

# FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

August 22, 2014

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*In attendance:*

*Brent Albrecht (BA)*

*Clint Buhler (CB)*

*Robert Carlson (RC) (Past President)*

*Alex Chamberlain (AC)*

*Rebecca DiVerniero (RD)*

*Timothy Francis (TF)*

*Jim Haendiges (JH)*

*Jerry Harris (JDH; secretary)*

*Linda Jones (LJ)*

*Curtis Larsen (CL)*

*Matt Morin (MM)*

*Erin O'Brien (EO) (President-Elect)*

*Sandy Peterson (SP)*

*Helen Saar (HS)*

*Nate Staheli (NS) (President)*

*Samuel Tobler (ST)*

*Don Warner (DW)*

NS: I didn't print and agenda, but sent one out by e-mail so that we wouldn't be governed by that in this 30 minute meeting.

I just wanted to keep you abreast of some things that Faculty Senate has been involved in over the summer. We have a few issues. Most importantly, I want to ensure that we're comfortable with the schedule. I did get a few e-mails back that some people had some issues, so we want to revisit that and see exactly how it'll play out.

LJ: Should we introduce ourselves?

NS: You all know me! (Introductions all around; Andrew Wilcox not present.) Not to be superficial, but this is an extremely good group and an especially well-respected group on campus from involvement and based on interaction with administration. As in the past, we're going to accomplish good stuff this year. There's some fun and exciting things I think we'll be able to be involved with this year. We'll really push that shared governance concept. We've got pretty good access to Dr. Christiansen (the Academic Vice-President) and the President, as I've had some informal meetings with him: he seems pretty open...inundated right now. I haven't scheduled a formal meeting with him and Erin and I yet, but we'll give him a few days to relax. Let's talk quickly about the schedule. In summer, I proposed a schedule that I thought was somewhat creative to meet everyone's needs—I dunno, maybe it's not the best way to do it. Has everyone had a chance to look at it? Let's see if we can set it in stone. One issue we ran into was with I proposed as a business meeting once a month, where we vote and put into action things we've been discussing. Every month, we have to get an agenda of items to discuss; as an old item, we vote and it's in place. I suggested that be the first Friday at 2 PM, but after some subsequent e-mails, 3 PM seems better for most people. (Several people announce that they teach at 2 PM.) If there's no objection, I'll move that one to 3 PM, once a month, on the first Friday. (No objections). Again, the purpose of that is to vote on policies and formally approve actions—the larger items for discussion or vetting will take place in another meeting. This one will be short and to the point. Then I proposed a working meeting, is scheduled for need only—if we don't need it, we won't have it, but we probably will need it. I had that it from 1-3, an open time frame so we could schedule subcommittee meetings, etc. This might be where we assign, for example, 4-5 people to take care of some issue, etc. or schedule another time to meet. That way we have some open time. I did get some feedback on that; maybe 1:30-3:30 would be better? Any objections? That's the fourth Monday.

CB: So we'll be doing most of it during the first hour...?

NS: Yes. I said 2 hours in case something comes up that we have to deal with; at least some of us can tackle it. I'm hoping we won't have to have much in that meeting, and that we can subcommittee things out. I'm not a "meetings guy," and I don't want to fill up a 2 hour meeting.

ST & DW: That doesn't work for me—I teach at 1 and 2. 1:30-3:30 isn't much of a change from 1-3. If there's no votes, I might be able to just look at the notes and be volunteered by various people to help out, so I might not be as crucial to be there in person.

NS: That would be my suggestion. More than that, sometimes we may not need to meet as a whole body, but this time is reserved for a group of people to meet or only a subgroup of people to meet and then report back to us at the business meeting.

BA: 2 is preferable for me.

CB: I'd need to leave by 2:30 to get to class.

ST: Anything against noon? I know that the General Faculty meeting, which you're probably going to get to, is set for a noon time slot...

NS: There were many that couldn't do it then. If it's OK, we can move it back to Friday again; I was just trying to avoid too many Friday things.

LJ: If this is a working meeting, and we're in subsets, subsets could arrange to move to another time when all its members could meet.

NS: Let's try it and see what happens.

ST: I have no objection; I just won't be able to make it. Would it be preferable for those working meetings to send a representative who could then volunteer me?

NS: Yes.

ST: At least on certain issues. Knowing what issues might be discussed, it might be worth it.

NS: Yes, and you could carry the vote when we have the business meeting. And we'll get the agenda out enough ahead of time that if there's not anything of consequence that you need to get to, you wouldn't need to find a representative.

That's fine. Lastly, I had the third Monday at noon for the General Faculty meeting. My thought is that that's more of an information setting for faculty to learn what we've been doing and be involved in decision making. We'd have to excuse faculty that teach then.

EO: Will September 5<sup>th</sup> be the first Friday meeting?

NS: Yes, but we won't have the working meeting this coming Monday (Aug. 25, the first day of classes).

LJ: Will there be a General Faculty meeting during finals week?

NS: No. OK, so that's the schedule, and that's a big thing to get out of the way right now. I have a few other items. Most important and pressing item is the Faculty Constitution and By-laws. We had a meeting April 7 and had good discussion on that. Scott Lindsey was charged with creating a draft, but then had surgery, and I tried to get with him after that but our schedules didn't work. He and I will get together next week to put together what the committee has already discussed. Then I'll float that to this executive committee for a cursory review and to get changes and modifications you might have. One thing that's come up is that are we senators, are we an association, etc., and I think a lot of that was discussed at the previous meeting, so I'll summarize that and put it into the policy. My thought on that is that we get that in place by the Executive Committee so we can present to get it to the general faculty as soon as possible. What's the best way to do that? Put it out for us to vote on?

RC: We have to follow the current By-laws that, I think, require a full faculty vote. We can vote on what to put forward, but the full faculty need to vote on approving the new version.

NS: Once it's accepted it's in place...? We don't need to come back here to accept their acceptance?

RC: No, not unless they wanted to change it substantially.

NS: OK, then that's what we'll do by the first General Faculty meeting I want to have a 2-3 page document in place that faculty will have had about a week to review and then vote on at the meeting. We'll vote by SurveyMonkey or something. I know that will be a bit pressing during the first week of school, but it's not a super-huge document. Questions? Now, logistically, the distribution of that document: I toyed with a couple of different ways where the committee could discuss it. One would be through that Canvas discussion group I invited everyone to join, or we could use a Dropbox scenario, or by good, old-fashioned e-mail, and you could reply by e-mail. Is there a preference?

DW: I prefer e-mail, and you can just reply to all so they know what your comments are, and it's just easier to read for me. I've got Dropbox, but honestly I get confused sometimes.

NS: Same with Canvas—you have to e-mail reminders to look at Canvas.

RC: The benefit of Dropbox, or Google docs, or something like that is that as people make comments or changes, everyone else can see them in real time. When things are e-mailed back and forth, sometimes comments don't get integrated to the whole picture.

MM: There's also a record that future committees can go back to without having to dig through old e-mail correspondences.

NS: We can hybrid it: we can have the Dropbox document available, and via e-mail notify you about it, too, and can make changes in the document there if necessary. We'll try it on this first one and see what happens. The next priority is the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities policy. If there's one thing we get done this year, this is it along with the Constitution and By-laws (which will be done, I promise you!). This has taken lots of time over the last years. We're going to have to talk about the best way to tackle this—we've talked about tackling it as a whole document, in pieces... This may be where we may need to assign subcommittees for parts of that. It's a big document—RC can speak to this better than any of us.

RC: I've been through it and tried to make comments. We even tried to pull out the main issues, but I don't think any 1-2 of us can identify what "main issues" are for others. It's gigantic, but it's absolutely necessary. We have to find a way to get this done. This is one of those huge things that's been so overwhelming it's led to paralysis, and that can't happen. If we want to ignore it, we can let the policy office do it, but I think they have a different vision of what faculty rights and responsibilities are than we do, so it behooves us to do it ourselves.

NS: Politically, they've noted that they're waiting for Faculty Senate approval. So, that'll be coming up—that just needs to be on your radar, just not in the next 2–3 weeks and it is of major importance and something we need to be involved in.

EO: Academic Integrity is another issue that is sitting on all the lists and has been held up because I need to meet with our legal counsel because apparently it's a landmine. I didn't realize this, and legal has been hard to get this summer. Now that everyone's back we can do it.

NS: Those are the main policies we're going to run into this year in terms of crafting and being involved with. That's what we'll run into this year in terms of process. The last thing I want to bring to your attention is the Rank, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP; also called Faculty Review) policy. There's been some confusion with regard to the dates, but I think we've got that fixed by getting with the office administrators and the deans, and Martha and Pam helped us over the summer. We've pushed the dates off a little, but that won't happen in the future: the policy will be the policy. Are there questions about that? Or the process? Or I could go through some of the highlights of things I think we need to talk about. (No questions.) In general, the dates are there, but two things are coming up and have come back to me from the deans are: (1) role statements, and (2) the dean's report. As you talk to your faculty about this for their portfolios, the role statement has been formalized through the Faculty Review policy. Each faculty member is required to craft a role statement. It's not contractual, but it's somewhat contractual: you and your supervisor are discussing what your role is each academic year. It can change from academic year to academic year. The big thing from my perspective—and I'm interested in your thoughts on this—is that it's a faculty-driven role statement, not one where the dean or chair says "Here's your role." It's worked out in consultation with them, but faculty are in charge of driving and crafting those.

DW: It's contractual between the faculty member and...?

NS: The dean. I said "chair" because I think the chairs do have a role.

RC: But dean signs off on it.

EO: Conversations have to happen at the chair level because, for example, our dean cannot meet with all of us.

RC: There aren't any deadlines, but anyone up for any review—as the committees are going back to look at how you've fulfilled your responsibilities, the statements define those. Most of us will have pretty standard ones, but there's a number of faculty that have somewhat bizarre agreements. When those are verbal and not written, then the committee doesn't know how to evaluate them, and during a review might get dinged because your portfolio didn't look like everyone else's. So rather than forcing the committees to guess what your responsibilities have been, the role statement will define it. So it's in your interest to get it done for a given year so that at the end of the year when you compile your documentation about what you've accomplished that year, you can make it match.

CB: So it's a yearly thing?

RC: Yes. For most people, there won't be any change from year to year, but some people have significant changes from year to year.

EO: They can also be retroactive. A lot of us have things come up during a year, and if a dean signs off on them, you can ask the dean to have that in writing and added to the list of things you were supposed to do during the past year.

RC: I guess that'd be an addendum.

DW: I haven't heard a lot about this. When do we start doing this—right away?

NS: Yes...this came up because of the new Faculty Review policy. I see this as evolutionary this year—not a phase-in; you wouldn't have had this year. I've had deans coming to me saying that the need to do their dean's reports, which tell them to look at their faculty's role statements and compare and do some analysis. But we don't have those. This year, as you go through and evolve, you can come up with one that you need to be measured against when you go up for review. I'd do this over the next month or two. We might be able to get a template (*secretary's note: some examples are at [http://www.usu.edu/provost/faculty/promotion\\_and\\_tenure/role\\_statement.cfm](http://www.usu.edu/provost/faculty/promotion_and_tenure/role_statement.cfm)*).

CB: Do I list specific committees? That's fluid a lot of times.

RC: No, but those are unimportant for the role statement. You just say you're serving on regular committees. But if you're doing something outside the norm, with or without explicit release time...

EO: It'll impact how you'll be evaluated. For example, my course evaluations regularly say that it takes me a while to get things back to my students, but I have all these other things to do, so given that I didn't get release time for that, it's understandable, and in my self-evaluations I put that it'd be nice to get a little free time.

RC: Some of the art faculty have informal arrangements to maintain their personal studios, or some theater faculty may have arrangements of things to do at Shakespeare Festival...things that aren't traditional like those might be expected to be parts of their jobs. Those are important to put in there.

NS: You may even have office hours, which have been a subject of discussion. Let's say you're only on campus for three days, and you have made arrangements with your dean for when students say "S/he's never in her/his office," you'll be there when you said you would—that can be on there. They'll probably be more forthcoming about that, and we may want to issue some sort of formal document or statement on that.

CB: So we craft it and give it to our department chair...?

RC: Yes, though only dean signs off of it. But it's probably good to make sure your department chair isn't blindsided.

CB: Then we upload it to our e-portfolios somewhere?

NS: Yes.

CB: Is there a place for it?

RC: There will be. We're working on e-portfolios, and that's a high priority. We have some new things in the works for Digital Measures. We should know more in the next week or two.

NS: That's the one thing that affects faculty a lot; the deans have asked about the dean's report a lot, which is contingent on the role statement. It used to be that deans were getting asked for letters of recommendation, and then after the school did a review, the deans would give their approval; now that doesn't happen. The deans give a dean's report before it goes to the school committee. That's what the dean's report is, if any dean should ask you. I've talked with them in multiple meetings, so they should be fine with that. That's what's up with RTP. I think you're going to see a lot of anxiety as this policy is implemented over the next year or two. If we as faculty, especially us representatives, say it's not that we're checking on you, we just want to improve what you do and the quality of how you do it. But some faculty will consider it a watchdog thing. We need to portray it as a way to maintain quality in our teaching.

RD: Talk to the deans the same way you just did because my dean came to talk to me about my third-year review, and presented it as "We're doing this to watch you and make sure you're doing what you said you would." And I heard it the other way first, so I got a little nervous!

NS: The third-year review is to make sure faculty are on track and have a trajectory toward tenure. As I've become more involved in this process with faculty and deans, the different perspectives of saying the same thing has become apparent. That's all I have by way of business that I wanted to bring to your attention today. Are there any other issues you want to bring up? I want to thank RC and those that had the ability to make comments on new draft of the faculty handbook. I made sure administration knew we wanted to have ownership of that.

RC: Thank you! No one owns it, really. I made a lot of changes to simplify it and treat it as a resource. Every now and then, faculty realize they need to do something and have no idea who to ask or where to look for how to do it. If you come across any of those things, bring it up so it can be added. For example, library liaisons—that wasn't in there but came up because I had a new faculty member say "I want to take my class to the library—who do I contact?". So we put in that there's a library page that lists all the liaisons. We just need references like that. It won't add substantially to its length, it's just these little reference things that faculty could look through the index and find what they need quickly—that's the goal. I made some meaningful changes because in the past, it's been treated as policy even though it's not. Whatever was in the handbook was considered the gospel truth, but it's not. A lot of your evaluations are based on your old handbook and some of those have changed and administration may not have noticed.

EO: Is a section in there on the Health and Wellness Center?

RC: Just a little blurb, but yes.

NS: One thing I thought was interesting is that the office hour issue came up when it was being crafted. I said that the new policy will be more vague on the time, but how about we put language in that didn't specify a number of hours or days, and they were fine with that. You're required to have office hours that are reasonable for the students, spread out through the week, but not necessarily each day or per class. We're big kids and know our responsibilities, but we need to honor those or administration will have problems with it. That's the kind of thing we did with the handbook this year, and they were OK with it.

RC: It'll need to be updated yearly because it references specific people, and those might change.

IJ: It's connect to the Faculty Senate web page, too, under the "Faculty Policy" tab. I added it this morning.

CB: You may want to make a living document of changes each year. Say "this year we changed this," etc.

EO: And we can e-mail that to the faculty so they can know if there's anything new that they need to worry about.

RC: The title changed too. In policy, it was always referred to as "the faculty handbook," but the printed version said "New and Adjunct Faculty Handbook," which was misleading—it's the same for everyone.

NS: Lastly, committees. For your information: the RTP Committee doesn't have a chair yet. I'm in the process of getting a chair for it. If anyone asks about it, the committee is full and functional, but doesn't have a chair yet. But everything goes to the school review chairs anyway right now. So we are aware of it.

CB: For the faculty handbook, is there a "here is the RTP process deadlines, etc.; in your first year do these things, in your second year do this, etc." No one knows when to start these processes.

EO: It happened after the deadline.

NS: Informally, who knows when they're supposed to submit your letter of intent to apply?

RD: I found out two weeks ago that it was supposed to be months ago.

NS: Mumir (Mahmud, the former chair of the RTP Committee) has a web site that needs to be updated. I propose we do a flowchart. RC has done this, but if you contact Human Resources individually, they'll tell you.

CB: It seems like it should be a section in the handbook.

RC: I think I put in just references to the policy, not a flowchart. But once we have a flowchart, that'd be perfect.

NS: There ought to be a place where you can just put in your date of hire and it'll tell you what your next thing is.

EO: The reality is that this is a policy that was approved at the end of last year; notification didn't go out until June for most people. It's new for everyone and no one knows anything.

CB: So now is the time to get it in.

EO: Now that we're all back, it can go in.

ST: People in their second years right now need to know the April deadlines.

CB: So file at end of our second year for review in our third year?

NS: Yes.

TF: The policy has flowcharts in it (shows on tablet).

NS: Good, but we should put in examples.

TF: But I think something still needs to be in the handbook so people know where to look.

NS: That's the stuff that's shaking out a bit. Is there anything else we need to discuss today?

RC: Tell all the people you represent if they have any doubts about when they're up for review to contact Human Resources.

NS: And/or your deans. But the surest bet is Human Resources. The next thing is the Constitution and By-laws that will be coming out.

JH: September 15 is the first deadline for professional development. We didn't get quite as much money as I thought it would be, but we have some.

RC: We sponsored \$108,000 last year.