

Faculty Senate meeting

9 October 2020

Senators in Attendance: Rex Strange, Brandon Field, Adrian Gentle, Bartell Berg, Jamie Seitz, Kenny Purcell, Laura Bernhardt, Mary Doerner, Marilyn Ostendorf, Peter Cashel-Cordo, Sang woo Heo, Mike Strezewski, Steve Gruenewald, and Chuck Conaway.

Other Attendees: Mohammed Khayum, Shelly Blunt, Amy Chan-Hilton, Jennifer Greene, Marna Hostetler, Peter Whiting, Ben Luttrull, Alisa Holen, Kyle Mara, and Hayden Olberding.

- Held via Zoom meeting. Called to order: 2:32 pm.
- Approval of minutes from last meeting
 - Changed several typos, and a couple of substantive edits to clarify the events from the last meeting.
 - Minutes, as amended, were approved unanimously.
- Approval of minutes for emergency meeting held over summer, 26 June 2020
 - It was noted that the word "their" was spelled as "there" on page 1.
 - It was also noted that Section VI seemed to be an empty placeholder and should be struck.
 - Approved unanimously, with abstentions from everyone who had not begun to serve their term at that time.
- Chair's report:
 - The following statement was approved at the last meeting: "The Faculty Senate respectfully requests to be included in all appropriate conversations-- including but not limited to policies that affect faculty salaries, furloughs, employments, benefits, and changes to academic programs--leading up to, defining, and responding to a declaration of a state of financial exigency."
 - The Senate Chair would like to make the following comments about this topic:
 - Senate should prepare itself to take part in such discussions. First, we need to assess what other institutions have done in the past with regard to Financial Exigency and how those institutions have since recovered. It takes decades to develop and articulate a successful program and the loss of such programs will not be in the long-term interest of the University and its mission.
 - Second, Senate should define the academic priorities that will be needed to assess each and every program on campus. There should also be a call for each department to develop its own retrenchment policy – such policies typically include such issues as full time vs part time, tenured vs non-tenured, and seniority.

Other considerations include unique (and necessary) skillsets and specialties among the faculty.

- Finally, we should seek to better integrate our existing programs and minimize competition among the colleges and academic programs. We should also reduce redundancy among our course offerings. Such changes will become ever more important exclusive of COVID-19, as demographic trends predict diminishing enrollment over the next few years with an extreme drop predicted for 2025.
- It was mentioned at the Chairs' Council that HR will be sending out a new training module regarding the new sexual harassment policy.
 - Senate Chair would request that the deadline for completion be after Thanksgiving, after our classes all go virtual, because this is not the best time to be assigning extra work to over-worked faculty.
- Note on the current charge regarding the future of the University Promotions Committee and similar policy changes that might affect our processes:
 - First, when would such a change take place? Immediately or in the subsequent term?
 - The online handbook should make it possible for immediate implementation; but Shelly would have to ask HR.
 - There are people in the process of applying for promotion currently, would this be changing the rules in the middle?
 - In our discussion of this charge, we should add a recommendation for a date of implementation.
 - Second, many of the discussion points regarding the future of our Promotions Committee reflect discussions brought up five years ago in our ad hoc committee on Promotion and Tenure (2015). The report submitted by that committee was accepted by senate, although the recommendations were neither passed nor rejected by Senate. In summary, the ad hoc Committee find consensus with regard to the fate of the Promotions Committee and provided three different recommendations that range from disbanding the committee to maintaining the *status quo*.
- Provost's Report:
 - Update: work still continues on the budget to eliminate items that will bring us under the immediate reduction. The discussions are also examining what sort of outcomes might happen in the next biennium.
 - There has been no discussion regarding faculty salaries or Academic programs yet. They are working out the savings that are being affected

by the cuts currently, and will have a better idea of what cuts still need to be made after that is completed.

- With regard to charges in the works:
 - The Core 39 charges that were sent to his office are being acted upon.
 - With regard to the charges about the omission of Classroom Perception Surveys, there are some issues because faculty who just arrived might not have any student surveys on their review packet.
 - With regard to the Financial Exigency charge, his understanding of our intent was that our statement reach the Board of Trustees.
- 110 faculty had the opportunity to take advantage of the one-year extension for their tenure timeline; 63 took the extension, 47 opted out and continue on their previous timeline.
- The work on the Strategic Plan continues; Goals are completed. Working on Objectives that can be measurable; this would be an improvement on the previous Plan, which stopped at the Goals level and never had measurable objectives.
- New business:
 - Charge regarding the statement on current Covid-19 safety practices.
 - According to one of the Senators from the Nursing College, right now, the local hospitals are packed with Covid-19 patients, and the point should be made that we should we can to minimize exposure.
 - It should be noted that as a group, we can support this charge without disparaging different learning modalities.
 - The Communications office was planning a message from Dr. Rochon, to the point that Southern Indiana region is not doing so well currently. Contact tracing is seeing people treating the regulations in a more relaxed manner. After seeing this charge, their current plan is to include many more people sign the message, including Rex and others, and have them representing different groups on campus to make a stronger message.
 - Suggestions regarding the charge were made, but no motion of an amendment was offered formally:
 - It was suggested that the wording of "until the pandemic is over" could be changed to something along the lines of "until the university policy is changed".
 - It was also suggested that it be added that the University administration is happy with the overall conduct of our students to comply with the current policies to keep the campus open.

- A friendly amendment was offered that Senate give Rex the authority to sign the University-wide statement on the behalf of Senate. Amendment approved by acclamation.
- It was mentioned that in the course of soliciting feedback on this charge from the faculty, the topic of how course delivery modalities were decided across program and campus was brought up.
 - Several faculty across campus felt pressured to teach in face to face classrooms in spite of their discomfort, because they did not qualify for the exceptions.
 - It was acknowledged that everyone cannot expect to get all of what they want, but even so, it appears that at the dean or department levels, some faculty felt that their preferences were not even being taken into consideration.
- Charge approved unanimously.
- Charge regarding the addition of a member to represent the Library to the University Promotions Committee.
 - Unanimously approved.
- Charge regarding the reform of the Promotions Committee to be an appeals body.
 - The question was asked if there is an appeals process for promotions. The process is that any appeal of any subcommittee's decision can be made to Faculty Senate. However, in practice, that has never been done in the history of ISU-E or USI. This information on how to make an appeal should be shared with pre-tenure faculty, to help alleviate some of their concerns.
 - In some understandings, the University Promotions Committee is not so much to judge the content, but rather a judge of the process: that the college committees are following their own criteria on the promotion guidelines. On the other hand, the understanding also exists that the Promotions Committee should be a gatekeeper to the promotions process. Currently, there is nothing that specifically states what the process really is.
 - It was observed that as an institution, we inherited our University Handbook from a different institution, because we were a branch campus. One of the difficulties is that the criteria that are listed in the University Handbook are not identical to the guidelines from the individual colleges. The interpretation of these guidelines has created difficulties.

- It was suggested that we read the reports that have been composed as a result of previous investigations into this topic. Rex has them, and will distribute them so we can read them.
 - While we cannot expect to get individual data points from the Promotions Committee, it would be helpful to have statistical numbers from the results of this committee. To provide the most insight, it would be desired to know if there were differing recommendations between the Dean, Provost, College/Departmental committees, and the University Committee.
 - Rather than send something to the Faculty and Academic Affairs committee, it might be best to produce an ad hoc committee, since they are currently overwhelmed.
 - Charge was withdrawn by its author. It was requested that this topic be put on the agenda for next meeting, so that after reading the reports from previous investigations into this topic Senate will be able to formulate a charge for what to do to move forward.
- Adjourned: 4:19 pm

Minutes recorded by Brandon Field, secretary.