so we'll have to rely on ER and RJ for rationale behind wordings. In the meantime, PA and I will talk with Donna about sick leave for faculty and I'll word something to support Donna's recommendations and to tell people to see Donna if they continue to have questions/issues.

TM: Do we know anything about the President's meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup>?

DW: I think he's just updating us. Also: I would like us to produce a resolution that the Board of Regents start a search for a permanent president – we're the only college in this state in the last 50 years that has had to have an interim president without an active search for a permanent President.