

USI Faculty Senate Minutes

1 April 2016

Senators present: Brandon Field, Joanne Artz, Rob Millard-Mendez, Nick LaRowe, Peggy Shields, Chad Milewicz, Marilyn Ostendorf, Jason Fertig, Chuck Conaway, Cindy Deloney-Marino, Mary Kay Arvin, Rex Strange, Jessica Jensen, Gabriela Mustata-Wilson

Visitors present: Ron Rochon (Provost), Shelly Blunt (Provost's Office), Gabi Wy (Shield), Amy Chan-Hilton (CETL), Peter Cashel-Cordo (Faculty Academic Affairs Committee), Tamara Hunt (Assessment Committee), Melody Lee (Faculty Academic Affairs Committee)

- Called to Order, 2:05pm
- Motion to approve minutes
 - Unanimously approved with 2 abstentions.
- Chair's Report:
 - President's council:
 - Long discussion of the internet outage. Be resilient in our teaching methods so this doesn't affect us.
 - Put the Assessment of Auxiliary Units recommendation on the schedule for next week. Tuesday, 9am.
 - Nominations for various positions on University committees that are going empty for next year has been distributed. Please discuss with your colleagues about being nominated.
 - We will have two reports from committees this time.
 - We will continue to meet as an executive committee over the summer. May, June, and July; possibly in August to help Nick plan for next year's first meeting.
 - Our last scheduled meeting is April 15; if there is unfinished business, we may need to have an additional meeting this year.
- Provost's Report:
 - The procedure of the Fall and Spring meetings is something that was inherited. RR is going to put together a small committee to work on what happens at those meetings. Spring meeting belongs to the Faculty Senate; going to have representation from Faculty Senate on that committee.

- Regarding the recent internet outage: lots of emails from students were received with verbiage that was inappropriate. No one on campus was more concerned about the outage than the IT department. Please, be patient with one another and remain civil.
- Pott College Dean search is moving along. Meeting with each member of the executive team for the search and the chairs within the college. Intends to have diverse representation across the College on the search committee. Needs updates to the handbook to look at many of the things that have become outdated; plans to use the Executive Committee of Faculty Senate over summer to look at that.
- Regarding the Promotion and Tenure discussion and the amendment to the Bylaws that was on the agenda for last meeting:
 - Thanked Senate for not voting last meeting at his request since he was not able to be there.
 - Amy Chan-Hilton has been working on suggestions regarding portfolio submissions; she has met with the deans, and Dr. Rochon will be meeting with the Department Chairs at the Fall retreat about this. Developing guidelines for both the faculty *preparing* the portfolios and the faculty *reviewing* the portfolios as to how to present.
 - Concerned about pre-tenure faculty. Clarity and reducing anxiety.
 - Would like to give Amy some time to work on this, and ask us not to take action on the current amendment to the Bylaws that we have been considering.
 - The Ad-hoc Committee dealt with the calendar of reviews as well and recommended the addition of an additional review in the 5th year. This recommendation was approved by a vote of the Faculty Senate last semester, and Rex hopes that that element can be adopted.
 - Peggy moves that we table the vote on the amendment by-law that would eliminate the Promotions Committee; seconded by Cindy.
 - Peggy approves of the intent to increase the feedback to the pre-tenure faculty.
 - The Nursing and Health Professions College has difficulty getting full professors promoted, because their forms of scholarship is not always understood by the rest of the University. The senators from NHP hope

that part of the improvement will be in development of communication based on the various modes of scholarship. They have been working with CETL to develop guidelines and mentoring programs, and will continue to bring their concerns from the various members of that college, especially those regarding the Clinical Track to the attention of CETL.

- Perhaps we need a large-scale conversation about the diversity of scholarship to describe all the various modes of scholarship. (The Faculty and Creative Works Report is now available on the CETL website, which documents all of the scholarly and creative works that the faculty have done in the past year.)
 - Motion approved unanimously.
- Our graduation rates on African American students are not great.
 - Having visits from guidance counselors from inner-city Chicago public schools to see the campus.
 - Sponsored students last year from different Chicago-area school; they are coming down again with other students this semester to visit campus.
- Tamara Hunt presented the Assessment Committee report:
 - Survey of department chairs: Would like to reform the assessment program review process. There must be regular assessment of programs, per HLC, but lots of flexibility within the guidelines.
 - Committee worked on it, and came to realize that it needed to be an effort from the whole campus.
 - Joanne moved to accept the report. Brandon seconded.
 - Rex had accidentally not sent out the body of the report, so he will send that to everyone.
 - Senators should read and consider the recommendations and be prepared to make motions stemming from that report.
 - Motion unanimously approved.
- Peter Cashel-Cordo presented feedback from the Faculty and Academic Affairs committee regarding Faculty Senate charge about Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs) from last semester that they would like further guidance.
 - The committee's response was circulated and is included in minutes below.
 - Two interpretations have been made of the charge: form a committee to review and revise, if necessary, the course evaluations (narrow interpretation); however

when the Faculty Senate originally received the charge, there was a much larger-ranging discussion. What interpretation should be made?

- Recommendation that a survey of the faculty at-large be made to identify faculty concerns of SETs.
- This topic will be taken to the Executive committee over the summer so there is something clear to act upon in the Fall.
- Resolution regarding scheduling of final exams is presented by Jason Fertig:

Recently the USI Student Government brought to the attention of the Faculty Senate the fact that many senior students have final exams scheduled after the university commencement ceremony. They expressed dissatisfaction with this state of affairs.

Logically, a graduation ceremony should come after all academic deliverables have been completed. Moreover, graduation weekend ought to be a celebratory consummation; under the current schedule this occasion is too often shrouded in stress and uncertainty.

Faculty Senate agrees with students' concerns. We believe that the Academic Calendar should allow for students to participate in the commencement ceremony with the knowledge that there are no more academic deliverables for that semester. Many other institutions (e.g. Ball State and Indiana State) schedule their commencement ceremonies after final exams and we are confident USI can do so as well without a major overhaul.

We recommend that the calendar committee convene to investigate this issue and attempt to rectify the situation in an appropriate timeframe.

- Resolution unanimously approved by a vote. Jason will work on the calendar.
- Student ID charge, originating from Nick LaRowe, regarding adding an expiration date to the student ID cards to make them legally compliant for voter ID.
 - What is the standard state-wide about expiration dates on student IDs? Nick will talk to the Registrar to see what the other institutions do.
- Adjourned, 3:56pm. Next meeting: 15 April, UC 2207.

April 1, 2016

Response from FAAC to Faculty Senate: SETs

The FAAC met over Spring Break (March 10) to discuss the charge, received February 29th, regarding Student Evaluation of Teaching. The committee reviewed the charge and the accompanying document from the Liberal Arts faculty. The members of FAAC engaged in a spirited discussion about the charge.

The issues raised in the Senate at the time it received the charge, other issues addressed by Liberal Arts faculty, and yet more issues brought forth in FAAC discussions, suggests that the USI Faculty have wide ranging concerns regarding the present USI SET program. These concerns primarily fall in three broad categories: the appropriateness of the questions being asked, how the SETs are being administered, and to what end are they being used. In other words, many members of the faculty have raised fundamental questions regarding USI's SETs. Faculty's SET concerns are certainly important to the faculty, and they are passionate regarding their views and concerns. In the opinion of the FAAC, these concerns will not be easily or quickly addressed.

With regards to how to proceed, FAAC seeks guidance from the Senate with respect to the scope of the charge given to the FAAC. The charge received by the Senate can be narrowly interpreted as a request to "form of a committee to review and revise (if necessary) course evaluations" with goal to "make them more relevant for both face-to-face and online courses."

Alternatively, the materials and discussion regarding the charge received by the FAAC suggests a broader interpretation. As noted, discussions in both the Senate and FAAC, as well as the accompanying document from LA faculty broadens the scope of issues with the SETs into the three categories previously mentioned.

If the Senate wishes to pursue the more narrow interpretation of the charge, then the FAAC recommends a faculty survey regarding the perceived problems with the existing instrument's set of questions. There has been a range of concerns raised to date in the aforementioned

discussions regarding the questions. For example, are the questions “relevant” in terms of online courses, whether they are valid in what they measure, what should be measured, how reliable are the results, and to whom to compare the results.

However, if the broader approach is the preferred interpretation of the charge, then the FAAC again recommends a survey of the faculty. This time, the goal of the survey is to ascertain faculty concerns in the aforementioned three categories (appropriateness of the questions, administrative process, and purpose) to obtain greater detail than presently available. The Senate might consider organizing breakout sessions at the Fall 2016 Faculty Meeting to further provide faculty with an opportunity to identify concerns and provide suggestions for improving the USI SET process. Multiple sessions each tackling a specific concern, i.e., online courses, paper or online, etc., could be offered.

Suggestions for the design and delivery of a faculty survey follow. The survey should be put together by faculty with expertise in survey design. This could include interested faculty from marketing, political science, education and other disciplines. The actual topics to be surveyed depends upon which approach the Senate wishes to pursue, and the FAAC is open to having interested faculty contribute to this effort in the form of an ad hoc committee. The individuals from the College of Liberal Arts would be welcomed to join. As far as delivery, OPRA is the logical office to administer of the survey.

In sum, the Senate and perhaps the FAAC need to identify exactly what problem areas exist with the SETS. Once that is achieved we can plot a strategy to provide suggestions for solutions. However, in the opinion of the FAAC, the Senate should strive to engage the faculty at large throughout this process and include their input at all appropriate stages.