

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Mar. 21, 2013

In attendance:

Paul Abegg (PA)

Lish Harris (LH)

Robert Carlson (RCa)

Dianne Hirning (DH)

Rob Cowan (RCo)

Scott Lindsey (SL)

Jim Hardiges (JiH) (for Amijo Comeford)

Tom McNeilis (TM) (for Erin O'Brien)

Jerry Harris (JeH; secretary)

RCa: OK, has everyone seen the minutes from last time? Is there a motion to accept? (SL moves, LH seconds.) Any discussion? All in favor? (All aye; no abstentions.) OK, updates from various meetings. Curriculum Committee: it was the shortest meeting of that group I've ever attended—it lasted less than 1 hr! No major events to report; the General Studies issue didn't come up, but several minors did and were approved, including Biology. Also, a Biology honors course.

SL: Did the minors for Marketing & Management come up?

RCa: Kyle had a conflict and didn't make it to the meeting on time. He relies on the meetings being longer, but it was over by the time he got there, so we're e-voting on those.

SL: Do you foresee any issues with them?

RCa: No. They almost tried to vote, but some people hadn't heard them described and wanted to hear from Kyle before doing so. OK, next, the Board of Trustees meeting: it was remarkably long, because an inordinate amount of time was spent on the Macklemore concert issue. It was too loud, and there may be some addressing of outdoor concerts in the future. It was a matter of circumstances; the board praised the students for how they handled it. There were some issues with content—it wasn't the biggest problem, but it got the most comments.

RCo: I've heard plenty of offensive things from the rodeos in the Sun Bowl, and do people that live nearby complain about that?

RCa: They do, and that was brought up. Also, Ed Reber got an award for excellence because he's retiring.

PA: Do we still have a something coming from Faculty Senate for those that are retiring?

DH: What happened was last year was that we didn't have anyone, so doing something for retiring faculty dropped off the radar. Is there anyone else this year?

LH: Just Ed.

RCo: Candace Mesa, too.

DH: What we'd talked about doing was sending a letter from the Faculty Senate that thanks them for their service—in recognition of it. We didn't want to duplicate anything else—receptions, or plaques—because departments or the college seemed to be doing that. So we never decided if we wanted to do something other than a letter.

RCo: Victor Hasfurther, too.

PA: Would a memento be in order?

RCa: Well, it sounds like some acknowledgement would be great. I don't know how to find out who's retiring.

PA: Human Resources will know.

DH: I'll contact them.

PA: We should do something that doesn't duplicate a plaque, but something more than a letter...

DH: What would be appropriate?

PA: A gift card for a local restaurant? (Lots of agreement.)

RCa: That would be appreciated. There wasn't anything else exciting at that meeting.

PA: They have one more this year?

RCa: Yes.

SL: I've heard that there's going to be a change in chairmanship...?

RCa: As I understand it, yes.

SL: How long do the chairs usually last?

PA: It depends on circumstances.

RCa: This term was a challenging one, but Chair Caplin was very good to faculty—he scheduled meetings just with us (AC and RCa), and kept us in the loop as much as possible. He was very sensitive to faculty-raised issues. He expects not to be chair next year, but I don't know more than that.

SL: Will it be John Pike? He's the Vice-Chair.

RCa: I don't know if that's how it works. That would be an interesting transition. There are new members of the board that have political clout, too. But we haven't hear more than that from Chair Caplin. OK, the next thing on the agenda: feedback on the faculty hiring issue. We've had plenty of concerns raised about the hiring process... have you gotten feedback from constituents?

SL: In a word, they all feel it's a joke.

RCa: What would work better?

LH: Adopt the system used at other universities—where the process is department driven. Maybe not the University of Utah's, because we're not a Research 1 school, but use Weber's, or UVU's—there should not be differences between us and them.

PA: Does SUU do same thing?

RCa: Not as us. Whether it's out of Human Resources or not isn't the issue—who gets to visit with a candidate, who gets contact with them is the issue.

RCo: One of our chemists who interviewed there had a normal, typical experience when interviewing at SUU.

LH: I was invited to visit with the chair at Weber when I applied there.

PA: I suspect the policies are similar at all schools.

RCo: Another set of problems is that when we hire someone, Human Resources takes a “black or white” view of salaries, no matter what the circumstances are, and they won't budge. So you might have someone applying that has lots of experience vs. someone fresh out of school, being offered the same salary—they won't negotiate at all.

RCa: I doubt that administration will give that authority to department chairs—maybe to the schools. They were a little flexible when I was hired, so any recent inflexibility might have to do with the current budget climate.

LH: I talked to Amijo about this, and it also has to do with the tenure policy—tenure cannot be transferred.

RCa: Yes, it can.

RCo: No, it can't, or at least it's changed since I was hired.

LH: If there's someone that's been teaching elsewhere for 10 years, they shouldn't have to start over here.

RCo: And this wraps in with what we talked about when Pam came to speak to us—there's no indication or allowances for rank. They won't hire someone here at higher salary than anyone here already has.

SL: Well, while that's distasteful, that's pretty standard. New Assistant Professors come in at higher rate now because of market realities.

RCo: Another thing we noticed in our recent experience that is because Utah is right-to-know state, any applicant can look at existing salaries on-line. What's wrong with this is that the numbers posted include overload pay—an applicant can see there that someone has a salary higher than they're being offered.

RCa: There's clearly a problem—the question is, what could happen to address it?

SL: First, survey our sister institutions and see their policies, and emulate those. Use their official policies; then dig deeper and see what the practical issues are.

RCa: Right now, the policy is very flexible.

DH: I would want to know not only the official policies, but also what does and doesn't work with them. If somewhere else has a policy that they're trying to get rid of, we don't want to adopt it.

LH: We should see what we can find on-line, then contact Department Chairs at those institutions and ask them—ask the how policies actually work, and what doesn't work, and go from there. In my head, it seems like if everyone else does it the same way, there's either a huge disconnect between their policies and implementation, or else all other policies allow hiring processes that work well, and *ours* is faulty. There has to be some consistency.

PA: The Academic Vice-President has control over this.

RCa: Yes, and there's a lot of leeway there.

LH: I think Don (Hinton) would be interested, if nothing else, in knowing about this to push this discussion so that when a new, permanent person comes in to the position, we can move on it.

RCa: I would guess that the next person in that position, coming from the outside, will know what goes on elsewhere. So I'll approach Don on this.

TM: I think the Human Resources people have had too much authority on this in the past.

RCa: And they are strongly influenced by a very limited legal view that is not shared by other institutions.

LH: *Any* other institution!

SL: Hiring should be the beginning of a collegial relationship. Right now, it's cumbersome, too formal, and has no collegiality.

RCa: It's off-putting.

SL: In parallel, talking about pay, I would like to see us first support, in this group, pursuing a policy whereby the CUPA data is made public to faculty. Not in its raw form, but in aggregated form, organized by zip code—the same ones Pam uses. That's a top issue with my faculty. It's nice to be able to go talk to Pam and see the data there, but my faculty wants unfettered access to that data. I know Pam's reluctant about that, so if you talk to the Academic Vice-President, this issue should be raised along with the other one.

RCa: I don't know if they'll see it as connected, but I can do that. One other thought about how the right-to-know information being misleading makes applicants think we're playing hardball with them—is there any way around that? To clarify that overload is included in the numbers that they are seeing?

RCo: On the web site, you *can* see breakdown of the numbers, but the data on there is corrupted. For example, according to it, someone's job title is "Moving Expenses!" We are listed as having three Elderhostel lecturers in Physical Science.

JeH: Those may be the ones teaching ICL classes.

RCo: So someone can look in detail at the site, but I think that their first impressions from the initial numbers allow them to make a decision right away.

RCa: That may affect the hiring process...I don't know that Human Resources will be happy with us pointing that out.

RCo: It's almost like we need to predict what might go wrong and fix it up front, which is backward. But we've had real problems with this making the interview process so sanitized that an candidate can't meet the people s/he'll work with.

SL: In our department, Human Resources forbids any deviation from the approved set of questions...that is terrible.

RCo: Last year, we had three candidates, and based on the data rankings required on the form Human Resources gave us, all my numbers for all three candidates added up the same, but I had definite opinions on who I liked and didn't. It wasn't reflected in their limited set.

LH: When I have to do those, I wait to fill them in later, and score things based on who I liked afterward for reasons that may not be reflected in the criteria.

RCo: Some strengths should have been worded better.

TM: If the candidates been able to meet with other faculty, those other faculty could have a say in which ones would be better fits.

SL: When you talk to Don about this, what we ought to do is permit candidates to have a "meet 'n' greet" with the whole department to which they're applying—have an opportunity to present something on pedagogy or research—do job talks, in addition to teaching demonstrations.

RCa: We had problems with the questions. We had one candidate with lots of teaching experience at an institution like ours, one with lots of clinical research experience, and one in between the other two—it's not possible to ask one set of questions that work for all of them!

LH: By the time you're inviting people to campus, hopefully they're all qualified to work on campus—...the campus visit is for them to see if they like *us*, and for the department to see if the candidate fits. At the campus-visit point, it's not about "Tell me about your degrees." It's about "Here's what we have to offer you." Does the candidate's work ethic fit in? That's how it works everywhere else. There's no legal reason why we can't have subjective assessments.

JiH: Ami told me that the reason we can't "wine & dine" candidates has to do with those candidates flying to Vegas, renting a car, driving up, etc. but then they are left alone for dining. When I interviewed here, I thought that was very strange, after having had other interviews elsewhere.

LH: We make a big deal of the "Dixie Spirit," but we do the *opposite* of that during our interviews! I think other people have different interpretations of "Dixie Spirit" as a result!

RCa: That's the universal feeling. Somehow, we get people anyway. OK, I think we're all in agreement on that. Next issue: Professional Development. JiH knows about this: we've had lots of discussion on that committee this semester. Here's two changes that we're confident people should be excited about, though there are others, too. First, the committee chair: right now, though it's not in the policy, it has been tradition to have the Faculty Senate President-Elect be the chair, so there's a new one every year. The committee has found this cumbersome because it creates a lack of continuity, with time having to be spent getting the new chair up to speed, etc. In particular, this committee is in bad shape because it has no charter, no statement of what they're supposed to do, and it has deviations from policy, so we're changing it to something that will be followed. So we want to hear feedback on having a chair that serves 3 years or something similar, and has had experience with the committee.

RCo: Is there any history of turf wars?

RCa: A little bit, every now and then.

TM: There has been in the past.

RCa: It is a possibility. Right now, that hasn't been an issue, but given other policy changes, it could be. Ami proposed this as a follow-up: the Faculty Senate President-Elect can be a non-voting member of the committee for balance. Then that person could report back to this body, so if turf wars manifest, they can be dealt with here.

SL: Why should the person be non-voting?

PA: That's how it's been, though it's not in the policy.

RCa: That combination would be a good check and balance.

RCo: If you're a non-voting member, you're advisory.

TM: So do we ask for nominations from the faculty?

RCa: From this body.

PA: If the chair is going to be on this body, why not have them stay on the committee to provide the continuity?

RCa: And why they're non-voting, I am not sure. But if *this* body is involved in selecting the chair, we can hopefully minimize bias.

SL: You mentioned a problem with an inequitable distribution of funds, or a perceived inequality?

RCa: There are some departments that get more money than others.

SL: Are the disbursements reported publicly? Is there an accounting statement?

RCa: Yes, I have that—it could be made available; it's not intended to be secret. We could even break down *why* individuals were supported—for example, if they're presenting at a conference gets ranked higher than simply attending a conference. This year, all presenters were funded, and some attenders were funded. Some departments just do these things more than others, and that's part of the reason for the inequality. The other change is that right now there are three periods of disbursement; we want to increase it to four. Some people find out about a conference at the last minute, and can't wait three months until next go-round for applications. We'll add one, and have them every 2 months. It's also been a concern that many people aren't ready by a Sept. 1 deadline, so we'll move that to September 15, then November, January, and March 15. We expected there to be fewer applications for March, but that wasn't the case.

PA: Is there a feeling that every department *should* have equal disbursement?

RCa: No. The current policy says that every faculty member allowed to apply for up to \$6000 every three years; we're looking to cap it at \$2000/yr. That may be controversial. We have some international conferences, or ones in Hawaii, that have been funded.

PA: If you're asking someone to chair the committee for 3 years, will that scare people away? It's pretty labor intensive...

RCa: I don't know...it's not *that* labor intensive. The other changes we're proposing are to put more burden of proof on the applicants. We've had significant conversations on this point: we want to broaden the criteria necessary for an applicant to qualify. Right now, we've had a variety of application types. For example, we had one for a person that would be teaching in new discipline in which the person had never taught before; there was a conference on how to do that that the applicant wanted to attend, but because it was simply for "attending," it was automatically low priority. Others attend a particular conference every year; they're high priority. The question was what's more important: someone learning how to teach in something new, or the other?

RCo: There's no history analysis.

RCa: Kelly Bringham is our go-to guy on the policy; he's very good at seeing things. Tier 1 and 2 trump everything. We're proposing to change the policy and consider how a faculty member is affected when making a decision. We're being hand-cuffed by the policy.

JiH: The other thing is that people think that professional development is where to go for money so people apply for all sorts of things.

RCa: There will be other changes to funding degrees. It's supposed to be a high priority, but it's rarely funded because it's so expensive. Usually it's funded directly by the Academic Vice-President. So we want flexibility that a faculty member has to state the need of the development—how will it help that person do his/her job better? And we'll include value for research and scholarship (e.g., fine arts, librarians, etc., not just the usual "research"). The faculty member will have to define how a conference will meet that need. Right now, people just have to say they're presenting, and by policy that's "valuable." We want to change it to have a clearer definition.

PA: In the past, there's been talk about reversing the process—rather than send a person to a conference, bring prominent people here to meet with students.

RCa: Not students—we've looked into having separate group for student stuff; this is just for faculty development. That would be allowable under the current proposal for that, though. We have a written proposal for all this; we just want you to consider these in general, and we'll disseminate the document later. Right now, we want to concentrate on the chair problem, and see where more abuse could happen if implemented. And the schedule change—if there are problems with that. The next Faculty Senate meeting is next Thursday at noon—it will have a free lunch, but we don't know where it will be held yet. One other issue: has anyone heard of any problems with the voting (for the new Faculty Senate President-Elect)? I've heard of some browser issues, particularly with reordering the votes. As you hear about problems, pass them on to me.

DH: Are we going to be doing a separate vote for committees?

RCa: Yes, after this one.

PA: Jim Hardy is on the search committee for the new Academic Vice-President, so if there's anything we want brought up in that process, we need to let him know.

RCa: Matt Smith-Lahrman is our liaison on that committee.

