

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Mar. 8, 2012

In attendance:

Paul Abegg (PA)

Brad Barry (BB)

Jen Ciaccio (JC)

AmiJo Comeford (AC)

Rob Cowan (RC)

John Goldhardt (JG)

Jerry Harris (secretary)

Dianne Hirning (DH)

Jack Lounsbury (JaL)

Betty Stokes-Crane (BSC)

Matt Smith-Lahrman (MS)

Kyle Wells (KW)

Dennis Wignall (DW)

PA: Today I wanted to make you aware that there are some conversations going on in Academic Council about the academic calendar—being discussed are the potential to start three days later in Fall semester (because Fall is longer than Spring), and if we count finals as instruction, we could do that.

JC: Would it be possible to get out earlier instead? Increase the length of winter break?

PA: That hasn't been the discussion, but there is room on both ends as David Roos has looked at the statistics around the state—we have more days than some others. We could adjust without having to get out later. Also on discussion is the summer blocks—the idea of two 7-week blocks rather than 5, 4, and 8 weeks. There are many models being used. Please poll your departments on their feelings about that.

MS: So ask them what? Do they like the idea of two 7-week blocks.

JG: We like the 5.

JC: Us, too.

PA: This is available on Academic Council web site—you can look at their meeting notes. It looks like we will move to one reading day in Spring without having to move graduation because we're at the high end of instructional days state-wide. Please also tell this to your departments.

RC: For 2013?

PA: Yes.

MS: So the reading day thing is still under discussion?

PA: Yes, but it's looking likely. But we need info on the start of the Fall semester from your departments. Also, last time we also talked about tendency of college to react when the school district changes their schedule, and that's becoming problematic—some of our areas are planning ahead 2–4 years to secure space, so there is less flexibility in adjusting. But it is understood that there's a benefit when faculty have same breaks as their kids in the public schools. Elsewhere, the higher education institutions set their own schedules, and others, like the school districts, follow, but it's reversed here. They do consult with the school district, but then whenever the district finds a reason to change, they just do. Until we stop reacting to *their* changes, nothing will happen. So that's just some information to convey to your departments about what's being discussed for 2013. Looking forward, we're approaching the end of this semester. Areas that need new representatives as last time, so please facilitate the logistics of finding replacements within your departments.

DW: Department representatives can't be permanent? Or is there a requirement?

PA: It's a two-year commitment with the option to renew for another two years. March 22 is our general meeting—the main item at that meeting will be voting on the four candidates up for President-Elect, but we're still accepting nominations through tomorrow. Please send those to me and AC so we can have a ballot ready for the meeting.

MS: Will you send out an e-mail to the whole campus of who's on the ballot?

PA: I can do that. So I think we're coming to the point where we can finalize our revisions to the Constitution. What I propose is that this body vote to accept the revisions once they are finalized, and then we'll send them to Munir to update the web site. I fully understand that it will never be 100% current, but this will make them be more recently

revised, and we can look at it again down the line. I appreciate the efforts of BB, RC, and MS on this—it is tedious work, but it is valuable. We've been able to bring up some valuable things up to date.

MS: I talked to Munir, and he said that the webmaster position for Faculty Senate is not significant enough a workload to warrant time compensation. So we need to decide who will be that person.

PA: Well, as long as he's willing... I e-mailed a change in the representatives around yesterday—rather than list everything on that chart, I just listed which areas are currently represented, and as the list grows and expands, we can adjust it.

BB: Can I have you make that change now?

PA: Yes.

BB: So you take the reins of that document.

MS: It seems that some people need to feel that they should be represented. Humanities/Social Sciences splits to Psychology/Social Science, so one representative moves. So if a group thinks they should be represented, then they should be.

PA: So should I forward it to Munir?

BB: If you don't mind. Just copy and paste it in there.

PA: Have you incorporated the changes into the current document, or is it an addendum?

BB: Munir would have to plug it in to the existing document.

PA: It seems like it'd be more relevant if someone from the subcommittee would pass that on... So in our April meeting, we can ratify that in a vote rather than do that by e-mail.

BB: Can we do that now?

PA: Is everyone familiar enough with the changes? (A few yeses.)

MS: I'd like to read a final version with all the changes, to see what the new thing looks like. But it shouldn't be posted until we ratify it.

DW: Just post it to this group, rather than e-mail it to everyone.

PA: I can do that. Thanks again for all your efforts! The only other item I have today is that we talked about a list of topics we want to address as a Faculty Senate, and last month we talked about prioritizing items from that list, so if we can readdress that...I'll open it up for discussion. In my department, a prime concern was the one that DW raised about faculty being compensated at a percentage of their salaries rather than at adjunct pay.

RC: That was #1 in our group, too.

DW: The background conditions are currently more positive for that now than any time previously.

BSC: This is the overload compensation...?

PA: Yes—the priority is to meet the needs of the departments, but also create the luxury of taking on overload to make faculty happier.

DW: Elsewhere, the norm seems to be something like 10% of gross salary per course, and there's a limit to how much can be taken on.

JC: Per course or per credit? What if it's a choice between a five-credit course or a two-credit course?

DW: Per credit does make more sense...

PA: We need to look at different models to have a good argument.

RC: How do you tell what is "overload" and what is "normal teaching"?

DW: It's just a model that they've gotten away with for a while, but we're moving into a more professional area. If a class generates enough money to cover the class, then the money is there. So how do we do this?

PA: Let's finish prioritizing items first.

RC: In our department, another concern was allowing students to have money for research—as we move toward university status, where is the research money going to come from? Right now, it's from student fees, but we don't have anything as far as instructors that oversee it... So any of our science, especially pre-med students, need research to get into medical school, and we're deficient in that area.

JG: It's not a top priority for us in our department, but we would like to see it addressed and have more students involved to get more meaningful educational experiences.

AC: As far as undergrad research, that's a national trend in every area and is being stressed more and more. The issue of trying to equate professional development with undergraduate mentoring is a national issue, too—that what it means to be an advisor is as meaningful as doing research and teaching, so we'll probably have to shift our Professional Development policy to shift that paradigm. Currently, there's no place to go for that money.

DW: I just heard the Professional Development issue come up in a conversation in our department, and some faculty in our department are working on Ph.D.s and they want to be able to teach upper-level classes. In the past, they've been granted Professional Development monies to finish their classes—not to get a free ride, but this time they're being denied, and I can't seem to find out why.

AC: It's because funds are limited, so the committee has prioritized money for faculty to go to conferences. That's been a consistent comment from committee members, though, and they tend to agree, but there hasn't been a lot of talking about it.

DW: Well, if someone is upgrading their degree to better benefit the college, then that's Professional Development! The reality of attending a conference is 1–2 presentations and attending others during 4–5 days in a nice place. So the reality is that if someone making a life commitment to substantively change this campus, the money should be created for that endeavor. It's a transitional thing as we move to a university so that more faculty can stay here and teach.

PA: So there's a place for those in the requests—the viability of the request is an item on the form, so that can be argued by each individual, and that's where that information should be included. Then the committee can compare the viabilities of *all* requests, for that and conferences. And as painful as it is, they have to make decisions with limited funds. The challenge is the amount of a request for someone pursuing a degree is much larger than for conferences, so the committee has to decide things on an individual basis. If you're talking about bigger changes, they would have to address that in their policy.

JG: In our department, some time is given for dissertations, and that is also a huge resource.

BSC: We have four doing that right now.

PA: So is student research funding #2 on our list? (All agree.) What about #3?

JC: I've heard a lot about family leave—that it needs to be more defined and how, with faculty, it is structured. It's not six weeks—one cannot take six weeks off of a class, so how do those credits get dealt with?

MS: Now it's on an individual basis, though following federal law. We need standardization.

JC: So basically, there have been people who have been told “You can't teach at all this semester, and you'll get paid for six credits but not all the rest.” The handbook just says “you get it,” but nothing about how much or how it's decided.

PA: But there is a policy on it.

JC: I think it just says “You're entitled to it under these conditions,” but nothing about how it is given.

DH: There is a policy for FMLA, but to the best of my recollection, it does not designate what departments have to do for your leave—it says you can have it, but nothing specific about “you can teach halfway through the semester,” etc.

PA: So it's up to departments to work out the differences.

DH: And it sounds like departments are not being that helpful.

MS: Well, it *has* to be flexible—sudden accidents can't be planned for!

JG: But not so nebulous that it's neither here nor there.

MS: It usually goes into a room with the person involved, Pam, and Donna, and they all discuss it.

JC: But I've been told that it often stops at the department chair level, and frequently never makes it to the point where Pam and Donna get involved. So if the policy said that “it goes to these people to work it out,” that would be more helpful. I think it's mainly maternity that is an issue.

RC: As an extension to that: in our department, a woman went from full to part time by choice, but she had an MS, and she can't come back if we go to university status. She lost her tenure and can't get it back now. I don't know if that needs administrating, but we need to be aware of these kinds of instances as we move to becoming a university.

DW: In my experience, Donna was very flexible and generous. The problem is that it's on a case-by-case basis, and that's what a policy would resolve.

JC: I understand that not everyone can be treated the same because not all medical reasons are the same. But there should be the same process to arrive at the compromise.

MS: Especially with maternity/paternity leave—that can be standardized.

BB: This came up in our department, too.

PA: So is this part of medical leave?

JC: Yes.

PA: What else?

JG: What is the “nepotism to couples” issue?

MS: In our department, there are some husband-wife teams in same departments, and neither can be chair, etc. I don't know if there is a nepotism policy or not...?

RC: There is something about it.

JG: The supervisory position problem is the key issue.

JC: There's a good reason for it—even if no favoritism is actually happening, there can be the *appearance* of it (or not).

DW: It's not an issue if the couples are in different departments; just in one department.

PA: Was someone interested in being chair but couldn't?

MS: Yes.

DW: We had a similar situation in our department—if we had a policy, it wouldn't have unfolded for us as it did, so we need a policy for when one person in a couple is in charge.

MS: We also need a policy about candidates for a job saying they'll accept the job if the spouse is also given a position.

DW: That's also happened for us—we didn't have resources to give the spouse a position.

PA: As far as the last item on the list: new building planning. It seems the most effective way to address the faculty perspective on this is to inform and involve the chairs and deans. In the meeting, we expressed a desire to tighten the loop so that as things change in building/renovation plans, the faculty are kept in the loop. So departments that have plans to renovate or move, communicate with your chairs and deans and be proactive. That can help prevent some of the surprises we've experienced in the past.

DW: I'm sensitive to that—we've had instances when administration tells us "Here's what you get, you figure out what to do with it."

BSC: Us, too—in setting up a simulation room, they gave us a space for the room but no control room, and I did work with the planners. They gave us something, but not the ideal situation.

DH: We're having the same issues in the library, too.

PA: It's important to remember that there will always have to be compromise. So be active and informed. One of the points brought up was that they have to work with a set square footage even to get the building done and approved at all, so the decision comes to "Do you want to have less than you want, or no building at all?" With Fine Arts, we have two building, including an art gallery, but Music has only one classroom. But if it comes to "Here's a new building with less than you're asking for," we have to be flexible. But being involved in the discussions will go a long way.

DW: What about the library security issue?

DH: The larger campus security issue.

DW: It is insufficient.

JG: We've been fortunate that we haven't had more problems...but it won't stay that way.

DH: There are lots of problems that have occurred on campus that we have not been told about...

DW: We have a faculty member being stalked by a physically imposing student and challenging her authority. So struggling with that has put a strain on security—if they have to post people just to guard against this one individual, how is rest of campus covered? We don't have enough people.

DH: And they're not on campus on weekends. They're doing dorm checks at midnight when we close the library, so there's no one available to help clear the building or walk staff to parking lot. That's part of the strain—there are so few officers and the campus is growing.

BSC: It needs to reflect the growth.

DW: One of their solutions is that calling 911 will bring the city police, but they will defer to campus security because they don't always know where things are on campus—a lot of things can happen in that window of time while they are figuring it out. How do they get into a locked building, for example? I think there is a lot of potential for a very negative situation.

PA: I'll make note of these points and we can continue the discussion in the April meeting. If those areas that need new representatives can identify someone by the April meeting, we can get ready for next year. And remind your areas about this. We'll plan on that for the March 22 meeting in the Cottam Room. As MS mentioned (informally, before the meeting started), this is the last FSEC meeting for which I'm in charge. I've enjoyed working with everyone and have appreciated your input! I am confident that AC will do a great job as we move forward.