

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Feb. 21, 2013

In attendance:

Paul Abegg (PA)

Scott Lindsey (SL)

Robert Carlson (RCa)

Erin O'Brien (EO)

Ani Comeford (AC)

Del Parson (DP)

Rob Cowan (RCo)

Rick Roderick (RiR)

Ross Decker (RD)

Russ Ross (RuR)

Jerry Harris (JH; secretary)

Matt Smith-Lahrman (MS)

Lish Harris (LH)

Andrew Wilcox (AW)

Dianne Hirning (DH)

AC: There are a couple of items...one in particular I want to add to the agenda that will only take a few minutes. First: approval of minutes...?

JH: Let's not do that yet—I received some corrections that I have not yet made, but when I do I will send out the new draft.

AC: OK, we'll table that until next time. The first issue I've got that's not on the agenda: I will send you all an e-mail with this information. Bill Christensen has asked that I send through Faculty Senate to support a Sustainability committee on campus. It would be interested in ways in which we are decreasing our environ footprint—deal with water use, recycling, etc. There are many people involved in it and want to form an actual committee. I asked him for a vision and a mission statement, and he said what I will send around to you (quotes from e-mail). Bill is requesting that it gets support from Faculty Senate before going to College Council. So as soon as I send this out, consult your constituents to see if they would approve/disapprove of this committee.

SL: Wasn't something similar making the rounds already?

EO: It's the same thing

AC: Yes, Tracey O'Kelly sent around an e-mail announcement about a meeting to determine if there was interest in such a committee. OK, an update from the President's meeting: RCa and I met with President Nadauld and brought up some issues that concern faculty. The first was what the chances are that the legislature will approve cost of living increases. He said that this legislature it hard to read, so he had no sense at present, but he hopes to have a better sense in a few weeks, so we'll ask again at our next meeting. We also asked about the new policy person—whether or not this person is ready to start writing. We were told to contact Human Resources, which I did, but I haven't heard back yet.

RCa: We've talked to many people about this, but have no information.

MS: Martha won't be doing this anymore?

RCa: No, she's been reassigned.

AC: And while she's been on leave, policy revisions have skidded to a halt.

MS: Do we know how they're going to choose this person?

AC: Based on the person's experience; it's someone with lots of institutional experience.

MS: Is it an administrative choice?

AC: It sounds like it.

RCa: The person we think will get the position will be good, and it won't take away from many of their other duties.

SL: Is this person going to tackle the Rights & Responsibility policy? I suggest that they tackle it piecemeal rather than all at once...

AC: As soon as this person is official, and agrees to take the job, we're ready to go with the policies we've been looking at: the professional tenure-track policy, the professional development policy, which needs tweaking. I would like a list from *this* body of policies we want addressed—we can go right to the new person and ask that the policies on our list be done and prioritized. Another area that the former Academic Vice-President wanted us to work on, which got lost in the shuffle, is pushing for actual role statements for faculty in their departments, so we know what we're being evaluated on for rank and tenure decisions.

PA: I don't think it's as complex as it needs to be—department chairs are supposed to tell faculty what they're supposed to be doing each semester.

AC: Yes, but if there are changes, we need to be aware of them, and it needs to be clear. The last issue in our meeting with the President was that we've heard him talk about Master's degrees several times, but when we pushed him on it, he noted that none of the talk is based on data yet—much of it is based on the perception of the previous Academic Vice-President of programs that were ready to go forward with such degrees. We tried to emphasize to him that there are consequences to saying things about such degrees when everyone's wondering where it's coming from and there are no data to support anything. We need to know why those particular Master's degrees are being proposed, but according to him, there's no actual research data about them going forward.

RCa: He implied that *nothing* is going forward on that.

AC: Yes, we're concentrating on getting Bachelor's degrees going.

EO: Does he have a timeline of when we might start looking at Master's degrees?

AC: No...well, at least, he didn't give us one.

PA: Wouldn't that come from the Academic Vice-President anyway?

AC: He's basing everything on what he had from Donna.

RCa: He made clear that the cost of investment needs to be determined.

AC: OK, our next issue on the agenda is the faculty hiring schedule, which LH wanted to address.

LH: I know from those in the Humanities and Psychology that there's been some concern over the way that our interviews go—who's conducting them, why we do them the way we do, etc. When I was on the market a couple years ago, this place was by far the least hospitable in this respect, and the least well set up. My wife has relatives here, so we had other sources of information about the place, but elsewhere, you'd get wined and dined to show off the town, and we don't do that. We are using a community college model of hiring, not a university model.

MS: When I came here 15 years ago, I was wined and dined!

LH: But my main issue is: it seems like the departments need to have more autonomy and authority in determining interview schedules, arranging candidate meetings with faculty in the department, arranging for dining, getting shown around town, etc. It seems that Human Resources is in charge of how all that is done by school policy, and that's backward. The same is true with the cheating policy: right now, the biggest punishment a faculty member can impose for cheating without going to the Academic Integrity Committee is failing the student. Everything else requires that documentation needs to go to the deans, the Academic Integrity Committee, etc. That's also backward. If we have students in cheating rings and the like, individual departments should be able to impose sanctions beyond a failing grade. This last semester, I had one student I didn't want to fail, and I spent 12 hours of my finals week preparing documents I had to shuffle around campus just to get the Academic Integrity Committee to impose the punishment I wanted. So the power needs to come back to the departmental level—that's standard at other universities, and for departments to come up with appropriate sanctions that don't have to go through a centralized bureaucracy.

RCa: In my experience elsewhere, it's done the way we do it here.

RCo: Especially if you're overbooked. There was a case when I was at NAU in which a student got hold of a copy of an exam, but the police got involved because the student had broken into a faculty member's office to get it. Some cases might need police.

LH: But, for instance, if there was a student you wanted kicked out of your department because they cheated in multiple classes, the department can't do that. The Academic Integrity Committee wouldn't know it, but it shouldn't be up to a faculty member to gather all the information.

EO: I have two experiences relevant to this. First, I sat on an appeals committee, where a department had acted on their own, and their decision was ultimately upheld, so some punishment can be meted out at the departmental level.

RCa: Was it more than kicking the student out of class?

EO: It was an ethics breach—a student had to repeat coursework so they would be qualified to take a board exam. The student was denied that ability at first because of the breach. That happened at the departmental level. In the second instance, I had a case of rampant plagiarism—a student had committed multiple infractions, and I went straight to Del Beatty because I didn't want the student to get their story in with administration first. We worked out something that this student could do as a sort of punishment, but Del had told me that if the student didn't agree to the deal, then he would have pursued expulsion. So there are ways around it.

LH: In a case I had, the student went to Del himself to complain about other stuff, and I never talked to Del at all. I wanted to go through faculty channels.

RCa: We had a bad experience in our department in which not only wasn't Del helpful, but he forwarded negative information about the faculty member involved to the rest of the community.

AC: There are legal issues here; the Dean of Students has access to our lawyers to pursue an appropriate level of punishment that a student could otherwise turn around and sue for. That may be one reason that our system is the way

it is. Another may be to ensure that there's a record in cases of individual students cheating across departments. If it's only at the departmental level, it could be the equivalent of hands not talking to each other.

LH: With the student I caught, it was the second time he'd cheated in my classes, and odds are good he's done it before in other departments, and we have no way to communicate that. The Academic Integrity Committee hadn't heard of him.

AC: Well, it hadn't been reported to them.

LH: I had a faculty member in my department in such a situation who basically said that he was going to do the easy thing to move past it—he didn't want to have to deal with all the stuff that can come from it. That does a disservice to the school because there's no place for us to go.

AW: Can you learn if he cheated in my class?

LH: Yes.

EO: It doesn't violate FERPA—it's faculty members communicating in a professional context.

LH: You have to be proactive looking into it, but faculty members communicating professionally is OK.

RCa: There's a compromise: every time a student was sanctioned at the school I was at before, people had to create a paper trail. If there was an appeal from a student, then it was addressed in committee.

LH: I don't get the sense that most faculty members take this stuff lightly. But if there's someone that is *that* big a problem, the burden of proof should fall on the student that cheated, not on the individual faculty member—who has to go through his chair, his dean, and then the Academic Integrity Committee...as a faculty body, that's frustrating.

RiR: What I would say is: these two problems (cheating and the faculty hiring issue) have been lumped together here, and that the hiring issue has been left behind...this discussion about cheating has been about what is an appropriate process that takes the burden off of faculty. Not that a department needs to do it. But for hiring, that's an issue that should move to the departmental level. If we try and collapse these two issues into one issue, we miss the important points.

AC: OK, well...the academic dishonesty issue: how do we feel about this process? Do we need to push for a new policy? Two things: (1) Should a department be able to administer sanctions rather than going through a larger committee (in addition to failing a student); and (2) what is the process a faculty member needs to go through to get something to happen?

RuR: Last time I looked into this, the policy was really very vague and unhelpful—it was a bulleted list of things that *might* happen if a student cheats. I pursued some cases early on in my time here, and I also felt very much on my own, without institutional support. The students immediately had parents call my dean to complain, and everyone was surprised that I pursued it. After that, I decided that I should “lay low” in pursuing such things until tenured and not bring it up outside of class. There was no departmental policy, and the college policy was useless. It seems like the incentive is to try not to discover cheating, or else you'll have to deal with many consequences.

DP: I had the same experience—if you turn the students in, then it's like *you* did something wrong. It wasn't blatant, but I definitely felt that. I don't know the answer other than do everything to discourage cheating.

RCa: If it were at the departmental level, it might shield individual faculty members a little, so all the faculty member would have to do was report an instance.

LH: It seems to me that there are some sanctions that shouldn't be done at the departmental level, but at the school level. I'm in the Criminal Justice Department; many of my students want to become police and lawyers. If I have a student that has cheated chronically, I don't want to give that person a degree from here that says “Criminal Justice”! But to find out if a student has cheated across campus, it's hard. And I don't understand why when a student is failed because of academic misconduct, the F on his/her transcript is not automatically annotated to state that the F was for academic misconduct. You have to go through Academic Integrity Committee to do this. Otherwise, 10 years from now, no one seeing the transcript, such as someone looking to hire the student, will know that the F wasn't just for laziness. Why is that not an automatic sanction? If we want to be serious about getting rid of cheating, we need more bite and less bark.

AC: I think two things: (1) We need to find out exactly what legalities are for these things—there may be legal restrictions and that's why some things are not there; the process goes through the deans because of lawsuit-happy students. Institution-wide, that may be why—it absolves a faculty member from having a student come to them and say that they're going to sue them. Maybe what we need to do is find out the legalities about academic dishonesty; and (2) I'm asking you to contact your respective constituencies and ask them what they want to see in a stronger Academic Integrity policy. Only if we know those things can we submit those specifically to the policy writer and say “Here's what needs to happen.”

LH: Legally, as public employees, as long as we're performing our functions as outlined, and it's not discriminatory, we're immune to lawsuits.

AC: But the key there is whether or not a student thinking s/he is being discriminated against. There are some situations where I'd be afraid that students would say “You did this to me because I am ____.”

LH: But if you have solid proof of cheating, that claim goes out the window. Changing the policy in that way provides incentives, and ensures faculty aren't frivolous with who they're accusing.

AC: I agree 100%.

RuR: Another faculty member shared with me that he had sanctioned a student for cheating, and the student turned around and accused him of sexual harassment. Ultimately, the accusation didn't go anywhere, but it was an instance of the faculty member having to be alone without support.

AC: Yes, there are concerns there as well. I had a similar situation where I felt threatened by a student for a couple of years. So we need to protect the faculty member but also let them act. Let's go to our constituencies and find out what they want to see in a strong policy.

PA: Where is the current policy?

RuR: Somewhere on the Human Resources page.

AC: It's in the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy.

RCo: Students will need to be made aware of that policy, too.

RiR: It seems to me that it's an appropriate time for this institution to consider the stance it wants to take on this. It should come with some pressure—if we're serious about the transition to a university, this has to be re-evaluated to the core because we have different expectations of students. It needs to be institutional because you don't want anything marginal for due process—even if it's not discriminatory, if a student can argue that the accusation didn't go through due process, they *can* sue. I don't know that I trust everyone in my department to think in terms of legal due process—the Criminal Justice Department might, but my department might not get to the nuances of what needs to be done.

AC: Maybe what we need to do when we ask for revision is specify that if the process is outlined, then it can be followed.

RiR: It cannot do what it's done here: chilling the faculty member from pursuing something. The institution needs to stand behind the faculty member, and the policy needs to clearly show that. The institution has a strong value in that being the case—they don't want to be perceived as a place where cheating is acceptable.

RCo: As a quick summary, I like the idea of bringing it to the departmental level for some sanctions, but we need a list at a broader level to compare cheating across departments.

AC: And create a standard for academic dishonesty. As for the other issue LH brought up, about the faculty hiring schedules: if we could also get a sense from each of your departments about how much control they'd like to have in the process, how many are comfortable with Human Resources handling it, etc.

AW: Are we talking about *individual* faculty members having say about who gets hired?

AC: I think LH was referring to the overall process.

LH: Some of both. Elsewhere that I interviewed, I met with each individual faculty member, or in small groups of the entire body of faculty in that department, so they could all grill me and see if I'd fit in there personally as well as professionally. They had open lunches. I was on our Psychology Department's hiring committee last semester, and they were trying hard to bring more of the process to the department. They arranged a "meet-and-greet," but that was the extent of it—that was the extent of the candidate's exposure to the faculty and vice-versa. That's not enough for a candidate to learn more about the department's synergy and decide if s/he wants to go there. Giving some power to faculty members is good, whether they have individual votes or whatever, but that should be considered.

JH: It might be a departmental budget thing.

RCo: We're doing this right now in Chemistry, and we were told by Human Resources we couldn't take the candidates to dinner because it might bias the committee. You can't take them to meet individual department members, either. Human Resources is micromanaging the process. And we tried to change the schedule but Human Resources didn't let us.

AW: It is a legal issue.

RiR: It's the policy *interpretation* of the law, not the law itself. In the first place, you can train search committees how to do things legally as much as saying "you can't take someone to lunch," which isn't in the law. But from my point of view, having been hired two years ago, I wouldn't be here if I hadn't wanted to get out of Wisconsin. I use the process employed here as an example in my classes of how *not* to do it. Everywhere a bad decision could have been made, it was. We've made it better now.

PA: It sounds like it's different in every department. And it begins in Human Resources: at universities, hiring comes from the content area, not Human Resources.

AC: I would really like for you to talk to your department chairs about their hiring experiences. We need to know exactly what happens across campus, and department chairs will have been most involved. Have they been given strict limitations? The smack-down for how they did something? And we should all review the policy and pinpoint what we don't like about it, but only once we know what's already being done can we decide how to recommend changes. Without that, the policy wouldn't be revised to include what we want it to.

RCa: We can give examples from other institutions that we know about.

LH: I guarantee that it's different elsewhere—at the University of Utah, candidates *do* meet each faculty member, they go to dinner, etc.

JH: Yes, I went through that there.

AW: We're hiring now; we had a candidate here for a couple of nights; someone not on the hiring committee took him to lunch. I only got to meet him for 10 minutes, but this is all a huge legal black hole to get into.

AC: We definitely should look at what other institutions are doing.

RCa: From a competitive point of view, we can say that we're turning people away because our policy is so restrictive.

AC: A couple of years ago, there was a move to have a whole-campus hiring committee—that was scary. I think we can make inroads here.

LH: I think the same can be said in this case: if we're moving to being a university, let's now do hiring like a university does.

AC: Yes, we can be proactive there. At our next meeting, please come back with what your constituents want on both of these issues. Is that fair? OK, then we can proceed very directly.

SL: Where do we take this? These issues keep piling up.

AC: I'm keeping track of them. As soon as the policy person is announced, that person is getting a list. And I will follow up with them for progress. This body needs to prioritize the policies, too, so we can keep following up on specific ones.

RiR: Is that the only way it will change?

AC: Yes.

RCa: Well, we could do it, if anyone wanted to take the time to write our own policies.

SL: What happened to our policy subcommittee?

AC: We need policies to come *into* that group for review, but since policies are all on hiatus right now...

RiR: As a faculty member in a department, I have a feeling that the most important decision is all about who we hire! It's a potentially decades-long decision about what a department is going to be like. The administration doesn't have that felt need as strong as the department does. Other than ensuring that a position's salary is reasonable, it's not right in front of them like it is us. I agree with what's been said about prioritizing, etc. for the policy person. But what happens if enough of us feel strongly and write a policy?

AC: Sure, anyone that wants to can do that. But it can't go into effect without going through the policy office, etc.

AC: OK, that was a good discussion. Quickly: the new Faculty Senate Executive Committee members: if you are leaving and your tenure is over, please feel out the faculty in your department to see who wants to replace you. I would like those names by the end of the month.

SL: So you want nomination list by next week?

AC: Yes, our constitution says we have to have them by then so elections can be held. One last issue: building security. If you're in a building that you think has security issues, we need to know—English is doing this now because we have classrooms that are very open and entirely visible. We developed an emergency action policy to address this. If you have similar issues in your buildings, develop emergency action policies and get them to Sherry Ruesch. English will present theirs at the general Faculty Senate meeting, and that will establish a precedent.