

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (FSEC) MEETING

December 8, 2009

In attendance:

Paul Abegg (PA)

Jerry Harris (sec.) (JH)

Randy Jasmine (RJ)

Munir Mahmud (MM)

Shane Prine (SP)

Dennis Wignall (DW)

DW: Donna Dillingham-Evans wants us to work on a post-tenure review policy – this would apply to anyone with tenure at any rank. How we write it – it's in our hands. The problem from Donna Dillingham-Evans' view is that after someone gets tenure, there's no policy to address deficiencies in their teaching, commitment to the college, etc. – they can become transparent or disappear. There's no clear direction for her to follow and review such faculty. Is it a method to fire someone incompetent or behaves badly? That will be expected to be in there somewhere. If we don't make this policy, administration will, and that would be very different from something we'd do! I'm just mentioning this to plant a seed to start thinking about this *now* since there's not enough people here today to do anything about it. I don't have any set policy items in mind for today; nothing concrete will happen over the holiday break, but by the end of Spring semester, we should have this in place for next Fall.

MM: So if we come up with guidelines, and then someone isn't abiding by them, then the administration can use it against them?

DW: Yes. Faculty Senate can't do anything about it; we can't adjudicate, but we can write the policy to be followed.

MM: We should announce to faculty that we're doing this.

DW: It could look like RTP. And faculty would have to approve it. I asked Ed Reber to review the policies that will be before College Council this coming Monday; he's more familiar with the language in them; I just want to ensure that faculty input has been included.

PA: It's just a system of evaluation. They just want *us* to have a say in forming it.

RJ: I thought once tenure was granted – are we talking about steps for further rank advancement?

DW: No, it's to further *retention*.

RJ: I thought that was a Regent's policy...?

DW: I'll have to look into that. There's a gap between what administration *here* can do and what Regents can do if something is forwarded to them. There are policies already in place for code of conduct, but not for tenured professors. If it's in a Regents policy, there's a disconnect. On the flip side, the Regents could get torqued about something someone here does that we don't think is that bad; the policy would guard against the Regents' doing anything with which we disagree.

MM: What kind of protection does tenure provide?

RJ: It means you can't be fired without cause.

MM: So we'll define "cause"?

DW: So Ed is reviewing the other policies before College Council; hopefully he'll get back to me before Monday; if he says "all the work we did making changes on those hasn't been included at all and Martha and Pam went ahead with their own versions," I won't vote for those policies because it disempowers us. I don't think Martha and Pam would do that, though.

RJ: Haven't they already gone through one stage?

DW: Yes, Academic Council.

RJ: I'd be surprised if there is a different version before College Council at this point – but we need to be diligent.

DW: If our input isn't there, then College Council needs to be made aware of that. I don't mind fielding counterarguments from Martha. ...Across a few (6-8) e-mails I have fielded, a recurring theme has been that there's a disconnect between the FSEC, Senators, and constituents – information is not getting out to average faculty. To me, if someone wants to know something, we'll help you find it and have the information out there. If you overinform someone, you inherit problems, but if you underinform, you create myths, so there has to be a middle ground. So I think all of us need to be MORE encouraging to our colleagues to go to information that is available, and to have them go to each Senator to get that info. We can't, as a body, inform individuals about everything; that's what Senators are for.

PA: Are our notes sent to people not at meetings?

DW: Yes, after we go over them.

PA: What about Dennis Martinez?

DW: He's still on our (FSEC) mailing list.

PA: Do we have representation from every department?

DW: I don't know – in terms of Senators, yes, but not on the FSEC. Some of this is due to the newness of some programs. But our goal should be to have that kind of representation, and that would help faculty in general understand the steps they can take to be heard on an issue.

PA: Should we talk to department heads?

DW: No, they should go to all Faculty Senate meetings and get notes from ones they miss – that is, connect with people. That’s our responsibility as Senators.

MM: Who gets copies of the minutes?

DW: The FSEC, and then they can be shared with Senators as they like – anyone else that asks will get copy of the minutes. But firing them out to everyone tends to attract “brush fires” (“I don’t like this,” etc.). I don’t want to minimize the importance of connecting with colleagues, but there’s a fine line: be informing, but not overly.

SP: I wouldn’t want to spend a day each week responding to nasty e-mails…!

RJ: Some of this connects to the misunderstanding about the recent Board of Regents visit – staff and students knew, but faculty didn’t! I think we have to reestablish credibility because of this.

DW: As senators, that’s where we gain our credibility. In that situation, we were caught in a squeeze between President’s wishes and the Board of Regents’ thinking that they advertised the meeting adequately. By the time the FSEC was allowed to put it out, most knew anyway, but the fact that they heard in roundabout ways is a problem, so I understand the complaints. We have to be a bit more hard-nosed about it; maybe we should have asked President Nadauld when we could release that information, or who else knew already. We can do that. I’m grateful to everyone for maintaining that confidentiality even though we took a hit; we would’ve taken a worse hit if we hadn’t.

PA: As long as we learned from it!

MM: Whatever we learn, we should be talking about it to our divisions. Keeping things to myself means my division wouldn’t know. We should make it known that whenever anyone talks to us as a committee, it’s our duty to discuss this with faculty in our division.

RJ: And we have to make that clear to people asking us things. There are some things for which it’s our responsibility to not tell if we hear, but as the FSEC, except in exceptional circumstances, that isn’t the case.

DW: I got an e-mail over the weekend that said that the FSEC is “beyond ineffectual.” I thought about that before responding, and after a day or so, I wrote back a lengthy e-mail saying “If you think you can do better, come Monday morning, first thing, I will abdicate and you can take over.” I didn’t hear back. What I have is a central concern here: we field complaints, concerns, etc., but we rarely field solutions! People think that because there’s a body for it, they can complain, but not offer solutions. People can complain all they want, but they need to put solutions forward that the FSEC can work with. If they don’t, and we come up with our own solutions, then they can’t complain! When we come up with our own solution, it makes us vulnerable.

SP: There’s also a difference between “criticism” and “constructive criticism”!

RJ: I think *you* (DW) get that more because of your position; I’ve gotten more constructive e-mails as a representative.

PA: RJ's right – anyone in position like that (FSEC president) is going to get stuff.

DW: Do we have any other agenda items, other than survey results and the aforementioned material about post-tenure, for the General Senate meeting on Thursday?

PA: Do we need to bring up changing the length of terms (of FSEC president-elect from 1 year to 2 years)? (DW reviews why this would be good idea – it provides for a better learning curve for the incoming president.)

DW: I'm willing to do this, but it will require a change in our Constitution.

RJ: Someone is going to have to serve longer than usual – so in the first year, president serves with the past president; the second has president elect but not past president.

DW: There's a three year carryover.

MM: Elections would be when?

DW: Every two years.

RJ: ...for president-elect.

DW: Even getting someone to put their name on a ballot is like pulling teeth! I got into it because I walked into Martha's office, and she asked me if I wanted to do it.

PA: But at the same time, faculty need to step up and start becoming involved if they want a say in how things go – that takes putting yourself on the line and creates vulnerability, but puts you in the power position.

MM: Sometimes, Faculty Senate my go face-to-face with administration – for example, PA won't be tenured at the time he becomes FSEC president; will that be an issue?

DW: No, because as past president, I can put forth sensitive issues. Both president and past-president go to all meetings, so I'd become the target on issues of sensitivity.

MM: Do we want a policy that says that the FSEC president must be tenured?

DW: That would be wise; also, the person couldn't be *up* for tenure while serving as president-elect, either. I'll look at our Constitution to see where we can fit this in.

SP: There's a legacy/history of faculty that are not empowered; those that have been here forever may think what we're doing is feckless...it's "learned helplessness" among long-time faculty.

DW: Yes, there's a comfort in status quo, so why contribute? It's an actual choice, vs. helplessness. I think it keeps going back to why we need another layer of organization to set a stage for something that has a stronger voice. For example, I have 104 responses to the survey about President Nadauld and a presidential search, out of >400 people (*all* DSC employees)! I was trying to attract attention/responses from *everyone*, and I haven't heard from *anyone* other than faculty and a couple of adjuncts. And my e-

mail didn't even get to some of our 0.74 timers. ...As a heads-up for everyone: I'm personally paying for SurveyMonkey; at some point, I may seek reimbursement for those costs, but I think doing it that way takes us out of the loop, creating a professional data collection point we can't manipulate; SurveyMonkey will just give us results in a file. I've made this service available to student government, too; it's the same charge whether I use it once or 50 times, so as gesture of support, I made it available to student government, too – their president has a survey he wants to put out to students. ...I asked Tom to bring copies of the Faculty Excellence Committee's questions for faculty evaluations, but he's not here – JH, can you send what he sent to the FSEC? I'll ask for a quick vote; then we can present that to the General Senate on Thursday. Anything else? (No.) I think the General Senate meeting will be largely about the results of the survey, and boy it's hard to convince faculty that they will have a voice in selection of president!

RJ: We've talked about the consequences of an immediate search, but I think there's a valid concern about whether or not our financial situation will be different when we do a search later! But the message about whether or not to retain our current President – that sends a message to the Board of Regents that *they* do a better job of selecting our president than we do! That's problematic when the elephant in the room during the meeting with the Board of Regents was that President Nadauld was sent here primarily to stop the University of Utah affiliation – he did what the Regents sent him to do. President Nadauld has done everything right since then, except that he's never had a faculty-level discussion about affiliation.

DW: The only thing he's ever said is that it's a 10-step procedure, and we're on step 2.

RJ: He's been disingenuous with us on that topic, and if we support him, it sends the Board of Regents a message that we think that's OK.

DW: That's why I put into the survey a sentence about how faculty will have a voice when a search happens. We have an upcoming accreditation issue: if we have an interim president when that happens, that doesn't bode well, so the Board of Regents has two choices, and I don't think they're going to start a search. But we also know that President Nadauld says he's interested in remaining here for only 1-2 more years, but in two years, I'd like something from *this* body, and the Senate in general, that says explicitly that we *will* have a national search and no more interims. So we're relying on President Nadauld to say "I'm stepping down at time X" in time so that the Board of Regents can do a search to have someone ready when "time X" comes. I don't think we want to send a "lame duck" message.

PA: How likely is it that they'd put something in writing?

DW: I think a unanimous message, representing all faculty and put forth by the FSEC and Senate, that we want a nationwide search at the point when President Nadauld is going to step down, is needed. That's what the Board of Regents policy alludes to anyway, but they can suspend their own policy willy-nilly.

PA: How many candidates were there when Caldwell came in? (No one knows.)

DW: I think we should anticipate that the Board of Regents has identified someone already and that when a search happens, they may already know who they're going to appoint.

PA: Anything we do is just a recommendation.

DW: We need to position ourselves publicly, because public pressure on Board of Regents and the governor is effective, but it's a fine line before we become too head-on with them, which is bad. Caldwell was very head-on, and they didn't like it. Utah culture doesn't sustain that approach; Utah is hierarchical and authoritarian, and we have to work within that system. You can't stand up and challenge it, because if you lack the authority they have, you're dead.

MM: But do we assume that the Board of Regents will always move to prevent us from growing, etc.?

RJ: I don't think that's anything more than geography – the southern part of Utah gets treated differently, but we're getting big enough now that that can't happen.

DW: Some of the Regents from southern Utah want us to go back to two-year status – the rest of the Board of Regents gets their picture of what's going on down here from *them*, so they get a skewed picture!