

## Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

14 September 2018

Senators present: Chuck Conaway, Peter Cashel-Cordo, Tori Colson, Kenny Purcell, Brandon Field, Ken Shemroske, Charlotte Connerton, Wes Durham, Marilyn Ostendorf, Rex Strange, Perry Burnett, Al Holen, Ethel Elkins

Other attendees: Amy Chan-Hilton, Michael Dixon, Belle Cowden, Mohammed Khayum, Andrea Wright, Marna Hostetler, Kat Draughon, Rebecca Deeg

- Meeting called to order about 2:30 pm.
- Minutes from August 31: with minor edits made to draft version and unanimously approved with three abstentions from Senators or Alternates not present at last meeting
- Chair's report:
  - Have passed on the two changes to the Bylaws that were approved last time to the Provost's Office and informed the President's Council that those changes were made.
  - Looked at metrics on academic progression for students. To be more than DFW rates.
  - New Provost will still have oversight over the Academic Affairs and Students Affairs.
  - Faculty Senate will have one hour with each finalist for the Provost's search. We will probably not have an opportunity to have input into the times of those meetings, and Chuck asked us to try to make those meetings when they are announced, even if it means having a colleague cover a class.
  - Chuck would like to invite David Bower and members of the Provost's Search Committee to the Faculty Senate meeting on October 19 so we could provide our input to the committee.
- Interim Provost's Report: Dr. Khayum
  - President presented the budget request to the Commission for Higher Ed. The budget request document and the slides used in the presentation are linked from the Board of Trustees website, and may be on the Marketing and Government Relations web pages. Our performance funding ask is \$4.4M over the next two years. We also requested a capital request for upgrading the rest of the NHP building, including renovations and additions to the Health Center. We also had line items for New Harmony, over \$500k; one for public safety for the sheriff's office; a request to be continued to be considered for the STEM funding formula that we were included in for the first time last year; a request for funding for minority groups that have significantly lower 4-year graduation rates to do special programs; requested money for other repairs. Next step is to go before the Appropriations Committee to present the requests. We should know by April what we will get out of that process.
    - In the budget presentation, USI's presentation was efficient and functionally effective. The other institutions had long preambles discussing the initiatives that they were doing and who they were.
    - Dr. Khayum thinks we need to develop our narrative around what we do that is different than what everyone else says. He thinks faculty are well-suited to develop

that narrative, and assured us that the people in University Marketing and Communications would be aware of efforts that faculty put forth, so those efforts aren't lost.

- Because the search is still open for the Governmental Relations position, Dr. Khayum and Dr. Dixon have been attending the Commission for Higher Education meetings.
- Faculty Convocation is October 12. The goal of the Convocation is to do something that focuses solely on the faculty: recognition of awards, promotions, years of service, and recent PhDs.
- At the Chairs' Retreat this year, all the chairs were asked three things: (1) What similarities and differences are there between the roles of faculty and universities in general prior to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? (2) What is distinctive about USI? (3) Identify opportunities that would advance USI's distinctiveness and contributions if we connect these two things. He would like us to develop the narrative around the intersection of the strengths of USI and the modern roles of universities and university faculty.
- Updates from the elections: Chuck has heard from all the Colleges, all the seats are filled, except one alternate from LA for the Grievance Committee. Rex's At Large Senate seat also might not have an alternate.
- Update on open charges:
  - Counseling Center charge is closed.
  - Report from Student Affairs committee including resolution on the charge of apparent selection bias. There were concerns that the applications that the students were filling out for the President's Medal award were not inline with the requirements of the award. Chuck reviewed the award requirements and the application questions, and he thinks that there should be no concern, but he asked the committee to write a rationale describing whether or not the application questions are appropriate. He also asked them to prepare some rubrics around which to assess the applications and the interviews for them to discuss. Part of the original charge was the perception of bias, and there is still disagreement among the committee about that bias. The amendment to the bylaws later in the agenda for this meeting will also address the keeping of statistical records on the applicants for the award which can be used to address any future concerns of bias.
- Survey Governance Policy: Dr. Kat Draughon
  - Have had Qualtrics for a year now. They want to know what surveys are going on, protect the information, and protect the end-of-semester SET response rates. They know response rates have been going down, and they are trying to keep those response rates up.
    - It was commented by one senator that this is exactly the what OPRA had assured Faculty Senate years ago would *not* happen when it was mandated that all evaluations would be only online; we were told that SET response rates would not be affected by the use of electronic responses.
    - Student response rates for course evaluations vary widely; [clarifications from Dr. Draughon after the meeting in writing indicated that the campus response rates vary

from 10% to 100%]. It was implied that faculty can raise their student evaluation response rates by talking about the surveys in class, based on conversations that OPRA staff have had with the faculty who have high response rates and asking them what they have done. No mention was made of talking with faculty with low rates to see if they were in fact doing the same things.

- Currently, 187 Qualtrics users are active on campus, lots of surveys have been built, lots of responses have been received. There were initially concerns about an approval process, but Dr. Draughon does not think that it has turned out to be an issue. During the approvals process, she is looking over the surveys to make sure that data being collected are appropriate to be collected, but are not forcing faculty to change any of their questions.
- The use of Qualtrics has been able to standardize the appearance of the forms.
- Questions were fielded from Senators about the proposed Governance Policy:
  - Question was asked about surveys done on paper, in class. Dr. Draughon said the survey policy only pertained to electronic surveys.
  - Concern was expressed about surveys that were being performed for faculty research; how can we ensure that the faculty will be able to retain their academic freedom; she says that she does not force any changes to the survey by the faculty. However, since an IRB approval process is already in place, the idea that “final approval by OPRA will be required to activate and allow for distribution of the survey,” infringes upon the conduct of faculty research.
  - Concern was expressed about surveys that were time critical, especially those for accreditation purposes, and still need to happen during the end-of-semester black out period Dr. Draughon assured Faculty Senate that if exceptions were needed, that would not be a problem.
  - Dr. Draughon says that this policy does not apply to focus groups, and only pertains on quantitative surveys, not qualitative questions that may go out electronically.
  - At least one senator indicated support for the policy for the ways that it attempted to protect faculty research data and limited liability.
  - There was a request to add language regarding an appeal process about surveys that had not been approved by OPRA for distribution. Dr. Draughon asked that Faculty Senate provide her language about that approval process, including who would be the appeal. Peter Cashel-Cordo will talk to his constituents who expressed concerns and ask them to draft something.
  - With regard to the SET questions, she wants to have a finalized version before they code it in, because she doesn't think it will be possible to change the questions once they are input for next Fall because of the amount of work required to build the dashboards.
- Student Affairs committee standing charge to collect statistics: last Spring we asked them to keep track of the demographics (in particular, the College) of the students nominated.
  - This requires modification to the Bylaws; the addition which is in bold below:

...

### Section 3. The Student Affairs Committee

The committee is composed of one faculty member from each academic college, one at-large faculty member, and three student members appointed by the Student Government Association. The president may appoint ex-officio members to the committee. Functions of the committee are:

- A. To review and recommend general University policies dealing with
  - 1) Admissions, retention, and academic standards.
  - 2) University scholarships, awards, and honors.
  - 3) Student orientation toward academic life.
  - 4) Student assessment of the total learning environment.
  - 5) Student academic advisement.
  - 6) Student appeals related to behavior with respect to curriculum and instruction.
- B. To make final decisions in the appeal cases of students denied admission or readmission through ordinary University channels.
- C. To select the recipients of University-wide awards, including the President's Medal.

#### **Further functions include a standing charge:**

#### **A. To monitor and report statistics in the committee's end-of-year report about student applicants for awards, particularly in terms of the students' college.**

- Motion for the amendment of the bylaws unanimously.
- Student Evaluation of Teaching report. Are there any other issues that we need to prepare as charges to address this issue?
  - One concern that has not been addressed was how the responses will be used in the evaluation of faculty for promotion and tenure?
  - Concern was also expressed about the questions:
    - It was suggested that the question about how much effort the student put forth would affect the students' responses to future questions. This question was removed in the new questions.
    - It was also brought up that the question "if you were the instructor for this course, would you do anything differently to improve" is offensive to the faculty because it implies that the student would be qualified to judge how he or she would teach the course.
    - The use of the word "accessible" has no parameters in the question about how "accessible" the students felt that the instructors were throughout the course.
  - There also needs to be a process of continual improvement for the question set, which is in contradiction to the statement Kat made earlier, but is a necessary part of survey science. This would require some group to evaluate the questions regularly to ensure that they were asking about what was intended.
- Meeting adjourned: 4:39pm.